

6 Pro-China winner vows to unite Maldives, releases ex-president

10 India's private space sector skyrockets

11 Celebrated Syrian author Khaled Khalifa dies at 59

16 BNK's Sanchez, Lebron win German Padel Open titles

Kuwaiti Asiad medalists feted

Trap shooters win silver • Zankawi visits official whose leg broke after hammer throw



HANGZHOU: This photo released by Ali Zankawi on Oct 1, 2023 shows Zankawi visiting injured athletics official Huang Qinghua in hospital. — AFP



KUWAIT: Abdullah Al-Rashidi, Iman Al-Shamma and Yousef Al-Shamlan pose with their medals as they arrive to Kuwait on Sept 30, 2023. — KUNA



Kuwaiti shooters Khaled Al-Mudhaf, Abdulrahman Al-Faihan and Talal Al-Rashidi won the silver medal in the men's trap-50 event on Oct 1, 2023. Rashidi also won silver in the individual men's trap shooting event.

KUWAIT/HANGZHOU: Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Aiban said Saturday Kuwaiti athletes have made outstanding achievements at the 19th Asian Games. They have won medals to the delight of all Kuwaiti people, he told reporters after arriving home with the medalists.

Shooters Abdullah Al-Turqi Al-Rashidi won a gold medal in the men's skeet event on Wednesday, and a silver along with Iman Al-Shamma in the mixed skeet competition on Thursday, while fencer Yousef Al-Shamlan won a bronze in the saber competition

on Monday. Aiban attributed the achievements to the encouragement the athletes got after their meeting with HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah ahead of the competitions.

The minister expected Kuwaiti athletes to add more medals to Kuwait's tally in the remaining days of the games. On Sunday, Talal Al-Rashidi won the silver medal in the men's trap shooting event, while Kuwait's shooting team of Khaled Al-Mudhaf, Talal Al-Rashidi and Abdulrahman Al-Faihan won the silver medal in the men's trap-50 event. The 19th Asian

Games opened in Hangzhou in China's Zhejiang province on Sept 24 and continue until Oct 8.

Meanwhile, an athletics official suffered a broken leg at the Asian Games after being hit by a hammer hurled during competition by Kuwait's Ali Zankawi. The official, named as Huang Qinghua, was sitting on a chair outside the throwing circle when Zankawi aborted his attempt on Saturday evening, with his hammer hitting the protective netting. But rather than stopping, the metal ball that weighs

Continued on Page 6

Property sales drop, 50,000 flats vacant amid expat layoffs

KUWAIT: The value of real estate sales in Kuwait declined during the third quarter of 2023 to KD 800 million, the lowest levels recorded since the third quarter of 2020. This decline followed the government's termination of contracts of 6,200 expatriates working in the government sector during the last fiscal year, as per recent official statistics issued by the Civil Service Commission.

The decrease in real estate values coincided with rising valuations in the residential sector, increased borrowing costs and growing market uncertainty. This uncertainty stems, in part, from questions about reforms to subsidies for water and electricity services and the distribution of land plots and housing units this year.

Furthermore, residential property sales experienced a significant downturn, reaching KD 363 million, the lowest levels since the second quarter of 2020, primarily due to a reduction in the number of property transactions.

The expatriate population continues to face challenges that limit their spending and even force some to leave. Additionally, restrictions on granting visit visas to expatriates have contributed to a surge in vacant apartments, with their numbers exceeding 50,000 uninhabited rental investment apartments by the end of the first half of this year.

During the first half of this year, there was an unprecedented annual decline in the growth rates of the expatriate population. Growth dropped from 5 percent over the past five years to approximately 1.8 percent in the previous year. Expatriates typically reside in designated investment areas where they rent apartments, as Kuwaiti law prohibits them from owning property.

Erdogan defiant after PKK attack

ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Sunday that "terrorists" will never achieve their aims, hours after a blast near the parliament in Ankara injured two police officers. The powerful explosion outside the interior ministry, which was followed by large flames, was heard several kilometers from the site of the attack. The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), listed as a terror group by Turkey and its Western allies that has been waging a deadly insurgency against Ankara for four decades, claimed responsibility for the blast. The targeted district is home to several other ministries and the Turkish

parliament, which reopened as planned in the afternoon with an address from Erdogan. "The villains who threaten the peace and security of citizens have not achieved their objectives and will never achieve them," Erdogan told the parliament.

Kuwait condemned "in the strongest terms" the suicide attack in Ankara, slamming the incident as an act of terrorism. Kuwait denounces such "acts of violence and terrorism" that target innocent lives, according to a foreign ministry statement, underlining its solidarity with Turkey in the wake of the attack.

HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable to Erdogan on Sunday expressing Kuwait's strong condemnation of the terrorist attack. HH the Amir affirmed Kuwait's support of all measures taken by Turkey to combat such terrorist actions to maintain its stability and safety.

Continued on Page 6



ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan delivers a speech at the Turkish Grand National Assembly on Oct 1, 2023. — AFP

Saudi projects budget deficit

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia has revised down its budget projections and now expects to record a deficit this year, the finance ministry said late Saturday, reflecting rising expenditures and falling oil revenue. The Gulf kingdom, the world's biggest crude exporter, had planned for a surplus of 16 billion Saudi riyals (\$4.27 billion) in 2023 but now predicts a deficit of

82 billion Saudi riyals (\$21.86 billion), or two percent of GDP, according to the ministry's pre-budget statement. A deficit of 79 billion riyals, or 1.9 percent of GDP, is expected next year, the statement said.

Saudi Arabia in December announced it had recorded its first annual budget surplus in nearly a decade, benefiting from oil price hikes that resulted from Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Oil revenue this year has fallen by 17 percent as prices have dipped and Riyadh has cut production in a bid to boost them. Daily output is currently nine million barrels per day, down two million barrels from this time last year.

Saudi Arabia is also pursuing an ambitious and

expensive Vision 2030 reform program spearheaded by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman that intends to shift the economy away from fossil fuels. Saturday's statement touted growth in non-oil sectors, whose revenue jumped by 11 percent in the first half of the year.

Saudi Finance Minister Mohammed Al-Jadaan said the government "will continue implementing fiscal and economic structural reforms to help develop and diversify the Saudi economy, and to increase economic growth while maintaining fiscal sustainability". The ministry currently expects budget deficits to last through 2026, the statement said. — AFP

UN mission visits Karabakh, first in 30 years

LACHIN, Azerbaijan: A United Nations mission visited Nagorno-Karabakh on Sunday, Azerbaijan said, after almost the entire ethnic-Armenian population fled since Baku recaptured the break-away enclave. An Azerbaijani presidency spokesman told AFP that a "UN mission arrived in Karabakh on Sunday morning" — mainly to assess humanitarian needs. It marks the first time in about 30 years that the international body has gained access to the region.

Later on Sunday, an Azerbaijani foreign ministry spokesman told AFP that the mission had visited a checkpoint

at the Karabakh border with Armenia. He said the mission — headed by the UN Resident Coordinator in Azerbaijan Vladanka Andreeva — was expected to hold a press conference on Monday. Armenian separatists, who had controlled the region for three decades, agreed to disarm, dissolve their government and re-integrate with Baku following a one-day Azerbaijani offensive last week.

The end of Karabakh's separatist bid dealt a heavy blow to a centuries-old dream by Armenians of reuniting what they say are their ancestral lands, divided among regional powers since the Middle Ages. Nearly all of Karabakh's estimated 120,000 residents fled the territory over the following days, sparking a refugee crisis. An AFP journalist at a border crossing along the Lachin corridor that links Karabakh with Armenia, saw only one car arrive from the now deserted enclave.

Continued on Page 6



LACHIN, Azerbaijan: This photograph taken on Oct 1, 2023 shows Azerbaijani servicemen standing guard at the Lachin checkpoint. — AFP



How the Kuwaiti dinar maintains its stability

Dinar pegged to a weighted basket of international currencies

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: Despite global economic crises, the Kuwaiti dinar continues to stand as one of the most stable currencies worldwide. This stability acts as a shield, protecting the country from the adverse effects of currency devaluation that many other nations face during such challenging times. According to the Central Bank of Kuwait, a key factor contributing to this stability is the country's policy of pegging the Kuwaiti dinar to a weighted basket of international currencies.

This basket comprises currencies from nations with significant commercial and financial ties to Kuwait. This policy has proven highly effective in maintaining a robust exchange rate for the Kuwaiti dinar against major international currencies. Moreover, it plays a vital role in shielding the local economy from the repercussions of imported inflation, underscoring the currency's importance to Kuwait's economy. Remarkably, Kuwait does not impose any restrictions on capital movement, further enhancing its currency's stability.

Intriguingly, the Kuwaiti dinar is among the

most valuable currencies globally, despite the country not having the largest economy or the fastest-growing one. The Central Bank of Kuwait adopts a fixed exchange rate system for the dinar (at around \$3.32), meaning it remains unaffected by supply and demand forces. This approach is aimed at maximizing profits from oil, which accounts for approximately 90 percent of Kuwait's export revenues and national income.

Additionally, Kuwait boasts one of the world's largest sovereign wealth funds, ranking second among Arab sovereign funds and holding a prominent position globally. The Abu Dhabi Investment Authority leads Arab sovereign funds, followed by the Kuwait Investment Authority. Meanwhile, the Saudi Public Investment Fund stands third in the Arab world.

Reports also indicate that Kuwait maintains substantial financial reserves, with its international reserves surpassing \$500 billion in 2016. This financial cushion means that Kuwait does not need to devalue its currency to support non-oil exports, which constitute a mere 5-10 percent of total exports, amounting to approximately \$440 million, while oil remains



the dominant contributor at 90 percent.

Kuwait's prudent financial policies, including its pegging strategy and robust sovereign wealth fund, have played a crucial role in maintaining the stability of the Kuwaiti dinar, safeguarding the nation's economy from external shocks and ensuring its currency remains among the most valuable in the world.

Message on the occasion of the German Unity Day

By German Ambassador
Hans-Christian Freiherr von Reibnitz

On the occasion of the German National Day, I am extending warmest greetings to the German community in Kuwait, to the Kuwaiti leadership and government and indeed all people of Kuwait, who so graciously extend their generous hospitality to us. The Day of German Unity has become our National Day as the single most important event in our recent history that has shaped modern Germany like no other: After decades of painful separation, East and West were finally - and peacefully - reunited under one banner.

The events leading up to it began in 1989, when the citizens of East Germany - particularly in the cities of Leipzig, Dresden and Berlin - were beginning to demand more freedom and democracy - and started peaceful weekly rallies to protest against the old regime. "Monday rallies" (as they were called) spread like wildfire and sent an incendiary message to all parts of the country. Soon after, these events culminated in a peaceful revolution that saw the foundations of the old East German state crumble in a matter of months.

Political negotiations followed and resulted in the re-unification of East and West Germany on October 3rd, 1990 - ending a dark chapter of post-war history, without a single shot fired. The miracle of peaceful reunification became possible since it was supported by our Eastern-European neighbors and by Germany's Western allies. We remain grateful for this to the present day.

Moreover, October 3rd also stands for a new era in our international relations: Conscious of the responsibility to bring our political weight to bear

in international fora, the new Germany has raised her voice to mitigate conflicts, to fight injustice and to stand up for the rule of law, to promote equality, human rights and closer cooperation worldwide. We will not stand idly by in the face of open aggression: That is why we stand firm in the defense of Ukraine's sovereignty against an unprovoked military aggression; and we also stood side-by-side with Kuwait in the dark hours of 1990, when faced with an invasion.

It is something of an irony of fate that when Germany finally rejoiced at her reunification, Kuwait's very existence was hanging by a thread. Both our countries have overcome their dark hours with the help of others - these historical insights are one of the sources from which our belief in solidarity and humanitarian assistance flows.

Today, Germany and Kuwait both have an uplifting new story to tell: Our friendship has stood the test of time - our understanding for each other has grown. Germany was quick to recognize Kuwait after its independence and we formalized diplomatic relations soon after in 1964. Ever since that time our relations have been going from strength to strength. Trade is in our two nations' DNA. First commercial links had been established long before Kuwait's independence - especially in the automotive sector. The first Porsche car had been delivered to Kuwait in 1954 - and the legendary 911 followed ten years later. Today, Germany is still Europe's largest provider of quality consumer goods to Kuwait - while Kuwait is a major investor in Germany.

In international fora, Germany and Kuwait have cooperated on a number of pressing issues, including on Syria and Yemen and as non-permanent members of the United Nations Security Council in 2019. Kuwait, with its democratic traditions, has become a valued international partner in our quest for global answers to new challenges.

And what about our citizens? I had the privilege to witness first-hand that, for many Kuwaitis, Germany has become a second home of choice - at least for the summer - and they are valued members of German communities there. Against this backdrop, it is highly appropriate that both our countries are now seeking to lift relations to the next level: I am happy to note that - in May 2024 - Germany and Kuwait will be jointly commemorating 60 years of diplomatic relations - and we can proudly say: Our understanding has matured and reached strategic depths.

We are now working to forge an even more strategic partnership for the future. Faced with common international challenges - from climate change and energy security to the fight against poverty and for the rule of law - there is a mutual appreciation for level-headed policy-making, worldwide humanitarian commitment and a principled approach to matters of peace and security.

On the heels of these developments, we aim to reconnect in particular the young generations of our countries. It is here where I see a big potential for cooperation in coming years. So as we celebrate 60 years of diplomatic relations we can be assured that our roots are deep and our friendship enduring. I look forward to jointly commemorating our anniversary while opening new chapters for cooperation between our two peoples.

I cannot close without personally extending my heartfelt gratitude to His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince as well as the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their steady and generous support for our work. I look forward to our close ties being further strengthened in the years to come.



Hans-Christian Freiherr von Reibnitz



National Guard Deputy tours Al-Sumud Camp

KUWAIT: Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Deputy Chief of the National Guard, inspected the Reinforcement Brigade at Al-Sumud Camp in order to determine the mechanism of work. He was received by the Commander of the Reinforcement Brigade, Brigadier General Adel Ghazi Nazzal, and the Assistant Commander of the Reinforcement Brigade, Brigadier General Saad Mubarak Falah.

The Deputy Chief of the National Guard conveyed the greetings of His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Commander of the National Guard, and the leadership's pride in the vital role they play in the National Guard system, and their constant readiness to exert precious efforts to preserve the security of the homeland under the wise leadership of the Amir HH Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



The Deputy Chief of the National Guard, listened to a briefing on the Reinforcement Brigade, the tasks it carries out, and its human cadres, vehicles, weapons and ammunition that contribute to the fullest implementation of security and military tasks. He was also briefed on the weapons and

mechanisms used in the Reinforcement Brigade and the support mechanisms on which human elements are trained to master their tasks, stressing the importance of continuing training to reach the highest levels of efficiency and readiness. He expressed his satisfaction with the efforts.

Kuwait adopting latest technologies for cancer diagnosis and treatment

KUWAIT: A Kuwait Health Ministry official underlined on Sunday the state's intent on adopting the latest diagnostic and treatment methods for cancer patients as well as ensuring compatibility with safety and quality standards. Dr Abdulredha Abbas, head of the nuclear medicine department at the Kuwait Cancer Control Center, spoke to KUNA following a regional training session on radioactive materials organized by the Center in cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).



Dr Abdulredha Abbas



Dr Shatha Al-Khalaf

Dr Abbas mentioned that this is the second session to handle topics of radioactive material production and quality manufacturing, adding that there

are two centers producing such materials for clinical purposes in Kuwait. He stated that these sessions are a testament to Kuwait's role in the field and all the technical projects it has achieved. There are eight centers in Kuwait for PET scans (positron emission tomography), all requiring radioactive materials daily, as the centers receive some 18-20 visitors while other centers are visited by 30-45 people.

Head of the radioactive materials unit at the center, Dr Shatha Al-Khalaf, described the sessions as an extension of continuous research efforts aiming to improve the quality of radioactive material. Lecturing at the session, she added, are a number of highly skilled experts and specialists in the field. Some 40 participants from Arab countries in Asia are taking part in the session set to span over the course of five days. —KUNA



Participants listen during the regional training session. — KUNA photos

Local

How to overcome weight loss challenges: Experts weigh in

Medical experts discuss eating disorder, treatments

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: Losing weight and investing in one's overall well-being and quality of life has long been a common goal for many individuals. However, losing weight for a healthier life is not an easy task, as it requires a lot of patience, perseverance, determination and mental strength, which many people give up on, in addition to the financial costs, which makes it almost impossible for some people, despite their efforts.

Kuwait Times interviewed Dr Mohammad Al-Ajmi, consultant for abdominal and obesity diseases, Dr Abdullah Al-Sairafi, PhD in exercise physiology and sport science, and coach and nutrition consultant Abdullah Al-Husaini to better understand the challenges people face on taking this journey and the possible strategies that can be followed for a healthier lifestyle.

Kuwait Times: What are some common challenges or difficulties that people face when trying to lose weight?

Al-Ajmi: The greatest challenge one faces when trying to lose weight is the simple fact of human physiology. Weight is controlled by complicated processes in which the body decreases metabolism, burning calories whenever it senses that the amount of food coming in is lowered. It is also great in saving energy by dispensing half the amount of calories needed by increasing muscle efficiency when you work out under dieting conditions.

These counteractions are the sole reason that people feel frustrated and quit trying to lose weight. For this, modern science had to interfere medically to increase calorie burning and keep weight loss going. New medication and procedures trick the body mechanism into making it feel full all the time or increase energy expenditure by the body. Another challenge one might face is that food can be a source of comfort and happiness. Eating disorders like binge eating and any other emotionally derived eating can be a cause of weight gain. The difficulty in this situation lies in the fact these people eat with no hunger involved in the equation. Hence, conventional medical interventions targeting hunger and satiety does not work here.

Al-Sairafi: Some common challenges include the inability to stick to a diet, relying on fast food and high-calorie meals. Many individuals heavily rely on restaurant products as a form of entertainment and as part of their daily activities. This directly affects the amount of energy consumed by the body, leading to weight gain beyond the appropriate and natural levels.

Al-Husaini: In the Arabian Gulf region, people often face challenges such as easy access to



Dr Abdullah Al-Sairafi

Dr Mohammad Al-Ajmi

high-calorie foods, including traditional sweets and fried foods. The hot climate also discourages outdoor physical activities, leading to a sedentary lifestyle. Cultural factors, such as social gatherings that revolve around food, can also make weight loss difficult. Finally, there's a lack of awareness about the importance of a balanced diet and regular exercise.

Kuwait Times: How does emotional eating contribute to difficulties in weight loss?

Al-Ajmi: To treat eating disorders you have to get down to knowing why a person seeks food. Is it for comfort or joy? Is it related to activities like watching TV? Is it socially related or simply out of boredom? Once the reason is known, the solution can be applied. The treatment for an eating disorder is usually psychological support and behavioral therapy. The fact that the person becomes aware of their foul behavior can be very effective to stop doing it. If they feel urged to eat and cannot rectify their situation, certain medication can help decrease cravings and the need to eat when being in a certain mood or situation. One caveat should be considered is that deprivation of joyful food could have a large-scale impact on people's general mood and could affect their psychological well-being. Doctors should be aware of these consequences and psychological support is needed in these situations.

Al-Sairafi: Eating is a means of releasing and engaging with our life emotions, not just a way to consume energy for production. Failing to regulate our energy intake and overeating based on our feelings can contribute to weight gain and decrease our ability to control our weight over time. Emotional eating acts as a stimulant for the release of certain hormones, which in turn promote euphoria, sedation and a sense of comfort, such as cocoa, sugars and other varieties.

Therefore, we should avoid emotional eating by finding appropriate practices to release emotions and feelings, such as exercising. Exercise is the most important and effective way to release these emotions and has a greater impact than food in regu-



lating emotions. Continuous aerobic exercises for at least 40 minutes release high levels of endorphins, which help regulate any feelings of weakness or the need to enhance our mood in a safe and natural way, avoiding emotional eating or other practices.

Al-Husaini: Emotional eating occurs when individuals eat not out of hunger but emotional needs, like stress or boredom. This can disrupt an otherwise balanced diet because emotional eating often involves indulging in high-calorie, sugary or fatty foods. Over time, this can lead to weight gain, creating a vicious cycle as emotional stress increases.

Kuwait Times: What is the role of willpower in the weight loss journey?

Al-Sairafi: Willpower is persistence, and no goal can be achieved in our lives, including weight loss, without sufficient willpower. The weight loss journey is not constant and is often characterized by fluctuations in weight, stability and more. The more we can persist, the better the progress we will notice. Perhaps one of the most important factors in increasing our willpower is seeing our accomplishments. Measuring the level of progress is important; therefore, we always recommend measuring body components regularly (approximately every month) to further motivate ourselves to continue and achieve more.

Al-Husaini: Willpower plays a pivotal role in weight loss. The ability to resist temptations, adhere to a balanced diet and maintain a regular exercise regime requires significant self-control.

However, willpower alone isn't enough; it needs to be combined with proper planning, education and support systems.

Kuwait Times: What are some strategies or techniques that can help overcome emotional eating and lack of willpower?

Al-Ajmi: One very important factor in weight loss is weight stabilization. Reaching target weight is only half the work; the big challenge is to keep the weight off. The best way to keep weight from coming back is to regularly follow with your doctor and continue the healthy lifestyle routine.

Al-Sairafi: Consulting experts can help condense a lot of information and thus start achieving more accomplishments and persistence than working individually on a plan to improve body components. Also, raising our nutritional awareness gives us enough consciousness to control our nutrition. Therefore, we should start learning the basics of healthy nutrition and try to apply them consistently to eventually achieve our ultimate goals and strive to maintain optimal body components. I believe that consulting experts will help shorten the learning process, and therefore begin to achieve more accomplishments and persistence. Also, raising our nutritional awareness will give us enough consciousness to control our nutrition. Therefore, we should start learning the basics of healthy nutrition and try to apply them consistently to eventually achieve our ultimate goals and strive to maintain optimal body components.

Kuwait delegation visits China defense university, colleges

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Ministry of Defense announced that a delegation headed by the Chairman of the Kuwait Education Authority, Major General Fahad Al-Turaiji, visited the People's Republic of China on Sunday. The Ministry said in a press statement that the visit is aimed at discussing military education affairs and exchanging experiences in the educational and academic fields between the two friendly countries. The program included several visits to the College of Defense Studies affiliated with the National Defense University and the command and staff colleges of all types in Beijing, and the city of Nanjing. — KUNA



Kuwait to witness meteor showers

KUWAIT: Al-Ujairi Scientific Center said that Kuwait will witness a group of "Tininiyat" meteor showers on October 8 and 9 after sunset and before midnight. The center added that it will also appear on October 21 and 22 in the sky of Kuwait. He explained that the moon of the month of October will be born on the 14th day, while Venus will appear at its farthest distance from the sun on the 23rd of this month. He reported that the world will witness an annular solar eclipse on October 4 and 14, but it will not be seen in Kuwait. Also, there will be a lunar eclipse on the 29th of this month. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Photo shows the coastline in Kuwait City. Al-Ujairi Scientific Center said that Kuwait will witness a group of "Tininiyat" meteor showers on October 8 and 9 after sunset and before midnight. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

PAAAFR stresses on Kuwait-US ties and food security

KUWAIT: The Director General of the Public Authority of Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR), Nasser Taqi, has stressed the importance of cooperation between Kuwait and the United States of America in boosting food security and benefiting from modern American experiences and expertise in various agricultural fields. This came in a press statement by the Authority on Sunday after meeting the Economic Counselor at the United States Embassy in Kuwait, Brad Stilwell, as the two parties discussed aspects of cooperation in the agricultural field between the two countries and the possibility of developing ways of working between them.

"He also discussed the latest studies and projects in Kuwait and the obstacles it faces to carry out joint action, overcome all obstacles, facilitate the action plan, and ensure that the issue of food security is put in the first place and draw strategies for its development," Taqi said. During the meeting, they also discussed how to activate agricultural cooperation between the two friendly countries in all agricultural fields, focus on joint projects between the two parties within the agricultural cooperation agreement, and stand on the latest implementation and supervision.

The meeting discussed the areas of training, exchanging information and agricultural technology, sharing the latest research related to the agricultural, livestock, and fisheries fields, and exchanging experiences in a way that contributes to the development of the agricultural sector. "The US counselor was briefed on animal and agricultural projects in the country to find out the latest developments and the results of these projects," he clarified. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The Director General of the Public Authority of Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources, Nasser Taqi holds talks with Economic Counselor at US Embassy in Kuwait, Brad Stilwell. — KUNA

Municipality issues recommendations

KUWAIT: The Committee for the Follow-up and Evaluation of Public Cleaning Contracts has issued 19 recommendations, most notably re-evaluating the technical conditions and specifications to suit the actual needs according to the nature of each region and finding means, alternatives, and advanced specifications for sweeping and cleaning works using modern and developed mechanisms and reducing the human element.

Last July, Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Communications Affairs Fahad Al-Shula issued a ministerial decision regarding the follow-up and evaluation of the work of public hygiene contracts for all governorates, with the aim of assessing the situation and the level of public hygiene in the country. The committee studied the reports and observations of the Audit Bureau, identified deficiencies, and offered mechanisms and solutions to reduce hygiene violations.

The recommendations included the need to link the e-baladia application with contracted cleaning companies, the urgency of developing an electronic application for inspectors, converting field inspection work, issuing violations and warnings via smart phones, in addition to preparing a system for evaluating the performance of inspectors by setting clear and specific standards and linking the evaluation of hygiene inspectors to the level of cleanliness in the region.

The recommendations indicated that all procedures and measures will be carried out through the electronic messaging system between all supervisors of centers and cleaning departments and the appointment of administrators in all centers with at least three employees per shift to cover and follow up on the administrative work of the center.

They mentioned the formation of a permanent joint committee between the Kuwait Municipality, the Public Authority for Agriculture, the Ministry of Works, and the Environment Public Authority to develop a mechanism for joint work in public hygiene and safety in the regions, in addition to amending the road regulations with regard to neglected vehicles, increasing the fines resulting from them, raising impoundment fees, accelerating the implementation of the truck parking project, and setting a clear mechanism for monitoring mobile vehicles and identifying locations for licensed vehicles in coordination with the Ministry of Commerce electronically.

The recommendations also touched on the assignment of a Public Hygiene Committee to develop a mechanism to establish a service that allows citizens to submit a request to deal with large-sized waste that is not absorbed in residential area containers and to provide a service to remove dead animals in coordination with the Public Authority for Agriculture and Fish Resources.

MILSET Asia: Kuwait's students grab awards

KUWAIT: Asia's Regional Office of the International Movement for Leisure Activities in Science and Technology (MILSET Asia) announced that the Kuwait Cooperative Center for Student Programs won three awards in the third edition of Arab Code Week (ACW), achieving first places in the student team competitions for the categories under age 12, age 12-15, and age 15-18. Head of MILSET Asia, Adnan Al-Meer, said in a press statement Sunday that this victory reflects the practical and applied programs and systems prepared by MILSET Asia in cooperation with

Kuwaiti scientific and educational bodies and institutions.

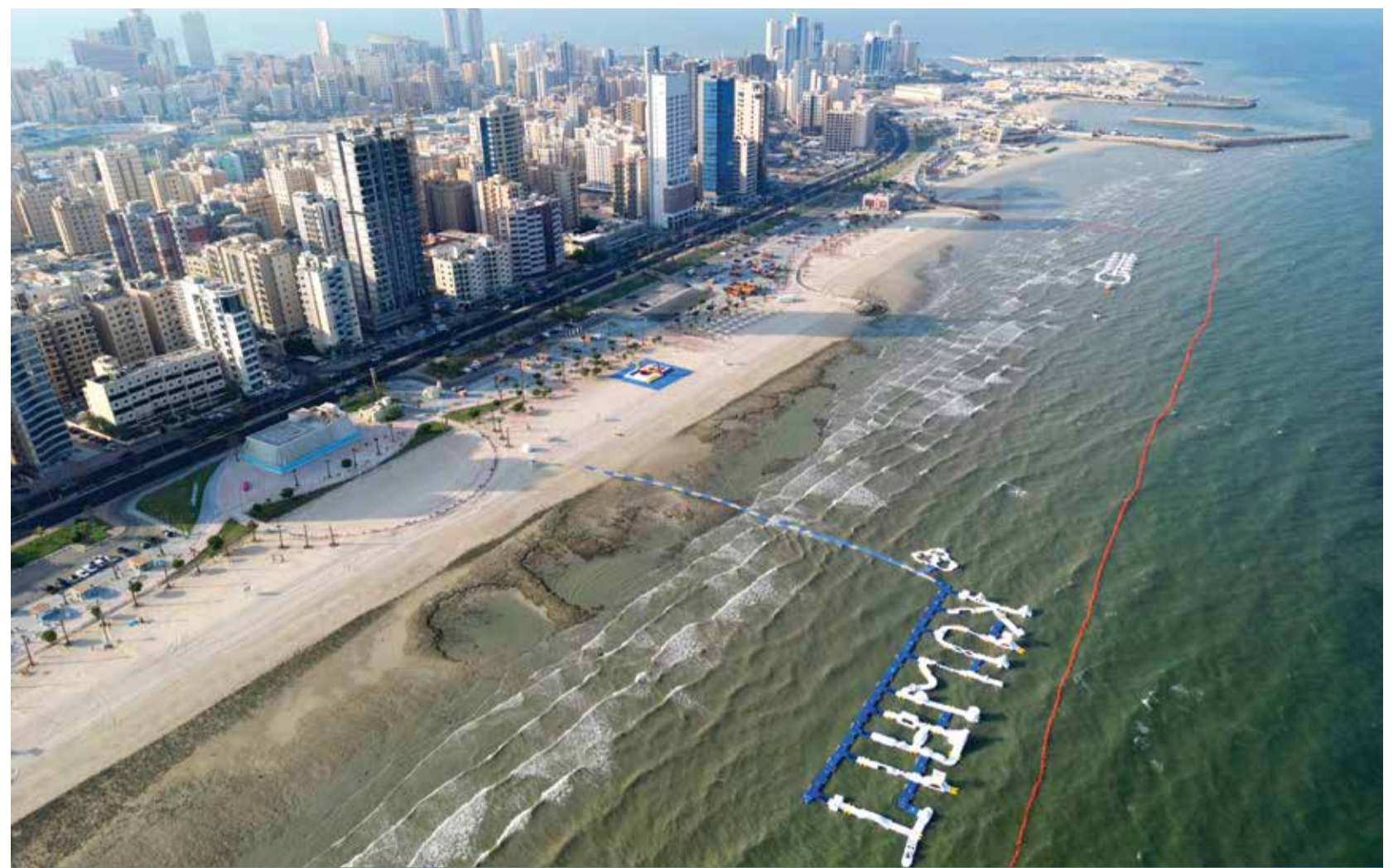
The Kuwait Cooperative Center for Student Programs organized activities for students during the ACW event, held online by the Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization (ALECSO). Al-Meer explained. The week included multiple activities and events, including holding workshops aimed at introducing students to how to register on the ACW platform, as this activity aims to explain the method of using the Arabic language to control the movement of robots by learning about voice recognition technology, he stated.

ALECSO, the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the Egyptian National Commission for Education, Science, and Culture, and the Tunisian Association for Educational Initiatives worked to organize this third edition entitled "Arabic Language and Digital Creativity," with the aim of helping students from ages 6-18, people with disabilities, and all those interested, he mentioned. This project seeks to provide an educational environment in a fun and easy way that helps teach the basics of programming to young people, he noted. — KUNA



Adnan Al-Meer

Photo of the day



KUWAIT: An aerial picture shows the recently renovated waterfront in Salmiya area in Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat


NCCAL holds workshop on antiques' preservation via nuclear technology

Workshop facilitate exchange of expertise, raise awareness




Lebanese Archaeologist Asad Saif lectures at the workshop. — KUNA photos






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KUWAIT: The National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature (NCCAL) commenced on Sunday a workshop on the use of nuclear technology for the preservation of relics. Taking part in the workshop are the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research. NCCAL Acting Secretary-General Mohammad Al-Jassar commended the efforts of participants and organizers, stating that these workshops contribute significantly to honing the skillsets and abilities of those working in the fields of archeology and museums.

The head of the antiquities and museums department at NCCAL, Mohammad bin Redha, explained in his speech that the workshop handles both theoretical discussions and practical application. IAEA communications officer Dr Nader Al-Awadhi highlighted the agency's role over the past few years in augmenting the benefits of nuclear technology. He indicated that Kuwait, supported by the IAEA, is making tangible progress in benefiting from nuclear technologies across various social, economic, health and environmental fields.

Al-Awadhi also explained that in addition to analyzing and preserving relics, nuclear technology is also used in archeological excavation. Determining the age of a relic, understanding its composition,



Mohammad bin Redha



Mohammad Al-Jassar

protecting it from decay, killing harmful bacteria and fungi and mending tears are all uses of nuclear technologies in archeology, Al-Awadhi added.

The workshop is set to extend for four days to facilitate the exchange of expertise, raise awareness and identify national requirements while taking into account current capabilities. Al-Awadhi expressed hope that useful recommendations and strategies would emerge from the workshop. Lebanese archeologist Asad Saif hailed the valuable content of the workshop, saying he is quite glad he is able to attend. — KUNA

Arab Customs Union targets 'unified fees'

CAIRO: The 41st meeting of the Arab Customs Union Committee kicked off Sunday at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo, with talks focusing on unifying Arab customs fees. The meeting is headed by the Sultanate of Oman, with the participation of members of the Unified Arab Customs Tariff Committee, including Kuwait. Kuwait is participating in the 41st meeting of the Arab Customs Union Committee with a delegation from the General Administration of Kuwaiti Customs.

Director of the Arab Economic Integration Department at the League, Dr Bahjat Abul Nasr, said in a press statement that the committee will discuss, over a period of three days, a number of issues, including unifying Arab customs fees, distribution of customs procedures and compensatory mechanisms within the framework of the Arab Customs Union, in addition to any topics on the agenda. Abul Nasr noted that "the Customs Tariff Committee is considered the committee concerned with unifying customs duties within the framework of the Arab Customs Union, and it is now negotiating this issue," noting that the committee completed, during the past meetings, unifying the names of the unified Arab customs tariff table.

He added that, in the context of facilitating the negotiation phase on unifying Arab customs duties, the General Secretariat of the Arab League prepared a database containing the customs duties applied to each country in addition to the fees fixed for those countries within the framework of the World Trade Organization. Abul Nasr pointed out that the database will be presented to the committee's work so that a clear picture is presented to member states during the negotiation process to unify customs duties regarding the current status of each customs item.

Arab market agreements

In another development, the Chairman of the Arab Ministerial Council for Electricity and the Egyptian Minister of Electricity and Renewable Energy, Mohamed Shaker, announced on Sunday the approval of two joint Arab Market agreements and their institutional frameworks. This came during the press conference of the Arab League's extraordinary session of the Arab Electricity Ministers Council at its headquarters in Cairo.

"The approval concluded the efforts of many years and represents a positive step towards establishing the Arab Common Market," said Shaker. The meeting was headed by Egypt and attended by Arab League Secretary General Ahmad Abul-Gheit, along with Arab electricity ministers and representatives of relevant unions and organizations. — KUNA



Lebanese children 'miss out' on school as crisis takes toll

Pro-China president-elect vows to unite Maldives

Page 6

Page 7

Young Ukraine war widows left with 'no more dreams'

Women in their 20s grapple with grief, lost hope for generation

KYIV: Twenty-year-old Erika Martyniuk only had five days together with her newly-wed husband before he was killed fighting Russian forces in southern Ukraine. She identified the remains of 21-year-old Savely Fedan, whose face was disfigured by fatal wounds, through his tattoos. "When I saw photos of his body in the morgue, it felt like I was dead too," Erika told AFP at a park in Kyiv.

Erika's story is not uncommon in Ukraine, where young people widowed by the war begin their adult life in mourning. Erika and Savely met in summer camp when they were still teenagers. After drifting apart, they reconnected a few years later and began a relationship in March 2022, shortly after the war began. The invasion pushed them to make things official.

Scared of losing each other, Erika said she got married to Savely one day before he was deployed in February 2023. "Our main dream," she said, "was to have at least one quiet day when we could not think about the war, about the fact that we'll wake up tomorrow and he'll have to leave again." He survived the brutal battle of Bakhmut but was killed at the end of August in the southern region of Zaporizhzhia. Since then, Erika said she had "no more goals, no more dreams."

Wearing Savely's old army bag over her shoulder, she gently places a Ukrainian flag at the foot of a memorial wall adorned with the faces of fallen soldiers. On her T-shirt reads the words: "Be a warrior, live forever".

Erika said she couldn't stand the relative normalcy of Ukraine's capital Kyiv, where residents have adapted to frequent air raids. "People walk around, laugh, plan parties. And I go to the cemetery," she said. She could only relate to other women who had also lost their partners. "They tell it like it is: 'it won't be easy, you'll be in pain for a very long time and you won't know what to do,'" she said.

The number of young widows is hard to estimate. Ukraine has not disclosed how many soldiers have died at the front. Oksana Borkun, who created an online community for women who lost their partners or husbands, calculated that 18 to 24 year-olds make up 7 percent of the 2,000 members of her Facebook group. She told AFP the relatives of young widows often diminish their grief when trying to console them. "They tell them things like: 'you're still young, you'll find someone else', or even push them to meet other people," Borkun said.

The women often shut down in response. And they are more at risk of sinking "into total despair" than their elders, she said. "Older women have children, tasks to get done, a job. Something to hold onto ... young girls completely collapse."

'Come back soon'

Since losing her husband, 21-year-old English teacher Daryna Voyevodina said she was "struggling to maintain social contacts". She said she only felt comfortable at the



KYIV: Daryna Voyevodina, 21, shows a photograph of her with her late husband Igor. — AFP photos

school where she works. On her arm is a tattoo of Stitch — the extra-terrestrial Disney character, and the call-sign of her late husband Igor.

Igor Voyevodin became a sniper shortly after the invasion began, despite his family's attempts to dissuade him. The former Japanese philology student died on August 20, less than a month after marrying Daryna. "I keep thinking that he's just busy, that he's going to come back soon," she said, trying to hide her shaking hands. "This war is a huge blow to our generation," she added.

She vowed to make good on their dream to get a



Erika Martyniuk looks at the Memory Wall of Fallen Defenders of Ukraine in Kyiv, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

house by the sea and a nice car. But the future looked bleak to her. "After the war, we are going to have a lot of problems because the best and most motivated people will have been killed," she said. Erika said she hoped to save lives as a combat paramedic. "Maybe I'll be able to save someone else," she said. Her 22-year-old friend Katya came to pick her up from her interview with AFP. Two days prior, Katya's own fiancée was killed in combat. The two girls had to prepare for his funeral the next day. "So many guys are dying and nothing changes," Erika said. "How long will it last?" — AFP

Derna rebuilding conference put off till November

BENGHAZI: Libya's eastern authorities Sunday announced the postponement of a reconstruction conference for the flood-hit city of Derna that had been planned for October 10 but was met with international skepticism. The event was put off until Nov 1-2 to "offer time for the submission of effective studies and projects" for the reconstruction effort, the committee charged with planning the meeting said in a statement.

The divided country's eastern administration last month invited the "international community" to attend the conference in Derna, the coastal city where a September 10 flash flood devastated large areas and killed thousands. The authorities later said that the conference would draw in international companies, and on Sunday the committee said the postponed event would be held in both Derna and the eastern city of Benghazi.

The North African country has been wracked by fighting and chaos since a NATO-backed uprising toppled and killed veteran dictator Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. Libya is now divided between an internationally recognized Tripoli-based administration in the west, and the one in the disaster-stricken east backed by military strongman Khalifa Haftar.

'Separate efforts'

The United States on Friday called on Libyans to set aside their political differences and agree on a framework to channel aid to eastern towns. "We urge Libyan authorities now to form such unified structures — rather than launching separate efforts — that represent the Libyan people without delay," US special envoy Richard Norland said in a statement.

Despite a wave of nationwide solidarity since the flood, there has been no show of support for the proposed conference from the Tripoli-based government of interim Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dbeibah. Jalel Harchaoui, a Libya specialist at the Royal United Services Institute, on Sunday said the eastern authorities were facing a "largely predictable setback", adding that "they will have no choice but to somehow work with the Tripoli authorities".

On Wednesday, the eastern authorities had announced the creation of a fund for the reconstruction of Derna and other areas affected by the flooding. They did not indicate how the new fund would be financed, but Libya's House of Representatives, also based in the east, has already allocated 10 million dinars (\$2 million) for reconstruction.

On Friday, the eastern administration announced that they had begun compensating residents affected by the floods, distributing cheques to the mayors of the stricken towns. During talks with the European Commission, UN envoy Abdoulaye Bathily on Thursday said he had called for funds delivered to Libya to be monitored. "I ... emphasized the need for a joint assessment of reconstruction needs of storm-affected areas to ensure the utmost accountability in the management of reconstruction resources," he said. According to the latest toll announced by the eastern authorities on Tuesday, at least 3,893 people died in the disaster. International aid groups have said 10,000 or more people may be missing. — AFP

Nightclub fire kills at least 13 in Spain

MURCIA: At least 13 people were killed in a fire in a Spanish nightclub on Sunday morning, authorities said, with fears the toll could still rise as rescue workers sift through the debris. The fire appears to have broken out in a building housing the "Teatre" and "Fonda Milagros" clubs in the city of Murcia in southeastern Spain in the early morning hours.

"The fire spread from the upper parts of the two clubs, the Teatra disco and the Fonda Milagros disco ... which originally were in the same building," said Diego Seral, spokesman for the national police. Authorities do not yet know where exactly the fire started.

Police have established a list of 15 people missing after the blaze, but Seral said that it was not yet final and could contain names of some of the victims who had already been found. A man named Jairo who said he was the father of one of the victims told reporters that his 28-year-old daughter was inside one of the clubs and that he did not have news of her since she left a desperate voice mail at 6:06 am. "Mum, I love you, we're going to die, I love you mum," a young woman's voice could be heard crying on the recording while in the background people shout to turn the lights on.

Emergency services said on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter, that firefighters were continuing to work at the scene and had not ruled out "the possibility of finding more victims." Jose Ballesta, mayor of Murcia, said the fire had broken out at around 6:00 am local time (0400 GMT) and was "extremely serious". Ballesta told the press at the scene that "there are still bodies to be pulled out" from the rubble, which he said was a complicated



MURCIA: This handout photograph taken and released on Oct 1, 2023 by the Emergency Services of the Murcia Region shows a firefighter walking past the Teatre nightclub. — AFP

task given the "risk of collapse". Firefighters dispatched to the scene at 7:00 am were able to extinguish the fire by 8:00 am, he said. Authorities said four people were injured, two women aged 22 and 25 years old and two men in their forties, all suffering with smoke inhalation.

A police spokesperson said that a birthday party was being held at the club on Saturday night. "According to initial information, the fire broke out on the first floor of the nightclub, which has a ground floor and a first floor," Diego Seral, the national police spokesman told radio Onda Regional de Murcia.

Video footage released by the city's firefighting brigade shows the firefighters holding a long hose

approaching bright orange flames inside the venue, passing bar tables that still have drinks placed on top of them. More than 40 firefighters and 12 emergency vehicles were attending the scene, authorities said.

Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez voiced "solidarity with the victims and relatives of the tragic fire in a Murcia nightclub". Spain's tennis superstar and this year's Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz wrote on X that he was "very affected by the terrible news". The city's mayor announced that three days of mourning would be held, and set up a reception base for the relatives of victims. The city's bars and restaurants will remain closed on Sunday in a sign of respect to the victims, said Hoytu, the local hotel-restaurant association. — AFP

'A million' people protest against Poland's govt

WARSAW: Around a million people gathered on Sunday at a rally in Warsaw to protest against Poland's conservative government two weeks ahead of a key general election. Called by opposition leader and former premier Donald Tusk, the "Million Hearts March" sought to mobilize the electorate ahead of the vote.

"This is absolutely the biggest demonstration in Warsaw's history," Warsaw city spokeswoman Monika Beuth told AFP, adding that "around a million" people attended. Protesters gathered at the heart of Warsaw, many carrying Polish and European Union flags, and marched through the city, with the rally culminating with a speech by Tusk, the head of the centrist Civic Coalition bloc. "We, here, are Poland," Tusk told the rally, "and we are here to win". "Poland deserves better ... Poland deserves the best", he said, adding that "more than a million" people were taking part.

Participants from across Poland began gathering in Warsaw in the early hours to rally against the government, run by the nationalist Law and Justice party. Kazimierz Figzal said it took him seven hours to get to the capital from southwest Poland. "We've had enough of what we witness now — our freedom is being curbed. We want democracy, for our children and grandchildren," the 65-year-old told AFP. "It's high time that we return back to normal, to the rule of law, to freedom of choice and of speech," said Monika Pieleszynska, a 43-year-old clerk.

Scores of prominent political figures joined the march, including leaders of some other opposition parties. "We are ready to win, we are ready to form a democratic,



WARSAW: Demonstrators take part in the 'Million Hearts March', organized by the opposition on Oct 1, 2023. — AFP

European and modern government," a co-leader of the New Left party Robert Biedron told the crowd.

Ahead of the October 15 poll, the ruling party, which frequently clashes with the EU and faces accusations of undermining the rule of law, holds a comfortable lead in opinion polls, with around 35 percent, according to IBRIS polling. The Civic Coalition opposition alliance has long trailed in second place, with 27 percent, according to IBRIS. Tusk has said that according to his party's internal polls, the ruling party's lead has narrowed to just two percentage points. "The opportunity is within reach, nothing has been decided yet," Tusk told his supporters earlier this week as he addressed crowds in Elblag, northern Poland, promising to hold the authorities accountable following the vote.

Bartłomiej Piela, a Katowice resident who travelled to the opposition rally's in Warsaw on Sunday, disagreed. "Breaking fundamental civil rights and women's freedom to choose how they wish to live, pitting Polish people against each other... I hope the march will mobilize people to change it", the 29-year-old said. — AFP

India's solar mission escapes sphere of Earth's influence

NEW DELHI: India's Sun-monitoring spacecraft has crossed a landmark point on its journey to escape "the sphere of Earth's influence", its space agency said, days after the disappointment of its Moon rover failing to awaken. The Aditya-L1 mission, which started its four-month journey towards the center of the solar system on September 2, carries instruments to observe the Sun's outermost layers.

"The spacecraft has escaped the sphere of Earth's influence," the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said in a statement late Saturday. Aditya, named after the Hindu Sun deity, has travelled 920,000 kilometers (570,000 miles), just over half the journey's total distance.

At that point, the gravitational forces of both astronomical bodies cancel out, allowing the mission to remain in a stable halo orbit around our nearest star. "This is the second time in succession that ISRO could send a spacecraft outside the sphere of influence of the Earth, the first time being the Mars Orbiter Mission", the agency added.

In August, India became the first country to land a craft near the largely unexplored lunar south pole, and just the fourth nation to land on the Moon. Rover Pragyan surveyed the vicinity of its landing site but was powered down before the start of lunar night, which lasts roughly two weeks on Earth.

India had hoped to prolong the mission by reactivating the solar-powered vehicle once daylight returned to the lunar surface, but so far has been greeted by radio silence. "It is OK if it does not wake up because the rover has done what it was expected to do," ISRO chief S Somanath said Wednesday. — AFP

International

Pro-China president-elect vows to unite Maldives

Win upends predecessor's efforts to revert country towards India

MALÉ, Maldives: The president-elect of the Maldives, Mohamed Muizzu, secured the release of his jailed mentor on Sunday, a day after divisive polls that saw the pro-Beijing leader vow to rebalance relations with New Delhi. Bowing to Muizzu's request, outgoing president Ibrahim Mohamed Solih ordered the transfer of his predecessor Abdulla Yameen from a high-security prison island to house arrest in the capital Male.

Hundreds of supporters cheered and waved pink flags of their Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) as Yameen arrived at his home, party officials said. Muizzu was a proxy candidate of Yameen, who is still serving an 11-year sentence for corruption carried out when he was in power between 2013 and 2018.

Officials said Solih did not have powers to pardon Yameen, but the only concession he could make was to transfer the convict to house arrest. Solih, 61, will serve as caretaker president until his successor is inaugurated on November 17.

'All Maldivian citizens'

Shortly after he was declared the winner, Muizzu, the current mayor of Male, urged unity in the politically divided, Sunni Muslim-majority nation. "No matter their political affiliation, they are all Maldivian citizens in front of me," Muizzu told supporters after his win late Saturday. "They are entitled to the same rights. They are entitled to equality in everything."

Before his jailing, Yameen had led an "India-out" campaign to remove New Delhi's deployment of a small detachment of security personnel to operate four reconnaissance aircraft gifted to the archipelago. During his five years in power, Yameen had also



MALE: People's National Congress (PNC) candidate Mohamed Muizzu speaks during a press conference in Male, on Sept 30, 2023. — AFP photos

shifted into China's orbit, moving away from India which had been a traditional benefactor of the small but strategically important Indian Ocean neighbor.

There was no immediate reaction from China to his win, but India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Muizzu on Sunday. New Delhi is "committed to strengthening the time-tested India-Maldives bilateral relationship", Modi said in a post on the social media platform X.

The president of neighboring Sri Lanka, Ranil Wickremesinghe, telephoned Muizzu to express "his heartfelt desire" to elevate ties to a "robust and multi-faceted partnership", his office said. The Maldives, a chain of atolls scattered 800 kilometers (500 miles) across the equator better known for its upmarket beach resorts, straddles one of the world's busiest east-west shipping lanes.

an interview Saturday. "Ethnic cleansing is a forceful action, when somebody is using force against civilians — (which is) what exactly Armenia used against us, 30 years ago." "But it doesn't mean we will repeat the same. There was no single case of violence or atrocity against civilians. They attest this themselves," Hajjiev claimed. "And there were no 'Armenian' citizens in Karabakh," he added.

"We always considered them as Azerbaijan citizens but unfortunately an illegal separatist entity didn't allow us to have direct communication with them," he said, of the ethnic Armenian separatists who governed the enclave for three decades. He said Azerbaijan had "engaged internal security troops to coordinate with the so-called local Armenian authorities". "They are still in control of the cities," he said.

Nagorno-Karabakh's ethnic Armenian authorities agreed on Thursday to dissolve their government and allow the mainly Christian enclave to become a formal part of majority-Muslim Azerbaijan by the end of the year. Baku and the separatist leaders are to hold talks on the transi-

tion in Stepanakert on Monday. Hajjiev said discussions with the ethnic Armenians were productive and centered on disarming its military. Armenia has accused Azerbaijan of illegally arresting people and says the enclave's inhabitants are fleeing out of fear of reprisals. Hajjiev said Azerbaijan had detained "five to six" people who it accused of "war crimes". "We know that there were concerns in Armenia and international media that we will arrest all militaries," he said. "They are free. If somebody puts down his gun, they are free and they have decided on their own choice to go to the republic of Armenia."

As for civilians, "we opened the gate and respected their freedom of movement, freedom of choice". "The majority of them are saying: 'I can't live under the flag of Azerbaijan'. I can't justify it, but I can understand and respect that. "If they accept Azerbaijan citizenship, we will protect and ensure their rights and their security and we will establish a municipality system so that they can govern their affairs at a local level, and religious and cultural rights will be assured." — AFP

and apologized. The apology was accepted and they took a photograph together.

Describing the accident, the 39-year-old said: "I raised my head and discovered that the hammer had bounced from the ground to the official's leg, so I quickly ran to him and tried to help him, especially since he was in a state of shock and writhing in pain. After I got to him, I discovered a slit in his trousers and saw blood pouring from the leg, and I knew it was broken. Then I tied it tightly to stop the bleeding until the ambulance arrived, so I helped them by putting him on an ambulance stretcher to transport him to hospital." Zankawi, who finished eighth behind Chinese winner Wang Qi, was shaken by the incident but said it could have been far worse. "Thank god the hammer hit the ground before it hit his leg," he said. — Agencies

Interior Ministry". The Ankara police headquarters said on the social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter, that it was carrying out "controlled explosions" of "suspicious packages" to prevent other explosions. The Ankara prosecutor's office said it was opening an investigation and banned access to the area. Local media was asked to stop broadcasting images from the scene of the attack.

Erdogan later opened the parliamentary session by slamming his country's long wait for accession to the EU, stating that Turkey "no longer expects anything from the European Union, which has kept us waiting at its door for 40 years". "We have kept all the promises we have made to the EU but they have kept almost none of theirs," he said, adding that he would not "tolerate any new demands or conditions" for his country to join the bloc.

This session of Turkey's parliament must also validate Sweden's entry into the NATO alliance. Hungary and Turkey in July lifted their vetoes against Sweden's entry into the Atlantic alliance, but have been slow to ratify its membership. Erdogan indicated in July that ratification by the Turkish parliament would not take place before October, but it is expected to be approved during this parliamentary year. —AFP

services in the city of Khankendi."

Nazeli Baghdasaryan, spokeswoman of the Armenian prime minister, said "transportation of forcefully displaced persons from Karabakh is nearing its end as 100,514 refugees arrived in Armenia" by Sunday evening. She said 47,322 refugees were now in temporary accommodation. On Sunday, Armenia observed a national day of prayer for the region. Bells rang in churches across the country, and the head of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Karekin II, led a service in the nation's main cathedral Echmiadzin, close to the capital Yerevan.

"As our sacred land of Karabakh is deserted, we pray for our sisters and brother of Karabakh who are going through terrible suffering," said the pontiff. Hundreds attended the religious service in the church of Saint Sarkis, in Yerevan. "One of the most tragic pages of Armenian history is being written today," 28-year-old Mariam Vartanyan told AFP, standing in the crowd of worshippers. In the Vatican City, Pope Francis said he was "following in recent days the dramatic situation of the displaced people in Nagorno-Karabakh". — AFP



Supporters of the PNC party and pro-China frontrunner Mohamed Muizzu shout slogans along a street in Male.

Muizzu won 54 percent of the vote in the runoff contest, prompting incumbent Solih to concede defeat shortly before midnight on Saturday. "He has started work on drawing up his team", a source close to Muizzu said Sunday. "He wants a smooth, peaceful transition". Muizzu told a meeting with

Chinese Communist Party officials last year that his party's return to office would "script a further chapter of strong ties between our two countries". The result upends Solih's efforts to revert the country's diplomatic posture back towards India since taking office five years ago. — AFP

Baku denies ethnic cleansing claims in Nagorno-Karabakh

BAKU: Azerbaijan denied accusations of ethnic cleansing to clear the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh of its ethnic Armenian population and told AFP its inhabitants were free to stay or go. Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has several times accused Azerbaijan of ethnic cleansing since the enclave's decades-long push to break away from Azerbaijani rule ended in sudden defeat on September 20.

On Saturday, Pashinyan said more than 100,000 of Nagorno-Karabakh's estimated 120,000 inhabitants had fled to neighboring Armenia. "We cannot accept accusations of ethnic cleansing or genocide," Hikmet Hajjiev, diplomatic advisor to Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, told AFP in



BAKU: Hikmet Hajjiev, foreign policy advisor to the president of Azerbaijan, answers questions during an interview with AFP on Sept 30, 2023. — AFP

As for civilians, "we opened the gate and respected their freedom of movement, freedom of choice". "The majority of them are saying: 'I can't live under the flag of Azerbaijan'. I can't justify it, but I can understand and respect that. "If they accept Azerbaijan citizenship, we will protect and ensure their rights and their security and we will establish a municipality system so that they can govern their affairs at a local level, and religious and cultural rights will be assured." — AFP

east crossing of Saudi Arabia with electric vehicles.

The team's ID. Buzz Volkswagen vans — modelled on the German manufacturer's Combi campervan — travelled across 12 countries, reaching Aqaba in Jordan from Turkey by ship. However, the trip highlighted shortcomings of the charging infrastructure, Rinderknecht said, comparing the mismatch of technologies to the "early days of telecommunication". In Europe, the team had to use numerous apps to pay for charging points across different regions. In Jordan, they had to adapt their European systems to the Chinese hardware they found.

Team drives electric vans from Geneva to Doha

DOHA: A Swiss-led team has driven electric vans across Europe and the Arabian Peninsula to Qatar to showcase zero-emission battery powered vehicles, organizers said Sunday. The five-strong Swiss and German team set out from Geneva on Aug 28 in two electric vans on a 6,500 km journey that ended in Doha on Saturday. "The motivation was really to do something unusual," the group's leader Frank Rinderknecht told AFP. "Certainly we did have the risk of not arriving — technical issues, health issues or an accident."

The journey aimed to raise awareness about the environmental benefits of electric vehicles, he said. "If our trip put just a little bit of rethinking, of initiative, into people's minds then I am not unhappy." The journey started with a crossing of the Swiss Alps and included what organizers believe was the first west-to-

US House speaker's future in jeopardy after shutdown deal

WASHINGTON: The future of Republican US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy looked in serious jeopardy Sunday, with hardliners in his own party moving to oust him and Democrats blaming him for bringing the government close to a total shutdown. McCarthy brokered a last-gasp deal late Saturday to keep the government funded for another 45 days, but right-wing Republicans were furious that it didn't include the deep spending cuts they demanded, while Democrats said the speaker had reneged on promises aimed at avoiding a budget crisis in the first place.

A leading headline Republican said Sunday he would move to oust McCarthy as House speaker for striking the deal with Democrats. "I do intend to file a motion to vacate Speaker McCarthy this week," Congressman Matt Gaetz told CNN. "I think we need to rip off the Band-Aid." Gaetz is a leading figure within a small group of far-right Republican legislators who brought the government to the brink of shutdown with their refusal to adopt fresh federal funding without deep spending cuts.

US President Joe Biden lambasted both McCarthy and the hardliners Sunday for failing to live up to an agreement forged around a debt crisis months ago that was meant to avoid a damaging shutdown fight — and for stripping out support for Ukraine. "Stop playing games, get this done," Biden said during a press conference, adding that he was "sick and tired of the brinkmanship, and so are the American people". "It's time to end governing by crisis and keep your word when you give it," he said.

Speaking to CNN, Gaetz acknowledged that, despite

vocal anger on the left, Democrats could nonetheless back McCarthy as speaker, particularly after he brokered the bipartisan shutdown compromise. "The only way Kevin McCarthy is speaker of the House at the end of this coming week is if Democrats bail him out," Gaetz said. "Now, they probably will."

'I will survive'

McCarthy had only barely survived a bruising battle in January involving a record 15 rounds of voting to become the 55th speaker of the House of Representatives. In order to gain the gavel, he was forced to make concessions to his party's far-right bloc, including the rule change — which Gaetz is now promising to use — that makes it possible for a single member to call a vote for a new speaker of the House.

McCarthy was left extremely vulnerable to factions in his own party when Republicans won only a razor-thin majority in the House in last November's midterm elections. But he remained confident Sunday he would not succumb to a motion to remove him, telling "Face the Nation" on CBS: "I will survive." If Gaetz is "upset because he tried to push us in a shutdown and I made sure government didn't shut down, then let's have that fight," McCarthy said.

Pro-McCarthy Republicans are already vowing support for their leader. Republican Mike Lawler said the disruption from a removal vote would only impede the work that Congress must now accomplish by mid-November if it hopes to make the next deadline. Defending the shutdown deal, he told ABC's "This Week" that "the only responsible thing to do was to keep the government open and funded while we complete our work."

But in a sneak preview of likely pushback from elements on the left, progressive lawmaker Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez told CNN she would "absolutely" vote to oust McCarthy, adding that it was "not up to Democrats to save Republicans from themselves". — AFP

Kuwaiti Asiad medalists feted...

Continued from Page 1

over 7 kg slammed into the technical official's right leg. Pictures showed Huang in agony, blood pouring from his shin, as Zankawi rushed to help him. He was carried out of the arena on a stretcher and received emergency treatment on site, before being taken to hospital for surgery. The 62-year-old was in a stable condition after suffering a fractured tibio-fibular joint, Chinese state media said. Zankawi, a silver medalist at the 2006 Asian Games in Doha, told AFP he visited Huang in his hospital bed on Sunday

Erdogan defiant after PKK...

Continued from Page 1

He wished the wounded swift recovery. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf sent similar cables to Erdogan.

The Turkish interior ministry said two attackers arrived in a commercial vehicle around 9:30 am (0630 GMT) in front of "the entrance gate of the General Directorate of Security of our Ministry of the Interior, and carried out a bomb attack". "One of the terrorists blew himself up. The other was killed by a bullet to the head before he had a chance to blow himself up," Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said in a press statement outside the ministry. "Two of our police officers were lightly injured" in the exchange of fire, but their lives were not in danger, he added.

In a statement to the ANF news agency, which is close to the Kurdish movement, the PKK said that "a sacrificial action was carried out against the Turkish

UN mission visits Karabakh...

Continued from Page 1

Sergei Astsaryan, 40, said he was among the last Armenians to leave the region. "I have no idea of where to go, maybe Europe," he told AFP, adding however that he hoped many of the refugees would return if Azerbaijan "gives guarantees, provides help." "I've talked to Azerbaijani police and they said there would be no problems if we want to return, that we can live in our homes," he said.

The Azerbaijani presidency said Baku's migration service began operating in Karabakh's main city of Khankendi (Stepanakert in Armenian) to register Armenian residents to ensure their "sustainable reintegration... into the Azerbaijani society," promising them the "patronage of the Azerbaijani state". The statement also said the central government "has started providing appropriate medical

International

Lebanese children 'miss out' on school as crisis takes toll

'This country is killing their future'

BEIRUT: Rana Hariri doesn't know when she'll be able to send her children back to school, as Lebanon's grinding economic crisis thrusts the fate of public education into uncertainty. Lack of funding for the school system has precipitated repeated teachers' strikes and school closures, resulting in children being increasingly pulled out of the formal learning system, and in some cases being forced to work.



BEIRUT: Homekeeper Farah Koubar helps two of her children, Acil (left) and Jawad, with their homework in their apartment on Sept 21, 2023. — AFP photos

Hariri, 51, says her nine-year-old daughter Aya "repeatedly asks me: 'When will I go back to school?' But I do not know what to tell her." Lebanon's public institutions have been crumbling since the economy collapsed in late 2019, pushing most of the population into poverty and dealing a heavy blow to state schools. Public sector workers, including teachers, have repeatedly gone on strike as the value of their salaries crashed after the Lebanese pound lost more than 98 percent of its worth against the dollar. "My children stayed at home for three months last year due to the strikes," said Hariri. She had hoped that her 14-year-old daughter Menna would someday become a doctor.

But now, "I just hope she'll be able to go to school in the first place," she said, sitting at her friend's house surrounded by her four children. "For the past four years, teachers have failed to secure their rights, while our children miss out on basic education." Public sector teachers earn the equivalent of \$150 to \$300 per month, while the education ministry has sounded the alarm over lack of funding. Hariri took her anger to the streets, protesting alongside teachers who demanded better wages at a sit-in in September. The school year is due to begin in early October, but amid uncertainty over the start date, her two sons, aged 13 and 17, have taken up work with their father, a plumber. Her daughters have meanwhile been forced to wait at home. "I want them to have a degree ... but this country is killing their future," she said with a sigh.

Public education 'in danger'

Since 2019, children have "experienced devastating disruption to their education", according to the United Nations' children's agency. The disruptions were attributed to the economic crisis, the coronavirus epidemic, a deadly 2020 blast that rocked Beirut's port and strikes that forced school closures. "A growing number of families" can no longer afford "the cost of education including transport to school, food, textbooks, stationery, and clothes", UNICEF Lebanon said. At least 15 percent of households have pulled their children out of schools, UNICEF found in a June report, up from 10 percent a year ago. And one in 10 families have been forced to send children, sometimes as young as six years old, to work to make ends meet, the report said. "Being out of school exposes children ... to violence, ... poverty," and increases risks of child marriage in girls, said Atif Rafique, chief of education at UNICEF Lebanon. Education Minister Abbas Halabi has repeatedly complained of funding problems, warning in September that "public education is in danger". "The most



School teachers lift placards during a sit in outside the Lebanese parliament in Beirut's downtown district on Sept 18, 2023.

urgent problem today is financial," he said, adding that his ministry was still working on securing funding for the upcoming school year. The education ministry mostly relies on government credit lines and donor funding, mainly from the World Bank and the UN, to educate the more than 260,000 Lebanese pupils and over 152,000 Syrians enrolled in public schools. But Halabi said donors had informed him they could not afford to give more money to public school employees.

'Catastrophic'

According to a recent Human Rights Watch report, the education ministry has slashed the number of teaching days from 180 in 2016 to about 60 in the past two years, "citing financial constraints". Year after year, the ministry has had "no plan" to secure the funds

needed for schools to remain open without interruption, said Ramzi Kais, HRW's Lebanon researcher. "If we're going to have a fifth year that is lost or interrupted, it's going to be catastrophic," he told AFP. But despite the setbacks, more pupils have poured into Lebanon's public schools as families can no longer afford private education. Homemaker Farah Koubar, 35, said she fears she one day won't even be able to afford sending her three young children to public school. "I'm afraid they will miss out on their education," she told AFP from her small home in Beirut. "Every year life becomes more difficult," she said, holding back tears as she recalled how she has had to ask acquaintances for financial help to secure her family's survival. "Everything is expensive, food, water, gasoline — even bread." — AFP

In US, naloxone part of this year's school supplies

ARLINGTON: Before Jackson Danzig leaves the house each morning, he makes sure his backpack is filled with the usual high school necessities: books, homework, lunch — and the Narcan sitting on his bedside table. The opioid overdose reversal drug, also known by its generic name naloxone, is increasingly being carried by high schoolers across the United States as opioids — including the powerful synthetic opioid fentanyl — devastate the country. "Everyone has a friend, or an acquaintance, who has experimented with drugs. Imagine yourself in a scenario where you find that friend in a potential overdose situation and you're not entirely sure what to do," says Danzig, 17, who along with his classmate Marin Peale has organized naloxone training for around 350 of his classmates. It isn't a hypothetical scenario: police responded to at least seven suspected overdoses last year at Arlington Public Schools, the largely affluent school district across the river from the nation's capital where Danzig and Peale are students. One student died after an apparent overdose on campus. Nationwide, the United States saw a record of around 110,000 drug overdose deaths between March 2022 and March 2023, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Fentanyl accounted for some two-thirds of them. Among teenagers, overdose deaths increased 94 percent from 2019 to 2020 — attributed by the CDC to the "widespread availability of illicitly manufactured fentanyls," the proliferation of counterfeit pills



ARLINGTON: This illustration photo shows naloxone, a medication designed to rapidly reverse opioid overdose, displayed inside a student's backpack. — AFP

made with fentanyl, and the "ease of purchasing pills through social media."

Endorsing drug use?

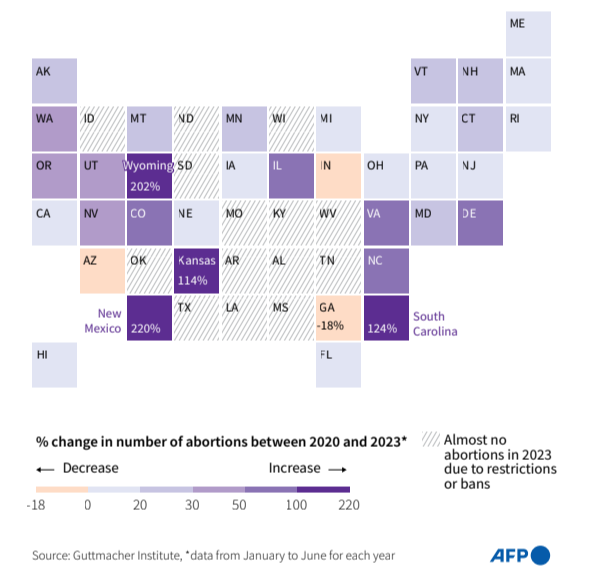
Increasing access to life-saving drugs like naloxone can be controversial: Some parents, Arlington students say, view naloxone not just as an acknowledgment of risky drug use, but as an endorsement. That criticism comes as local governments have sometimes diverged on drug policy strategies. Some liberal cities like Portland have come under scrutiny for watering down criminal drug penalties to the point that open-air drug markets have flourished and overdoses are spiking. Other states have moved toward harsher drug laws. After three high schoolers overdosed in Tennessee earlier this year, leaving two dead, the survivor was charged with murdering her classmates. Virginia has designated fentanyl as a "weapon of terrorism." But overall, "I see, across the political spectrum, support for naloxone ... and I think that's been a victory for public health," said Keith Humphreys, a drug

policy expert at Stanford University who supports increased naloxone access in US schools. In Arlington, school policies and state laws banning drugs remain in place, officials say. Among other rules, students who carry naloxone on campus must get training on how to use it and have parental permission to do so, said Darrell Sampson, APS executive director of student services, who described the policy change as having come from the ground up. "The students felt like they wanted to be able to support their peers," he told AFP. It comes on top of other drug education efforts at the school system, as well as the training of staff on how to use naloxone and the installment of emergency boxes of the substance throughout middle and high schools. "In schools, we've always been responding to substances," Sampson said. "But none of those substances, per se, are as inexpensive to produce, as deadly in even small doses, or as highly addictive as we're seeing with opioids and fentanyl."

Addiction crisis

Humphreys, the Stanford researcher, said increased naloxone access is only one part of the solution to the country's drug crisis. He called for bigger-picture investments in children's mental health and their ability to manage their emotions and develop healthy relationships. And while naloxone can prevent overdoses, he pointed out, it doesn't treat addiction, a problem that requires huge public funding. "It is a mistake to think if we could just reduce the overdose death numbers we would have made big progress," he told AFP. "That's an extremely modest aspiration." Both Danzig and his classmate Peale, also 17, started carrying naloxone last year, before the school's policy technically allowed them to — willing to get in trouble "for doing the right thing," Peale says. Now, though, naloxone has almost become commonplace. "Whatever classroom I go in, there has to be a box, and I also always carry one," Peale says. —AFP

Abortion in the US



Business

MONDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2023

Meta tech chief defends tech titan's AI strategy

AI-infused chatbots with personalities unveiled at Connect conference

MENLO PARK, US: Meta's chief technology officer is quick to push back on assertions that the company has fallen behind rivals like ChatGPT in the explosive surge across the tech industry in generative AI.

"The majority of the world's population will have their first experience of generative artificial intelligence with us," Andrew "Boz" Bosworth told AFP at the company's recent Connect conference for developers. Meta unveiled AI-infused chatbots with personalities at the gathering, along with tools for creating images or written content using spoken prompts.

The company that owns Facebook and Instagram has been seen as lagging rivals like Microsoft and Google, which have pushed out generative AI products and invested heavily in the technology seen as a force poised to shape the future. Bosworth was adamant that Meta is not behind, enhancing its global platforms with AI since before ChatGPT was launched to the public late last year.

"There are lots of cool tools, like Stable Diffusion, for generating images," Bosworth said of the buzz around AI offerings from other companies. But the executive was quick to point out that many of these new platforms take time and expert computer skills to master.

"We wanted the results to be great and fast, even on smartphones," Bosworth said, noting Meta's technology allows users to simply ask for an image of "hedgehog on a bike" or "happy birthday to a marathon runner," for example.

Meta for now has chosen the more cautious approach when it comes to generative AI. Two weeks before the debut of ChatGPT in November 2022, Meta released a generative AI chatbot called "Galactica" that specialized in scientific research. Galactica could write articles and solve math problems, but at times fabricated answers. Meta quickly sidelined the tool, a move Bosworth told AFP he thought was a mistake.

"If it had been up to me, I would have left it," Bosworth said. "We had warned that our chatbot was capable of saying anything" and that users should



MENLO PARK, US: Andrew Bosworth, Chief Technology Officer of Meta, speaks during Meta Connect event at Meta headquarters in Menlo Park, California on Sept 27, 2023. — AFP photos

proceed with that in mind. AI products by Meta rivals meanwhile remained available despite the potential for bizarre answers referred to as "hallucinations" that brought the companies some ridicule. But after years of controversy about content moderation at its world-leading social media platforms, Meta will likely err on the side of caution when it comes to setting safety parameters for its own creations.

As the other giants pushed out their AI products, Meta in the meantime improved its in-house AI model, releasing Llama 2 earlier this year as open source, meaning developers could tinker with it to create their own chatbots.

Metaverse

A Facebook employee since 2006, Bosworth recently led the division devoted to augmented and virtual reality innovations at the tech firm that was re-branded Meta. Changing Facebook's name in 2021 was billed as reflecting Zuckerberg's belief in the metaverse being the next major computing platform. Critics argued the move was actually part of a strategy to clean up its image after weathering ac-



MENLO PARK, US: Meta founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg speaks during Meta Connect event at Meta headquarters in Menlo Park, California on Sept 27, 2023.

cusations Facebook put profits over the safety and well-being of users. And, while Meta has invested billions of dollars in its vision of the metaverse, it is far from being realized. Bosworth conceded that adoption of Meta's immersive social networking platform called Horizon Worlds had been slower than hoped, until recently. "We should have had legs sooner," Bosworth quipped in a reference to adding limbs to virtual world avatars.

At Connect, Meta spoke little of the metaverse and spotlighted products like Ray-Ban smart glasses that allow users to livestream what they see. "Mixed reality" gadgets like its VR headset overlay digital content on what is around the user rather than immersing them completely in virtual realms. The abil-

ity to transition from virtual reality to augmented was also added to new Quest 3 headsets that will be available in October. People still won't be able to see a Quest user's eyes.

"We've tried it, the result can be quite off-putting," Bosworth said, noting that building the headgear comes with trade-offs. The tech world is eagerly waiting for Apple Vision Pro to hit the market early next year, with a hefty price tag of \$3,500 compared to the Quest 3's \$500. "There's nothing about that headset that we can't build," Bosworth said of Apple's luxury-priced offering. But Meta never thought that building something so expensive "was going to help our developers reach a big enough audience to be meaningful." —AFP



ANKARA: Cengiz Orsel, a wood craftsman speaks from his workshop in Ankara. — AFP

Threats, violence as Turks feud over soaring rents

ANKARA: Cengiz Orsel hung a banner above his woodcarving workshop in Ankara so that everyone would know the astronomical rent increase his landlord is demanding. Instead of 3,200 lira (\$117) a month, the sign said, "25,000 lira rent is asked for this shop"—the equivalent of \$911.

Rent hikes in Turkey have become so steep in the past year that they have led to violence between landlords and tenants, with media reporting 11 deaths and 46 injuries. Rents have soared by an average of 121 percent over the past year, according to a study published by Bahcesehir University in August.

In big cities such as Ankara and Istanbul, they have surged by as much as 188 percent. Orsel, who says he has paid his rent without fail for 20 years, fears he will have to close up shop. "I want to make my voice heard. Such demands will push people to the brink of violence, as far as stabbing each other," he said.

"I can't pay that!" he said. "But if I have to leave this neighborhood, I will also have to give up my job." Turks have been enduring a cost-of-living crisis that has intensified as annual inflation has remained in the high double-digits since the second half of 2019. Inflation approached 60 percent in August, but official figures are contested by independent economists who say consumer price increases actually reached at least 128 percent.

Eviction threats

The government has capped property rent increases at 25 percent for households, and aligned

them with the official inflation rate for businesses. But experts say the measures have only heightened tensions, prompting many landlords to use any means—including illegal ones—to evict tenants and find new ones ready to pay higher prices. Some landlords have hired gangs to terrorize tenants into leaving their homes in Istanbul's Besiktas neighborhood along the Bosphorus Strait, according to a real estate agent who requested anonymity.

Last winter, a landlord made headlines in local media after demolishing his tenant's door with an axe to forcefully evict him. "The number of disputes between tenants and landlords has exploded in recent years," said Meliha Selvi, a lawyer in Ankara.

Around 47,000 eviction trials and 100,000 others concerning illegal rent increases opened in the first six months of this year, more than double in the same period of 2022, according to Turkish media. "Tenants see their rights violated and landlords feel wronged by the crisis," Selvi said. "They accuse each other instead of holding the government to account."

The devastating earthquake that struck the country on February 6, which killed more than 50,000 people and displaced millions in the southeast, has only worsened the situation, said Osman Cal, a real estate agent in Ankara. Rent for a two- or three-room flat in a central part of the capital jumped from 2,000 to 2,500 lira (70 to 86 euros) to nearly 17,000 lira (590 euros) in one year, an increase of almost 650 percent. "Landlords are asking for rent increases well above inflation" amid an influx of displaced people from the quake zone, Cal said.

Ankara, situated far from the major fault lines that threaten Turkey, is considered one of the safest regions of the country. "They (the landlords) feel wronged by the rent cap. But a civil servant, a pensioner or an employee on minimum wage have not seen their salaries increase as much and cannot pay the current rents," Cal said. — AFP

California's green drive leaves its oil towns behind

TAFT, US: Fred Holmes watches with satisfaction as pumps pull oil from deep under his California farm, tapping a supply he thinks could last another century. But he knows the state's ambitious environmental policies will put an end to the practice much sooner than that. Oil extraction "could continue for another 100 years," he told AFP. But it won't.

"Twelve to 14 years" for his company at the rate things are changing, he says. California produces 311,000 barrels of crude oil every day, around 2.4 percent of all US production, making it the seventh largest producing state in the union.

But it is also at the leading edge of environmentalism in the United States, and is determined to shrink its dependency. In September Governor Gavin Newsom announced California was joining other states in taking legal action against oil companies, saying they knew decades ago their product was damaging the planet, but hid the truth.

For the people of Taft, a two-hour drive north of Los Angeles, the move is somewhere between a stunt and an insult to a town whose historic prosperity was built on black gold. "The governor does something like this almost daily," said Holmes. "It's like a circus." By 2045 the state—whose economy is bigger than that of all but four countries—plans to be carbon neutral, and to have ended drilling for fossil fuel.

Already, drilling permits are hard to come by. "Our town is essentially boarded up and it's almost a ghost town," said Holmes. Thousands of wells dot the desert around Taft, whose proud museum to oil is watched over by a wooden drilling rig.

It's a similar story in much of rural Kern County, which produces 70 percent of California's oil. Arguments over the damage that fossil fuels are doing to the environment—the changes in weather patterns that have left the state at the mercy of extreme climate swings—get short shrift.

"I'm not worried about climate change. You know, we'll go with the flow," 75-year-old Mickey Stoner told AFP. "This town will die if we don't have oil," she says. Taft is the site of the five-yearly "Oil-dorado"—a 10-day celebration of the town and its drilling heritage due to be held again in October 2025. The festival celebrates what made Taft possible, and, according to Mayor David Noerr, the industry that keeps it going. "Oil is the lifeblood of this city, and of Kern County for that matter," the one-time roustabout said.

The sector "pays huge sums of taxes to the counties and the cities, it funds schools, it funds law enforcement and funds programs for veterans and youth athletics, you name it." Like New Mexico, which offers fee-free university and college tuition

to residents, funded by oil revenues, and Wyoming, which generates a significant chunk of its budget from natural resource extraction, Kern County illustrates one of the challenges posed by the energy transition in the United States as the country tries to wean itself off fossil fuels.

Reducing California's oil production by 90 percent by 2045 would cost Kern up to \$27 million a year in property taxes and eliminate thousands of jobs, according to a recent study from the University of California Santa Barbara.

Aside from the gaping budgetary holes that will affect everyone in a jurisdiction, there is also the individual cost. What does an oil worker do when he's not allowed to drill for oil?

"Unless we have programs for workers to transition to other sectors that have equivalent compensation and equivalent skill sets, it's going to be a really hard sort of transition," says Ranjit Deshmukh, one of the researchers who contributed to UCSB study. President Joe Biden repeatedly invokes the "well-paid" jobs that green energy can bring. But the wor-



TAFT, US: Mickey Stoner (right) and her daughter in law Bianca Hiler (left) stand outside The Same Place Cafe, the only business that serves dinner along a once thriving Center Street in Taft, Kern County, California. — AFP

ry for oilmen like Noerr is that the efficiencies such technologies inherently bring mean fewer people are required to keep them running.

Once a field of solar panels is installed, it requires little maintenance—unlike the machinery that pumps oil to the surface. "Those green jobs provide economic benefit to the community intermittently, just as surely as the energy they produce is intermittent," he says.

For Holmes, it seems wasteful that the oil remains in the ground while California continues to need it. Why, he wants to know, should the state be importing oil instead of using its own supply?

"The only thing we're transitioning to is foreign oil," he says. "If we're going to use any oil, use ours first." But even here in Taft, some question the wisdom of continuing to use a source of energy that pollutes the air and warms the planet. "We need to seriously consider something else," diner waitress Bianca Hiler says. — AFP

Business

NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

Oil prices continue to rise; US government averts shutdown

US consumer confidence drops amid elevated energy costs

KUWAIT: Consumer confidence in the United States fell again in September, with the Conference Board index coming in at 103.00 from 108.7 previously. The drop in consumer sentiment comes amid elevated energy prices as well as a crisis regarding governmental funding that was averted in the last second with a stopgap bill. Within the index, present situation actually improved despite higher energy costs coming in at 147.1 from 146.7 previously. However, there was a noticeable drop in the consumer expectations portion, which declined to 73.7 from 83.3, indicating the level of worry regarding the near-term future.

Gross Domestic Product in the United States grew at an annual rate of 2.1 percent in the second quarter meeting market expectations. Despite the final figure remaining the same, consumer spending was revised downwards while non-resident fixed investments, exports, and inventory investment were revised higher.

Unemployment claims in the United States rose to 204,000 from 202,000 previously but came in better than expected and remains resilient against high interest rates. Last week's print was the lowest since January while current numbers also indicate that the labor market remains historically tight. The Fed have continuously lamented that the labor market was contributing to upwards pressure in inflation, and more readings like this are likely to reinforce expectations made the majority of Fed voting members that an additional rate hike is needed by year-end to combat inflation.

PCE inflation softer

Headline PCE inflation came in at 3.5 percent from 3.4 percent previously with the monthly figure rising to 0.4 percent versus 0.2 percent on the back of higher energy prices. Core PCE, which excludes energy and food, fell to 3.9 percent from 4.3 percent previously and to 0.1 percent versus 0.2 percent on a monthly basis. Furthermore, consumer spending drastically fell to 0.4 percent from 0.9 percent previously as student loan repayments resume in October. Core PCE has been the Fed's preferred gauge for inflation and monetary policy decisions, and the drop in numbers is certainly a welcome sign. However, the recent rise in oil prices is expected to add upwards pressure on inflation and could trickle down to ser-

Rates - October 1st, 2023

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.0653	1.0486	1.0655	1.0570	1.0400	1.0700	1.0622
GBP	1.2242	1.2108	1.2271	1.2197	1.2100	1.2400	1.2210
JPY	148.36	148.24	149.72	149.35	146.90	150.00	147.09
CHF	0.9062	0.9058	0.9225	0.9149	0.8900	0.9200	0.9056

vices and other measures included in the core report. Markets have dimmed down their bets for a rate hike unlike the majority of Fed committee voters, pricing in no hikes by year-end and anticipating a cut as early as July 2024.

Shutdown averted

President Joe Biden signed a short-term funding bill passed by congress to avoid an imminent shutdown of the government, with the stopgap bill extending the deadline until November 17. The move comes after weeks of disagreement between House Republicans and their counterparts in congress. The bill includes natural disaster aid but no additional funding for Ukraine. Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy is facing increased scrutiny by conservatives after supporting the stopgap bill, indicating that the political turmoil in congress regarding a long-term solution is still a problem. The greenback extended gains over the week, last trading at 106.22

Eurozone inflation falls

Annual inflation in the Euro area fell to lows last seen in October 2021, coming in at 4.3 percent from 5.2 percent previously, which represents a fall to 0.3 percent from 0.5 percent previously on a monthly basis. Furthermore, core inflation, which excludes energy and food, also fell to 4.5 percent from 5.3 percent in August. The print comes amid a series of disappointing data in the eurozone, including contracting PMI figures in both the services and manufacturing sector, as well as a general weakness in consumer demand. The ECB decided to hike interest

rates at the last meeting to take rates to 4 percent, however a weakness in consumer demand and business activities, as well as signals by multiple ECB speakers, have caused markets to price in no further rate hikes. The theme with several key central bank speakers in the eurozone seems to be "higher for longer" with French central bank Governor Francois Villeroy de Galhau stating that it is still "premature" to talk about rate cuts.

The euro ended the week in decline, with the EUR/USD currency pair closing at 1.0570.

Tokyo inflation slows

Inflation in Japan's capital fell to 2.8 percent versus 2.9 percent in the previous reading likely adding further support to the BOJ's ultra-loose policy. Furthermore, core inflation that excludes fresh food came in at 2.5 percent from 2.8 percent previously beating expectations. New governor Kazuo Ueda has continued the path of his predecessors in supporting and defending historically low interest rates, despite bets at certain points from market participants for a shift in policy. Lower inflation readings continue to vindicate the BOJ's decision to maintain policy even when 10-year JG bonds broke through the upper threshold of the central bank's ceiling forcing them to intervene.

The Japanese yen continues its weakening trend, with the USD/JPY pair closing at 149.35.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30900.

Truckers in Germany end strike

BERLIN: Truck drivers who transport goods around Europe ended a weeks-long work stoppage in Germany including a hunger strike after reaching a pay deal at the weekend, labour representatives said. Edwin Atema, head of the Road Transport Due Diligence Foundation, which monitors and addresses violations of work standards in Europe, said Saturday that the striking truckers had seen their demands met.

"All claims and charges against the Graefenhausen drivers are withdrawn, money has been paid and the strike is over," he said on X, formerly known as Twitter, referring to the location in western Germany where some 80 drivers had set up a protest encampment.

Atema, who led the negotiations on the labour side, said the drivers had been previously "invisible" in European road transport supply chains but achieved "fundamental changes" with their industrial action. "Not invisible anymore, but invincible," he said.

The truckers—mostly from Uzbekistan and Georgia, with a handful also from Tajikistan, Ukraine and Turkey—work for several Polish trucking companies owned by the Mazur Group. They said they were not being regularly paid their salaries—at a daily rate of about 80 euros (\$85)—and were charged hefty amounts to even take the jobs in the first place while having to work extremely long hours.

Believing their Polish employers would not respond to their growing desperation amid the 10-week strike, some of the drivers stopped eating last month. They were demanding a total of 500,000 euros in what they said were unpaid wages. —AFP



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 27 SEPTEMBER 2023

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Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	32,312	7,520.81	-0.8%	-2.3%	-7.3%	454,862,391	144,104,949	30,533	17.2	1.2	77.3%
Main Market	9,481	5,717.38	-0.4%	0.4%	2.2%	528,481,176	76,788,113	23,959	12.9	0.8	22.7%
All Share	41,792	6,886.73	-0.7%	-1.7%	-5.6%	983,343,567	220,893,062	54,492	13.6	0.8	100%

Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Banking	25,124	1,680.34	-0.6%	-1.1%	-6.3%	188,179,015	76,135,175	11,985	17.1	1.1	60.12%
Basic Materials	470	833.08	-0.3%	-5.4%	-3.7%	3,234,361	2,170,700	1,136	9.2	2.2	1.13%
Consumer Discretionary	1,046	1,557.17	0.2%	-2.7%	4.7%	86,556,063	16,815,513	5,502	12.9	0.9	2.50%
Consumer Staples	181	595.99	-2.5%	-2.1%	24.2%	2,353,907	1,194,441	134	74.9	1.1	0.43%
Energy	201	961.26	-1.6%	-3.4%	-15.6%	5,707,529	318,848	561	9.3	0.7	0.48%
Financial Services	4,427	1,238.38	-1.1%	-2.5%	-1.5%	461,090,244	71,099,093	13,024	24.7	0.8	10.59%
Health Care	236	475.11	-0.1%	-1.6%	2.9%	19	33.36	12	12.2	0.9	0.56%
Industrials	3,188	920.09	-0.4%	-2.2%	-14.7%	47,896,861	24,060,872	6,578	13.1	0.9	7.63%
Insurance	908	2,221.17	-0.6%	-1.4%	43.2%	1,553,146	239,928	223	10.3	0.9	2.17%
Real Estate	2,521	1,175.57	-1.9%	-3.2%	-2.7%	167,955,837	19,485,166	8,281	14.4	0.6	6.03%
Technology	8	555.81	3.9%	-4.5%	-20.2%	65,222	4,815.78	12	NM	0.7	0.02%
Telecommunications	3,277	1,072.29	-0.9%	-2.9%	-9.2%	16,767,894	8,998,312	3,846	10.0	1.4	7.84%
Utilities	205	489.47	-3.1%	-4.1%	-1.1%	1,983,469	370,188	280	15.0	1.7	0.49%

Top Gainers

Stock	Last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
COAST	106	30.86%	63,057,214	6,558,426	1,917
FTI	64.5	26.47%	121,256	7,029	58
IFAHR	317	20.53%	36,530,223	11,254,463	2,598
JİYAD	23.4	18.18%	39,813,190	938,388	821
ARZAN	181	11.73%	76,705,282	13,705,622	2,280

Top Losers

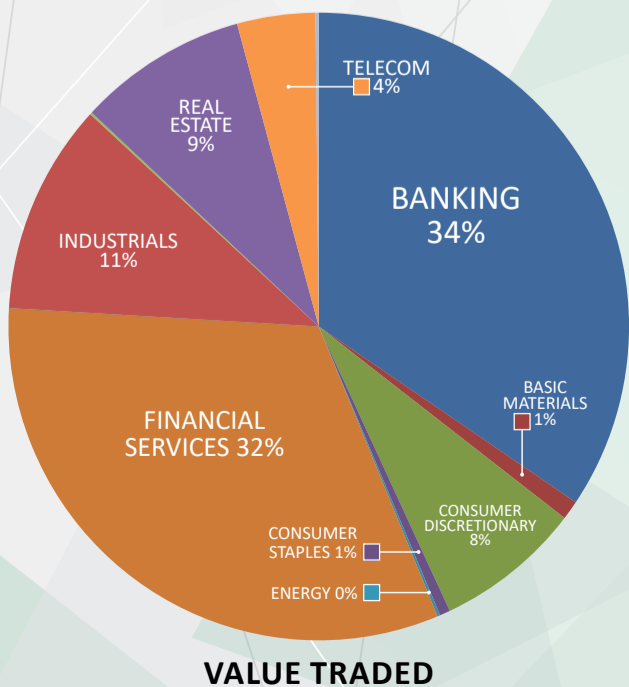
Stock	Last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
FIRSTDUBAI	37.9	-29.81%	11,933,040	502,688	752
WETHAQ	22.4	-22.49%	1,039,032	25,093	59
MARAKEZ	42.8	-18.48%	196,676	8,772	59
EQUIPMENT	27	-17.68%	158,252	4,801	44
PAPER	172	-16.50%	121,244	21,848	30

Top Volume

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
ARZAN	181	11.73%	76,705,282	13,705,622	2,280
IFA	217	5.34%	75,466,696	16,315,124	1,605
COAST	106	30.86%	63,057,214	6,558,426	1,917
KRE	165	2.48%	48,180,967	7,867,943	988
KFH	733	-0.68%	41,823,042	30,551,376	5,552

Top Value

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KFH	733	-0.68%	41,823,042	30,551,376	5,552
IFA	217	5.34%	75,466,696	16,315,124	1,605
ARZAN	181	11.73%	76,705,282	13,705,622	2,280
AGLTY	558	1.45%	25,301,917	13,535,405	3,749
NBK	906	-0.88%	14,546,437	13,208,469	2,005



Market Summary:

- Premier and Main market volume and value increased by 45% and 39%, and, 52% and 48%, respectively.
- Premier and Main indexes rebounded due to a significant increase in buy pressure. Currently moving towards overcoming resistance level.
- Technically, the All Share index closed at 6886, with support levels at 6862, 6830, and 6805, while resistance at 6918. The Premier index closed at 7520, with support levels at 7454, and 7342, while resistance at 7555. The Main index closed at 5717, with support levels at 5696, 5675, and 5641, while resistance at 5723.

Business

Last-gasp deal averts US govt shutdown

Funding bill to keep federal agencies running for another 45 days

WASHINGTON: The US Congress passed an 11th-hour funding bill Saturday to keep federal agencies running for another 45 days and avert a costly government shutdown—although the deal left out aid to war-torn Ukraine requested by President Joe Biden.

Three hours before the midnight deadline, the Senate voted to keep the lights on through mid-November with a resolution that had advanced earlier from the House of Representatives in a day of high-stakes brinkmanship on Capitol Hill.

The last-ditch “continuing resolution” was pitched by House Speaker Kevin McCarthy as millions of public workers looked set to be sent home unpaid, pending government functions from military operations to food aid to federal policymaking. “Tonight, bipartisan majorities in the House and Senate voted to keep the government open, preventing an unnecessary crisis that would have inflicted needless pain on millions of hardworking Americans,” Biden said in a statement.

But he berated McCarthy and the House Republicans for reneging on spending levels agreed with the White House months ago—a major reason for the shutdown near-miss—and for stripping out support for Ukraine. “I fully expect the speaker will keep his commitment to the people of Ukraine and secure passage of the support needed to help Ukraine at this critical moment,” said the president, who signed the measure late Saturday, according to the White House.

The shutdown crisis was largely triggered by a small group of hardline Republicans who had defied their own party leadership to scupper various temporary funding proposals as they pressed for deep spending cuts. The group of 21 hardliners had threat-

ened to remove McCarthy as speaker if a stopgap measure they opposed was passed with Democrat support, and many Washington watchers were expecting the speaker to have to fight for his job in the coming weeks.

Time to negotiate

One of the group, Lauren Boebert, declined to say after the House vote whether she and her colleagues would try to force McCarthy out, but she was clearly unhappy with the outcome. “There are too many members here who are comfortable doing things the way they’ve been done since the mid-’90s,” she told reporters. “And that’s why we’re sitting at \$33 trillion in debt.” McCarthy sought to convey confidence both about his own future and the prospects for securing a final agreement by the new mid-November deadline.

“In 45 days we should get our work all done,” he said, while seeming to offer a hand to the hardliners, saying, “I welcome those 21 back in.” Arming and funding Kyiv in its war against the Russian invasion has been a key policy plank for the Biden administration and, while the stopgap is temporary, it does raise questions over the political viability of renewing the multibillion-dollar flow of assistance. McCarthy said Russia’s invasion was “horrendous,” but insisted there could be “no blank check” for Ukraine. “I have a real concern of what’s going to happen long term, but I don’t want to waste any money,” he said. With tensions running high as Democrats pored over the text of McCarthy’s proposal, one of their lawmakers, Jamaal Bowman, triggered a fire alarm in a building housing congressional offices an hour before the House vote.



WASHINGTON: The US Capitol is seen at dusk as the House meets to vote on a rules package for the 118th Congress, in Washington, DC, on Jan 9, 2023. — AFP

Bowman’s spokesman insisted it was an accident, but Republicans accused him of seeking to delay proceedings. If Congress had failed to keep the government open, the closures would have begun just after midnight (0400 GMT Sunday) and would have delayed salaries for millions of federal employees and military personnel. Among the im-

mediate effects of a shutdown would have been the majority of national parks—from the iconic Yosemite and Yellowstone in the west to Florida’s Everglades swamp—shutting to the public from Sunday. The stopgap measure buys legislators time to negotiate full-year spending bills for the rest of fiscal 2024. — AFP

Nigeria announces measures to offset rising cost of living

ABUJA: Nigeria’s President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Sunday proposed a temporary minimum wage hike and more cheap gas-powered public transport among other measures to help offset the impact of his economic reforms as labor unions threatened a national strike.

Speaking in a national broadcast to mark Nigeria’s 63rd independence day anniversary, Tinubu’s announcement came after he ended a long-standing fuel subsidy that cost the government billions of dollars a year and also liberalized the naira currency. Government officials say the reforms were needed to revive Africa’s largest economy and investors have applauded them, but Nigerians are struggling with a tripling of fuel prices and inflation now at 25 percent.

“Reform may be painful, but it is what greatness and the future require,” the president said. “There is no joy in seeing the people of this nation shoulder burdens that should have been shed years ago. I wish today’s difficulties did not exist. But we must endure if we are to reach the good side of our future.” The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) -- the two major unions who repre-

sent industries from aviation workers and nurses to teachers and bankers—called an indefinite strike for October 3 because they say the government failed to address their concerns. There was no immediate response from unions on the new measures announced by Tinubu, though they have promised to go ahead with the planned strike.

In his broadcast, Tinubu said after talks with labor and businesses, the federal minimum wage for the lower-grade workers would increase by 25,000 naira a month (\$32) for the next six months. He said the government was also preparing to speed up the introduction of gas-powered buses for public transport, which would lower the costs of transport—one of the main complaints for Nigerians since the fuel subsidy removal. Social security cash transfers to the poorest Nigerians would also be extended and investments made available for small businesses, he said.

Tinubu—a former Lagos governor elected in February in a highly contested ballot—has promised to bring in more investment to Nigeria and tackle the country’s complex security challenges, from jihadists to bandit militias carrying out mass kidnappings.

The Nigerian leader has also sought to shake up the country’s central bank, whose previous director critics say was reasonable for unorthodox monetary policies that kept investors away.

The former central bank director has been replaced and arrested. The fuel subsidy had been in place for decades and kept petrol prices at artificially low. But



ABUJA: Nigeria’s President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Sunday proposed a temporary minimum wage hike and more cheap gas-powered public transport among other measures to help offset the impact of his economic reforms. — AFP

the measure costs the government billions because though Nigeria is a major oil producer, it imports most of its fuel because of a lack of functioning refineries. The NLC and TUC went on strike in August over the same issues, with many businesses, government offices, markets, banks closed for a day in the capital Abuja. But the call to strike met with more mixed response from businesses in the economic capital Lagos. — AFP

Software bug causes overheating issue in iPhone 15: Apple

CUPERTINO: Apple on Saturday said it has identified a few issues that can cause new iPhones to run hotter than expected, including a bug in the iOS 17 software which will be fixed in a coming update.

The company said that the new phones may feel warmer in the first few days “after setting up or restoring the device because of increased background activity” following complaints from some consumers.

“Another issue involves some recent updates to third-party apps that are causing them to overload the system”. Apple said it is working with app developers on fixes that are in the process of being rolled out.

The third-party apps causing the issue include the game Asphalt 9, Meta’s Instagram, and Uber. Instagram already fixed the issue with its app on September 27. The coming iOS 17 bug fix will not reduce performance to address the iPhone’s temperature. The company said that the iPhone 15 Pro and Pro Max do not suffer from overheating due to the design, but rather the new titanium shells. Apple also said the issue is not a safety or injury risk, and will not affect the phone’s long-term performance. —Agencies



India’s private space sector skyrockets

PARIS: When Indian entrepreneur Awais Ahmed founded his satellite startup in Bangalore in 2019, his country was still a year away from opening the space industry to the private sector. “When we started, there was absolutely no support, no momentum,” said Ahmed, who was 21 when he founded Pixxel, a company deploying a constellation of Earth imaging satellites.

Since then, the private space sector has taken off in India, joining a rapidly growing global market. There are now 190 Indian space start-ups, twice as many as a year earlier, with private investments jumping by 77 percent between 2021 and 2022, according to Deloitte consultancy.

“A lot of Indian investors were not willing to look at space technology, because it was too much of a risk earlier,” Ahmed said in an interview with AFP. “Now you can see more and more companies raising more investment in India, and more and more companies have started coming up now,” he added.

Pixxel makes hyperspectral imaging satellites—technology that captures a wide spectrum of light to provide details that are invisible to ordinary cameras. The company says it is on a mission to build “a health monitor for the planet”: it can track climate risks such as floods, wildfires or methane leaks. Pixxel had initially sought to use rockets from the state-run Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO).

“I remember having a conversation with someone in ISRO. We were trying to book a launch and they said, ‘Look, we don’t even have a procedure to launch an Indian satellite. But if you were a foreign company, then basically there’s a process’, which didn’t make sense when we started,” Ahmed said. Pixxel ended up having to hire US rocket firm SpaceX to launch its first two satellites. Pixxel has raised \$71 million from investors, including \$36



This screen grab made from video footage from ISRO via AFPTV taken on July 14, 2023 shows an ISRO rocket carrying the Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft lifting off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, an island off the coast of southern Andhra Pradesh state. — AFP

million from Google, which will allow the company to launch six more satellites next year. The start-up has also won a contract with a US spy agency, the National Reconnaissance Office, to provide hyperspectral images.

Modest budget

Prior to the 2020 opening up of the sector, “all Indian space activity was under the supervision of the ISRO space agency, which managed absolutely everything,” said Isabelle Sourbes-Vergier, an Indian space sector expert at France’s National Scientific Research Centre. The ISRO budget remains relatively modest at \$1.9 billion in 2022, six times smaller than the Chinese space program. Despite its limited resources, India’s space program has made huge strides, culminating with the landing of a rover on the Moon’s unexplored south pole in August.

The country also launched a probe towards the Sun at the start of this month and is preparing a three-day crewed mission into Earth’s orbit next year. Before the reform, private companies could only act as suppliers for the agency. “It was no longer tenable because there is too much to do,” Sourbes-Vergier said. India deepened its reform of the sector in April, unveiling a new space policy that limits the ISRO’s work to research and development while promoting “greater private sector participation in the entire value chain of the Space Economy”. India says it accounts for two percent of the \$386 billion global space economy, a share it hopes to increase to nine percent by 2030. The market is expected to grow to \$1 trillion by 2040. Indian companies have an edge when it comes to costs as the country boasts a large number of highly qualified engineers with lower salaries than their counterparts abroad. — AFP

Biden announces three more new offshore drilling

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden’s administration on Friday announced it would auction three new oil and gas leases in the Gulf of Mexico, triggering a furious reaction from environmental groups who said the move would accelerate climate change. Biden, who faces re-election next year, has repeatedly broken his promise made as a candidate to end new drilling on federal land and water, and the issue could be a drag on his ability to energize Democratic voters, especially youth, in 2024.

Biden did order a pause on new drilling soon after taking office, but analysts say he has been restricted in what he can accomplish because of hostile court decisions and the delicate balance of power in Congress. And Friday’s move was also denounced by advocates of the fossil fuel industry because it represented a significant reduction on the number of lease sales planned under former Republican president Donald Trump — 47 off all US coastal areas in the 2024-2029 period.

It “includes a maximum of three potential oil and gas lease sales — the fewest oil and gas lease sales in history — in the Gulf of Mexico Program Area scheduled in 2025, 2027 and 2029,” said a statement from the Interior Department. The statement added that the government is constrained by the terms of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) -- Biden’s signature climate-investment law passed last year — which makes the development of new offshore wind farms contingent on also offering at least 60 million acres of oil and gas leases in the previous year. This rider was added by Democratic Senator Joe Manchin, an ardent backer of fossil fuels, as a condition of his support, which was in turn crucial to pass the bill.

“The Biden-Harris administration is committed to building a clean energy future that ensures America’s energy independence,” said Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland. “The proposed final program, which represents the smallest number of oil and gas lease sales in history, sets a course for the department to support the growing offshore wind industry and protect against the potential for environmental damage and adverse impacts to coastal communities.”

Those reassurances failed to satisfy climate action activists. “This decision is beyond disappointing, as Americans face the impacts of the growing climate crisis through more frequent and intense fires, droughts, hurricanes, and floods,” said Beth Lowell, vice president for the United States of the non-profit Oceana.

“President Biden is unfortunately showing the world that it’s okay to continue to prioritize polluters over real climate solutions.” Mattea Mrkusic, energy transition policy lead for the nonprofit Evergreen Action added: “Experts have warned us for years that any new fossil fuel production is incompatible with limiting warming to 1.5 C degrees — and just this week the International Energy Agency reaffirmed that these kinds of fossil fuel projects are not needed to meet our energy needs.”

Mrkusic added new drilling wouldn’t just accelerate climate change but also subject frontline communities to deadly pollution. The American Petroleum Institute on the other hand slammed the auctions for being too “restrictive.” “At a time when inflation runs rampant across the country, the Biden administration is choosing failed energy policies that are adding to the pain Americans are feeling at the pump,” said API President and CEO Mike Sommers. — AFP



In this aerial image from a drone, tug boats tow the semi-submersible drilling platform Noble Danny through the Port Aransas Channel into the Gulf of Mexico.

Lifestyle



Beatboxers Conundrum (left) and Frosty compete in the solo semi final during the "New Urban Era Beatbox Battles" competition, at the ATIK nightclub in Tamworth, central England. — AFP photos



French beatbox collective EOG, perform during the "New Urban Era Beatbox Battles" competition.



Loop station artists Smonal and Yaswede (front) compete during the "New Urban Era Beatbox Battles" competition.



Beatboxer Jack Hobbs aka "Hobbit" poses for a picture during the "New Urban Era Beatbox Battles" competition.



Beatboxer Conundrum competes in the solo final during the "New Urban Era Beatbox Battles" competition.



Beatboxer Stan competes in the solo final during the "New Urban Era Beatbox Battles" competition.

Beatboxers from Britain and beyond have been showcasing their skills at a nightclub in Birmingham, central England, with an influx of newcomers meeting each other for the first time since the pandemic. "A lot of people started battling online and... now we're out of lockdown, they've come into the beatbox scene and started enjoying the community," explained Vic Brown, of New Urban Era, which organized last weekend's event in Tamworth.

Many who are new to the scene had never met in person, he said, and now "they can see these people in person who they've only seen online." "People are coming from different countries. It's bringing the beatbox community together again," added Brown. Beatboxing—which sees a performer simulate the sounds and rhythms of percussion instruments or a drum machine with their voice—dates back centuries in various cultures and guises.



Loop station artists Smonal and Yaswede compete during the "New Urban Era Beatbox Battles" competition.

It has become more widespread in mainstream culture, even as a stand-alone art form, after emerging as part of the hip-hop explosion in New York in the 1970s and 80s. Today, France is a leading home for beatboxing, while Britain brings its own musical pedigree to the technique.



Loop station artist Smonal celebrates as he wins the loop station final during the "New Urban Era Beatbox Battles" competition.

Beatboxers battle in Britain as global community grows

"France is absolutely killing the scene, and (the) UK scene, it's just huge as well," said Alex Hackett, 30, among those competing in Tamworth under the artist name Abh. "Obviously the UK culture around music—because we invented garage, drum and bass, and grime and all this—you see all these music styles coming together in the UK beatbox scene," he said. "I think it's really inspirational for anybody who comes out of the country."

Luke Chong—beatbox name Handfx—hails from Singapore and said performing in the UK event so far from home had been enlightening. "Singaporean beatboxers never really have the opportunity to really go overseas to

visit other communities and other battles so, to me, this is an eye-opening experience," he told AFP.

"I got to meet a lot of people, a lot of new faces, and I learnt a lot of techniques and skills," he said. Meanwhile Londoner Tommy Lewis, 22 -- beatbox name Tmy—praised the musical technique for allowing performers to "let all the creative energy within you just come out without the need of anything external". "I truly believe there's no limit to what you can do with beatboxing and it will continue to grow," he added.—AFP



People stand outside the ATIK nightclub during the New Urban Era Beatbox Battles competition.

Celebrated Syrian author Khaled Khalifa dies at 59

Syrrian writer and veteran government critic Khaled Khalifa has died of cardiac arrest at the age of 59 at his home in Damascus, a close friend told AFP. Khalifa, who hailed from Maryamin in northwestern Aleppo province, was celebrated for his novels, television screenplays and newspaper columns, and honored with several of the Arab world's top literary awards. He "died in his home alone in Damascus" on Saturday, said journalist Yaroub Aleesa, who had spent time with the author during his final days. "We called him repeatedly and he didn't respond. When we went to his home, we found him dead on the sofa."

Doctors at the Abbassiyin Hospital in Damascus said the cause of death was a heart attack. Khalifa gained fame as a writer of several popular Syrian TV series in the early 1990s. He was known as a staunch opponent of the ruling Baath party and his columns criticizing the authorities.

But despite his well-known stance, he chose to remain in the country after the 2011 civil war broke out with the repression of protests against the government. "I am staying because this is my country," he said in a 2019 interview. "I was born here, I live here and I want to die here!"

His 2006 novel "In Praise of Hatred" was shortlisted for the International Prize for Arab Fiction—often dubbed the Arab Booker prize—and was translated into six languages. The novel recounts the story of a young Syrian woman from Aleppo who escapes her sequestered life by joining a jihadist organization. In 2013, his novel "No Knives in the Kitchens of this City" won



Writer Khaled Khalifa speaks during an interview with AFP at his home in the Syrian capital Damascus. — AFP

the Naguib Mahfouz literature prize, Egypt's top accolade for writers. It focuses on the lives of Syrians under the rule of the Baath party headed by President Bashar al-Assad. The writer's death sparked a wave of condolences on social media from fellow writers and members of Syria's exiled opposition.

"Goodbye, you kind man," wrote Syrian writer and academic Salam Kawakibi. Khalifa was expected to be buried later on Sunday in Damascus, though details of the funeral had yet to be disclosed.—AFP

Turkish film festival cancelled over censorship controversy

An international film festival in Turkey has been cancelled after controversy over a documentary about judicial purges that followed an attempted coup in 2016, authorities said Friday.

The dispute centres on "The Decree", a documentary about the plight of a doctor and a teacher affected by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's sweeping crackdown after he survived the failed military coup.

The film was initially selected for Antalya's "Golden Orange" film festival, but excluded from the competition last week, prompting an outcry from filmmakers who condemned the move as censorship.

The festival's jury members threatened to pull out if the film was not readmitted and said they "reject the approach that looks for incriminating elements in a film and the normalization of censorship". The organizers gave in and reinstated the film, but it was excluded again after the culture ministry waded in. "I regret to inform film lovers that we have cancelled our festival, which was set to take place between October 7-14, due to external developments", the mayor of Antalya said in footage shared on social media.—AFP



(From left) Osage Nation Princess Gianna "Gigi" Sieke, Osage Nation Princess Lawren "Lulu" Goodfox, Chad Renfro, Scott George, Julie O'Keefe, Brandy Lemon, film director Martin Scorsese, Osage Nation Principal Chief Geoffrey Standing Bear, Julie Standing Bear, Christopher Cote, and Addie Roanhorse attend the premiere of Apple Original Films' "Killers of the Flower Moon" at Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center in New York on Sept 27, 2023.

New film on historical Native American murders reflects universal themes: Scorsese

Martin Scorsese, best known for his action-packed thrillers and gangster epics, now depicts an investigation into the murders of Native Americans in his latest film, "Killers of the Flower Moon", which premiered in New York on Wednesday. Adapted from a nonfiction book of the same name, "Killers of the Flower Moon" tells the true story of the 1920s murders and disappearances of members of Osage Nation on oil-rich lands in the central US state of Oklahoma.

At a red carpet event at Manhattan's Lincoln Center, Scorsese told AFP his film about the 100-year-old crimes touched on broad themes. "It's about a clash of cultures, misunderstanding each other, the sense of entitlement—and it could be (about) not only Americans," Scorsese told AFP about the film, which he shot on Oklahoma's prairies with around 40 Osage Native Americans included in the cast.

The \$200-million film stars Leonardo DiCaprio as Ernest Burkhart, a man in love with a Native American woman (played by Lily Gladstone) who finds himself embroiled in a plot hatched by oil-hungry cattle magnate William

Hale, played by Robert De Niro. An FBI agent, Jesse Plemons, is assigned to solve the murders. "Killers of the Flower Moon" will be released in North American cinemas on Oct 20, before being made available on Apple TV+.

The violence and crimes depicted in the film "could be in any part of the world," Scorsese said. "It just so happens to be a story that actually reflects through the millennia. It's good to tell this kind of story now because people are trying to shy away from this stuff. Show it, talk about it," the "Gangs of New York" and "Taxi Driver" director added.

American writer David Grann, whose book the film was based on, told AFP that the story covers "one of the most monstrous crimes and racial injustices committed by white settlers against Native Americans for their oil money". "What it is fundamentally about is what happens when greed is fused together with the dehumanization of other people," the New Yorker journalist said. "And what that led to were these genocidal crimes." —AFP



Zookeeper dies after apparent lion attack in Japan

A zookeeper at a Japanese safari park died after a lion apparently attacked him as he tried to bring the animal to its cage, police said Friday. Kenichi Kato, a 53-year-old worker at Tohoku Safari Park in the Fukushima region, was found bleeding from his neck and unconscious inside the lion's cage Thursday afternoon, a local police spokesman told AFP. "It is believed that

he was feeding a lion," the spokesman, who declined to be named, said. A senior park official earlier said Kato was trying to lure a lion to a cage by using food, but did not lock a door that should have separated him from the big cat.

"The process is that we open the door, and place the food. Once the food is placed, the door is to be closed and locked," Norichika Kumakubo, vice-president of the park, told local reporters Thursday evening. But "the door was open at the time", he said. Kato was a veteran staff member who worked with carnivores such as lions, tigers and bears, local media said.—AFP



ELIE SAAB SHOWS SPRING 2024 READY-TO-WEAR COLLECTION AT PARIS FASHION WEEK

Saudi model Amira Al-Zuhair had all eyes on her as she walked the runway for famed Lebanese designer Elie Saab as he showcased the label's Spring 2024 ready-to-wear collection at Paris Fashion Week on Saturday. The model showcased two unique-but-breezy looks on the runway for the collection titled 'Moonlight Shadow.'

In the show notes, the label described the Elie Saab woman as, "always ready for moonlight gatherings in radiant day looks that bring blissful glimmers to the evening." "Flowing open-back summer dresses with scalloped hemlines are garden-fresh in oversized white English lace. Wisps of citrus organza flowers flourish from the monochromatic hemlines of billowing silk bomb-

er jackets. Chunky tromp-l'oeil sapphires, rubies and platinum chains trace a white kaftan with a sleek cape," it continued. "Of course, the party is never complete without raffia leather platforms, mini top-handle bags and extravagant gemstone jewelry."
— www.arabnews.com



Saudi model Amira Al-Zuhair presents a creation for Elie Saab during a show as part of the Paris Fashion Week Womenswear Spring/Summer 2024 in Paris. — AFP photos



Models present creations for Elie Saab during a show as part of the Paris Fashion Week Womenswear Spring/Summer 2024 in Paris.



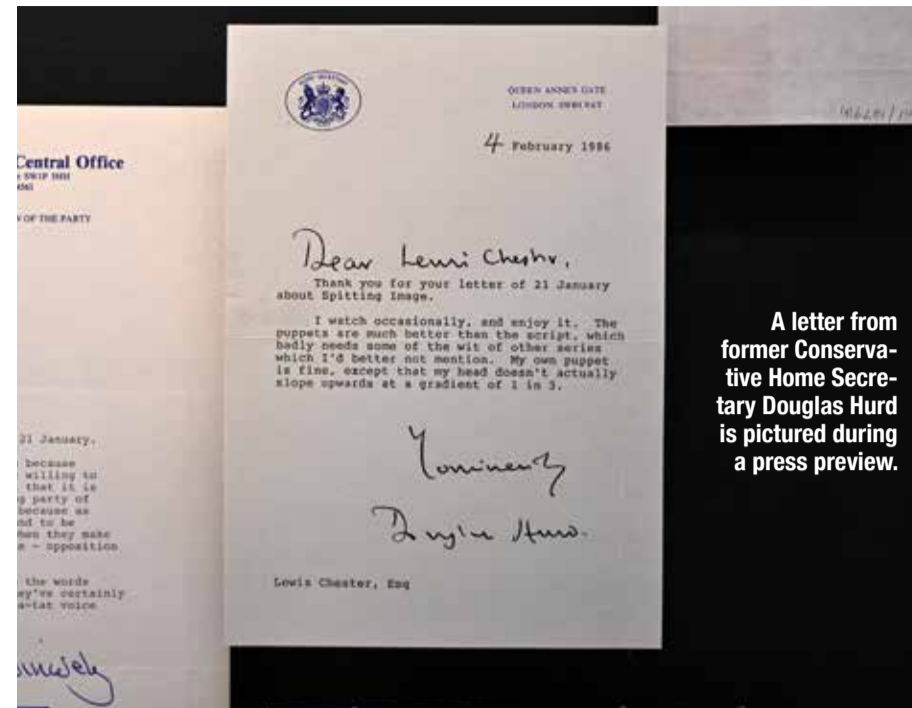
Lifestyle



Sketches of puppets are pictured during a press preview.



A puppet figure depicting former England footballer Gary Lineker is pictured during a press preview.



A letter from former Conservative Home Secretary Douglas Hurd is pictured during a press preview.

UK SATIRE 'SPITTING IMAGE' CELEBRATED IN NEW EXHIBITION

Margaret Thatcher wore a man's suit and smoked a cigar, Ronald Reagan was a liability who came close to causing nuclear war while Queen Elizabeth II's mother slugged from a half-empty gin bottle. At the height of its 1980s popularity, British satirical television program "Spitting Image" pulled in 15 million viewers each week. Now, nearly 40 years after it first aired, puppets of some of its best-known targets including Thatcher, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and Princess Diana have gone on display at an exhibition in Cambridge. Created by British caricaturists Peter Fluck and Roger Law, Spitting Image was merciless in its depiction of the leading public figures of the day.



An image of the puppet depicting former England footballer Paul Gascoigne is pictured during a press preview.

Producer John Lloyd said he had been determined to work on the show as soon as he heard about it and immediately got in contact. "They said, 'we already have two producers we don't need you, thank you very much', so I said, 'I'll work for nothing'", he told AFP.

Spitting Image quickly became a roaring success, with people from all walks of life tuning in every Sunday

a scene in which Major holds a plate of the vegetable. "I met him once and he was a tall rather good-looking guy but once you see the puppet suddenly he's short and he's grey and he's boring," recalled Lloyd. "He's nothing like him in real life but somehow it captures the essence of him."

'Anarchic'

Major's predecessor Thatcher was rumored not to be particularly interested in her own long-running portrayal. She was routinely depicted as an all-powerful woman surrounded by weak and bumbling male ministers. The exhibition, which opens Saturday at Cambridge University Library, also includes original scripts, sketches and letters of complaint received during the program's 12-year run. In one letter, politician David Steel objected to the way the show had his puppet "gazing up adoringly" at political ally David Owen and calling him "dear".

"I would also like to know why my puppet is so small when I am in fact noticeably taller than (then Labor leader) Neil Kinnock," the irritated Steel wrote. Norman Tebbit, one of Thatcher's most loyal and favored ministers, however,

was very happy with his leather-clad, knuckleduster-wielding puppet. "He found it very funny. It made him a working class hero," Lloyd said. Exhibition curator Chris Burgess said the show had managed to "combine the political with the every day, the anarchic, the surreal, the ridiculous. "It is the most popular satire that's ever been produced," he said.

For Lloyd much of the program's success lay in Fluck and Law's ability to take someone that everyone else saw as ordinary in appearance and "just to catch the way the nose is or a little look in the eye. "Suddenly you can never take them seriously again."

The program was often accused of going over the top, but Lloyd said this so-called cruelty really boiled down to playground insults and a universal sensitivity about physical appearance. "There's an odd thing about politicians, you can say, you cheated on your tax returns, you had affairs with 15 people... but say you have big ears and it's 'that's really unfair'," he said.

'Our Miss Piggy'

There was controversy when the show satirized the royal family including

Queen Elizabeth II who despite the outraged headlines was portrayed as "sensible and liberal minded". "No-one had directly in three dimensions caricatured the royal family, particularly not the queen," said Lloyd. "The director, Peter Harris, had done The Muppets before and he used to say, 'the queen, darlings, is our Miss Piggy', the heroine of the show'."

Then as now, Lloyd said, Britain was a divided society with families at odds with one another over the policies of Thatcher's Conservative government—just as they have been more recently over Brexit. "Now people are so quick to take sides. I think that's partly because there isn't enough satire on British television." But he said he was happy that Spitting Image had been able to wade into the middle of it all and make people laugh.

One man even wrote to the program to say he had been planning to kill himself but laughed so much at that week's program he decided he "could carry on". "It was fun. I don't think we made any difference but we at least got people to listen," he said.—AFP

Five things to know about the Nobel Prizes

Since 1901, Nobel prizes have been awarded to men, women and organizations for work that has led to great advances for mankind, in line with the wishes of inventor Alfred Nobel. The winners of this year's prizes will be announced daily from Monday, October 2 through October 9. Here are five things to know about the prizes and their creator.



This file photo taken on December 10, 2019 shows a visitor standing in front of a bust of the Nobel Prize founder, Alfred Nobel prior the Nobel awards ceremony at the Concert Hall in Stockholm, Sweden. --AFP

In absentia

Since 1901, six Nobel peace laureates have been prevented from attending the prize ceremony in Oslo. In 1936, German journalist and pacifist Carl Von Ossietzky was detained in a Nazi concentration camp. In 1975, Soviet leaders refused to allow Russian dissident Andrei Sakharov to travel to Oslo to pick up his prize. He was represented by his wife Yelena Bonner.

In 1983, Polish union leader Lech Walesa declined the invitation to come to Oslo for fear he would not be allowed back into Poland. In 1991, Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi was under house arrest when she won the prize. Given permission by the junta to travel, she also declined for a fear of not being able to return to her country. In 2010, Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo was in prison. His chair remained emp-

ty, where the prize was placed. In 2022, Belarusian human rights campaigner Ales Bialiatski was in prison. He was represented by his wife Natalia Pinchuk.

Posthumous awards

Since 1974, the statutes of the Nobel Foundation stipulate that the prize may not be given posthumously. But a person may be awarded if she or he dies between the time of the announcement in October and the formal prize ceremony in December. Before the change, only two people had won a Nobel posthumously.

One was Dag Hammarskjold, the Swedish secretary general of the United Nations who died in a plane crash in 1961 but was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize later the same year. And in 1931, the Nobel Literature Prize was awarded posthumously to another

Swede, Erik Axel Karlfeldt. In 2011, the Medicine Prize committee selected Ralph Steinman of Canada, unaware that he had passed away just three days before the prize announcement. Nevertheless, the foundation decided to give him the award.

Few female laureates

While female representation among winners has been steadily increasing in the last decades compared to the early years, the 60 women Nobel laureates still account for around just six percent of winners. But things are getting better. Since 2000, 31 women have been awarded all prizes combined, almost three times as many as in the previous two decades. In 2009, five women received a Nobel prize, including the first female laureate in economics, American Elinor Ostrom—a record yet to be equaled.

Economics has had the fewest women laureates at 2.2 percent, lower than the science prizes combined, which have seen 3.7 percent women laureates. While slightly more evenly distributed, literature is still largely a male affair with 14.2 percent women among laureates, with the peace prize faring slightly better at 16 percent.

The Nobel is an institution "for men", 2022 literature laureate Annie Ernaux of France told AFP. Nevertheless, the first person to win the Nobel prize twice was Marie Curie, in 1903 in physics and in 1911 in chemistry.

Missing mathematics

There has long been debate over why no prize was created for mathematics. There were longstanding rumors that it was in part because Alfred Nobel's lover had an affair with mathematician Gosta Mittag-Leffler—but in the 1980s, researchers were able to put that theory to rest. So why is there no prize? There are two likely explanations. In 1895, when Nobel wrote his will, a maths prize already existed in Sweden and he saw no need for a second one. And at the beginning of the 20th century, the applied sciences were in public and scientific favor. The contribution of mathematics to humanity was not as obvious as it is today.

Lavish prize ceremonies

The prizes are announced in early October, but the award ceremonies take place in Oslo and Stockholm every year on December 10, the anniversary of the 1896 death of prize creator and inventor Alfred Nobel. In Stockholm—where the laureates for medicine, physics, chemistry, literature and economics are hon-

ored—the prize ceremony is followed by a glitzy banquet at City Hall for around 1,300 guests, including King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia, the diplomatic corps, academics and business leaders.



This file photo shows a plaque showing Swedish chemist, engineer, inventor, businessman and philanthropist Alfred Nobel (1833-1896) on the podium during preparations ahead of the Nobel Prize award ceremony for literature, science and economy at the Concert Hall in Stockholm, Sweden.

Meanwhile, in Oslo, around 1,000 guests, including King Harald and Queen Sonja, diplomats and celebrities, attend the prize ceremony at City Hall followed by a smaller banquet at the Grand Hotel. Russia's ambassador has been barred from the Stockholm ceremony since 2022 due to the war in Ukraine. Norway's Nobel Institute has meanwhile maintained its policy of inviting all ambassadors.—AFP



This file photo shows a bust of Alfred Nobel next to the podium as preparations are under way before the start of the Nobel Prize ceremony in the Golden Hall of the City Hall of Stockholm.--AFP photos



Picture dated 1925 shows Professor Marie Curie working in the laboratory of Paris university.



Picture taken on December 10, 1975 shows Soviet human rights activist Yelena Bonner (right), wife of Soviet physicist Andrei Sakharov, shaking hands with King Olav V of Norway (left) as she accepts the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of her husband who was forbidden to travel himself to Norway for the award ceremony.

Sports

McIlroy, Rahm put Europe on brink of Ryder Cup glory

Americans need to win all seven remaining matches to tie the event

ROME: Rory McIlroy and Jon Rahm led Europe to the brink of regaining the Ryder Cup from a battling United States on Sunday as the hosts moved to within half a point of victory, leading 14-7 despite a blistering American charge. Luke Donald's Europe started the day four points from lifting the trophy they lost in a record-breaking 19-9 thrashing at Whistling Straits two years ago.

They raced out of the blocks in the Rome sunshine before the USA enjoyed a surge to quieten the huge home crowds, at one point leading in seven matches and tied in the other. The Americans need to win all seven remaining matches to tie the event and break the record for the biggest Sunday Ryder Cup comeback, having trailed 10.5-5.5 at the start of the day.

Only four teams have come from behind on Sunday to win since continental Europe joined the event in 1979, with the Americans' 1999 'Battle of Brookline' success and Europe's 'Miracle at Medinah' coming from having been 10-6 behind.

Europe are eyeing a seventh straight Ryder Cup triumph on home soil. Rahm grabbed a crucial half-point from a thrilling opening tussle with Scottie Scheffler by making birdie on the par-five 18th hole after the world number one thinned a chip across the green.

"We've had a couple of really good matches. He's a heck of a competitor," said Spaniard Rahm. You know, my hat's off to him and I'm glad I could get a

halve." Viktor Hovland had already romped to a 4 and 3 victory over Collin Morikawa to take his personal tally for the event to 3.5 points, the same as Rahm.

Patrick Cantlay—the pantomime villain after reports he was refusing to wear a hat over wanting to be paid at the event before his caddie Joe LaCava angered McIlroy on Saturday—edged out Justin Rose 2 and 1.

McIlroy, who ends the week with four points, closed out a 3 and 1 win over Sam Burns despite a late rally from the American. Tyrrell Hatton overcame some nervy late moments to see off British Open champion Brian Harman on the 16th hole and put Europe on the cusp and seven points ahead.

But the resurgent USA, hoping to lift the trophy in Europe for the first time since 1993, were ahead in the next four matches on the course, with Max Homa 1-up on Matthew Fitzpatrick up ahead playing the 18th. The United States also cut Tommy Fleetwood and Robert MacIntyre's leads in the bottom two matches to only one hole to keep their hopes of a stunning turnaround alive. Cantlay jeered -

McIlroy was livid on Saturday over the behaviour of Cantlay's caddie Joe LaCava on the 18th green and said he would use his anger as "fuel for the fire". LaCava reportedly apologised to the Northern Irishman on Sunday morning.

Cantlay was roundly jeered on the first hole and mocked again for a reported protest against the



ROME: Europe's Northern Irish golfer, Rory McIlroy (L) speaks after his four-ball match on the first day of play in the 44th Ryder Cup at the Marco Simone Golf and Country Club in Rome. — AFP

lack of pay for Ryder Cup players, with fans waving their caps at him. But he continued his good form from Saturday, when he made three straight birdies in his match with Wyndham Clark to beat McIlroy and Fitzpatrick, by handing Rose his first loss of the week.

Rahm and Scheffler played out a ding-dong battle in the top match, trading the lead multiple times until

the US star moved 1-up with birdies on the 14th and 15th holes. The European made a wonderful two-putt under pressure on the last green, though, to secure what could prove a crucial half-point and stay unbeaten this week. Hovland eased some of the early tension with a dominant win over Morikawa, before Hatton held off a fighting Harman. — AFP



Kuwait Rhythmic Gymnastics girls team with coach Irina Kovalchuk.

Excellent performance by Kuwait's rhythmic gymnastics girls team

KUWAIT: Kuwait rhythmic gymnastics girls team of the Kuwait Gymnastics Federation had an excellent performance that gave them 6 gold, 6 silver and 7 bronze medals during competition with players who represent well-established countries in the game such as Estonia, Slovakia, Lithuania, Austria, Venezuela, Egypt and host country Hungary.

The team's medals were won by Sarah Al-Bannai, Raya Al-Qassar, Nabila Al-Kharafi, Liyan Behbehani and Talia Behbehani who participated in the first level. Sarah Al-Bannai, born in 2012, won two gold medals in the hoop and ribbon and two silver in the

individual and the mace, meanwhile Raya Al-Qassar, born in 2013, won two gold medals in the free performance and the mace and the silver in general individual and the bronze of the ball.

Nabila Al-Kharafi, born in 2013, won two silver medals in the mace and free performance, and the bronze of the hoop while Liyan Behbehani, born in 2011, won the ribbon gold, and the ball's silver and two bronze in Mace and general individual. Talia Behbehani, born in 2014, won the gold of free performance and three bronze in the ball, hoop and general individual. Kuwait Gymnastics Federation congratulated the athletes for this new achievement which confirms that the level of rhythmic gymnastics of the girls is developing well and lauded the players perseverance and insistence to win and represent Kuwait well at this event. The federation also commended the efforts of coach Irina Kovalchuk in preparing the players to a point that made them reach this outstanding level.

Fiji target last eight at Rugby World Cup

PARIS: Fiji were below par but came from behind to beat Georgia 17-12 on Saturday and stay on course for the Rugby World Cup quarter-finals, a result that pushed Australia closer to a historic elimination. Scotland also kept alive their hopes of reaching the knockout stages by running in 12 tries in a hopelessly one-sided 84-0 bonus-point win against Romania, while Argentina also stayed in contention by defeating Chile. In Bordeaux, Fiji could have condemned two-time champions Australia to a group-stage exit for the first time in their history if the Pacific Islanders had scored four tries and picked up a bonus point against Georgia.

But the Fijians seemed beset by nerves in an error-strewn first half in which they conceded penalties, dropped the ball repeatedly and paid the price for their high-risk passing attack. Their ill-discipline left Georgia 9-0 ahead at half-time but the Fijians gradually hauled themselves back into the game in the second half. Waisea Nayacalevu scored the game's opening try in the second half before Levani Botia barrelled into the Georgian line and then flipped a sublime pass to substitute Vinaya Habosi who tore through a huge hole to score the second try.

"I think one thing about us Fijians is we like to keep the ball alive, we trust each other, I saw my teammate and I understand I have to give the opportunity," said Botia. Frank Lomani contributed seven points with the boot as Fiji moved a step closer to a first quarter-final since 2007. "If I am being honest we were beaten to the punch in the first half. We knew it was going to be a battle. I am just thankful we have the result," said Fiji head coach Simon Raiwalui. The lack of a Fijian bonus point left Eddie Jones' Australia side with a glimmer of hope. The Wallabies were plunged into difficulty by a 22-15 defeat to Fiji earlier in the pool games. Australia and Fiji both face Portugal in their final games. Australia need to pick up a bonus-point win and hope Fiji lose without a point. Even Portugal could sneak in with two remarkable, but seemingly unlikely victories.

Scotland were rampant against Romania and Darcy Graham ran in four tries of his own in Lille as the Scots set up a Pool B showdown against Ireland next Saturday. They will need victory at the Stade de France to at least finish on the same number of points as Ireland, who were hugely impressive in beating reigning champions South Africa last week. — AFP



MOTEGI: Grand Prix winner Prima Pramac Racing rider Jorge Martin of Spain (C), second place Ducati Lenovo Team rider Francesco Bagnaia of Italy (L) and third place Repsol Honda Team rider Marc Marquez of Spain (R) pose on the podium of the MotoGP Japanese Grand Prix at the Mobility Resort Motegi in Motegi. — AFP

Martin 3 points off Bagnaia with wet Japan MotoGP win

MOTEGI: Jorge Martin narrowed the gap on championship leader Francesco Bagnaia to just three points with six races left on Sunday after winning a Japan MotoGP cut short by rain. Starting from pole, the Spaniard had already cut the difference to Italy's Bagnaia to only eight points on Saturday with his third straight sprint victory and fifth of the season.

Ducati's Bagnaia came second in the race, giving the defending world champion 319 points compared to 316 for Martin on Ducati satellite team Pramac. Marc Marquez took third. The 24-lap race began under overcast skies and light rain quickly intensified once the race started in mountainous Motegi.

This made for treacherous conditions with slippery turns and a sea of spray, and most riders came into the pits early on to change tyres. Martin and Bagnaia worked their way back to the top of the field before organizers suspended the race with 12 laps to go.

They attempted a restart but the red flags quickly came out again and the riders were awarded full points according to their positions at the stoppage. "I was committed to do a great result today," Martin said afterwards. "I felt really good with the rear grip and I was able to overtake all of them (after the pit stop) and make this gap to win today," he added. "I'm so so happy. Luckily everybody's away but it was too dangerous to keep going," he added. Bagnaia said he was happy with the result but said he thought he could have overtaken Martin.

"I was hoping to do more laps to catch Jorge because I was trying to gain (on him) lap by lap without pushing too much," he said. "Unluckily, we didn't have time to finish the race... I think, with the time management, I was quite competitive in the last part of the race," he said. Looking ahead, Bagnaia said competition was turning more "difficult" and "intense" as he duelled with Martin for the championship. "I think it will be interesting. Could be a great fight. For sure, it's more intense right now. It's more difficult," he said.

Six-time world champion Marquez on Honda made his first podium finish of the year at the home circuit of the Japanese brand. He started from the third row, but as rain caused other riders to go wide or even into gravel, the Spaniard saw an opening to race to the podium. "I enjoyed (it). In the beginning of the race I was very calm, just tried to understand the tyres," Marquez said. "When I saw that there was water on the track, I started to attack and I was increasing the speed step by step," he said.

South African Brad Binder on KTM crashed out early in the race. He set a lap record on Friday, before Martin renewed it on Saturday. Johann Zarco also crashed and was not allowed to return to the race after he took a shortcut to get back into the pit lane. Last weekend, Martin had already narrowed the difference to 13 points in India in Greater Noida. This was after Bagnaia catastrophically crashed out in hot and humid conditions just over halfway through the race. — AFP



Group photo with winners and officials.

Athbi Al-Hamad wins squash championship

KUWAIT: Qadisiya Sports Club player Athbi Al-Hamad was declared champion of the Fifteenth Squash National Championship, which was concluded Wednesday at the Kuwait Squash Federation's court in South Surrah. Al-Hamad defeated his teammate Ahmad

Al-Tawari 3-0, and Al-Tawari was placed second. Shahab Club player Rashid Buresli was third after defeating Qadisiya's Ibrahim Al-Aryan 3-0. Deputy Chairman of Kuwait Squash Federation Khalid Al-Habeeb and Secretary General Khalid Al-Amran along with Treasurer Mishal Al-Sharqawi awarded the winners.

In under 19 year Qadeer Gul from Khaitan Club was first, followed by Abdelrahman Al-Mughrabi (Qurain) second and Jassim Al-Chareeb (Yarmouk) third. In under 17 year Qurain's Fahad Al-Ghais was first, followed by Talal Gul, and Abdelrahman Al-Sane third.

In under 15 years, Abdulrahman Al-Kandary (Khaitan) was first, Essa Al-Najada (Al-Arabi) second and Abdelmohsen Al-Otaibi (Khaitan) third. In the under 13 years Khaitan's Saleh Al-Kandary was first, Al-Arabi's Abdullah Hussain second and Qurain's Humoud Al-Sawagh third.

In the under 11 years Kuwait's Abdullah Al-Ali was first, Abdullah Al-Sebae second and Kuwait's Abdulrahman Al-Musabbahi third. In the women's competition Sarah Al-Ali was first, Ayesha Al-Methin second and Dunia Jumaah third.

Sports

Own goal seals Spurs win over Liverpool

Referees' body PGMOL admits 'a significant human error'

LONDON: Tottenham snatched a controversial 2-1 win against nine-man Liverpool as Joel Matip's last-gasp own-goal ended the Reds' resistance and the visitors had a goal disallowed that the referees' body admitted should have stood.

Liverpool had Curtis Jones and Diogo Jota sent off as Ange Postecoglou's side shattered Liverpool's unbeaten start to the Premier League season and extended their own thanks to the gripping climax in north London.

Jones was dismissed in the first half before Luis Diaz's goal for Liverpool was incorrectly disallowed for offside by VAR. Referees' body PGMOL later admitted "a significant human error". It said in a statement: "This was a clear and obvious factual error and should have resulted in the goal being awarded through VAR intervention, however, the VAR failed to intervene."

Tottenham took the lead through Son Heung-min's opener and Cody Gakpo equalised just before half-time, but Liverpool were reduced to nine when Jota saw red after the interval. It seemed Liverpool would hold out against the odds until Matip accidentally diverted Pedro Porro's cross into his own net with just seconds left.

Furious Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp said: "I never saw a game like this with the most unfair circumstances, crazy decisions. 'The offside goal. That is not offside when you see it, they drew their lines wrong."

"The first red card, Curtis steps on the ball and goes over. Not a bad tackle. For Jota, first yellow was not a yellow." After a dismal run of one win in their previous 23 meetings with Liverpool in all competitions, Tottenham could finally savour a rare success against the Anfield outfit.

It was Tottenham's first win against Liverpool

since 2017 when Spurs were using Wembley as their temporary home. Postecoglou's men moved above Liverpool into second place, just one point behind Manchester City after the champions' surprise loss at Wolves earlier on Saturday.

Liverpool, beaten for the first time in nine games in all competitions, are one point behind Tottenham in fourth place. For Postecoglou, it was an especially sweet success after he grew up in Australia idolising legendary Liverpool boss Bill Shankly as a childhood fan of the Reds' great 1970s teams.

The former Celtic boss has done a remarkable job reviving Tottenham following their woeful campaign under his predecessor Antonio Conte. While it is too early to label Tottenham as title contenders, they have already beaten Liverpool and Manchester United, as well as drawing with Arsenal, to underline Postecoglou's impressive impact.

"We're still a team in its infancy in terms of the way we want to play, the age and experience of the group," Postecoglou said. "Particularly the manner in which it happened, it leaves the real impact and impression on everyone involved. 'We had to cope with a fair few things and show a different side of our game. Second half I thought we were really good."

Spurs late show

Postecoglou's latest memorable result was kick-started in the 26th minute when Jones' raised boot caught Yves Bissouma on the ankle. Referee Simon Hooper initially gave a yellow card but after being told to consult the pitchside monitor he upgraded the punishment to a red.

After Diaz was wrongly denied by the offside flag, Tottenham took the lead in the 36th minute. James Maddison's sublime pass picked out Richarlison's run down the left flank and the Brazilian's



LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur's Italian goalkeeper #13 Guglielmo Vicario catches the ball during the English Premier League football match between Tottenham Hotspur and Liverpool at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London. — AFP

cross was perfectly weighted for Son to flick home from close range.

In first half stoppage-time, Dominik Szoboszlai's cross was headed back across goal by Virgil van Dijk and Gakpo took a touch before firing a powerful shot past Guglielmo Vicario from 10 yards. Jota was needlessly dismissed after 69 minutes for a sliding challenge on Destiny Udogie just 90

seconds after the Portugal forward was booked for clipping the same player.

Tottenham kept pushing in the face of Liverpool's massed defence and finally got their reward six minutes into stoppage-time. Porro's low cross forced Matip to block but his out-stretched leg flicked the ball past Alisson to spark wild Tottenham celebrations. — AFP

Bellingham delivers as Madrid punish Girona, Sociedad win derby

GIRONA: Inspired by Jude Bellingham, Real Madrid showed both steel and class to beat high-flying Girona 3-0 on Saturday and move back top of La Liga. Real Sociedad thrashed Athletic Bilbao by the same scoreline to win the Basque derby later on and rise to fourth.

Girona headed into the weekend as unlikely leaders but champions Barcelona usurped them by beating Sevilla on Friday, with Madrid then depositing their rivals at the league's summit with a solid triumph on Catalan soil.

Joselu and Aurelien Tchouameni's first-half goals were enough to burst Girona's bubble and after that the record 35-time La Liga winners kept the plucky upstarts at arm's length. The stylish Bellingham netted with 20 minutes remaining to seal Madrid's victory and continue his own sparkling run of goalscoring form.

Madrid defender Nacho was sent off late in the match for an ugly high tackle on Portu, who went off injured. "Nacho wasn't thinking clearly, he's usually a player who does things right, he has said sorry," said Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti, who praised his team's display.

"It was a solid performance, strong, we defended well, we knew they could hurt us with the ball, they play good football, so it was important to defend well in our half." Michel's side beat Real Madrid at home last season and their fans believed they could repeat the trick, but they found a determined side in their path.



GIRONA: Real Madrid's English midfielder #5 Jude Bellingham kicks the ball and scores his team's third goal during the Spanish Liga football match between Girona FC and Real Madrid CF at the Montilivi stadium in Girona. — AFP

In only their fourth season in the Spanish top flight and unbeaten in their first seven games, the City Football Group-owned team are flourishing, but their illustrious visitors arrived with a point to prove about the natural order of things, and snapped that run. Ancelotti brought in Eduardo Camavinga at left-back to bolster the defence after Atletico Madrid found too much joy down the flanks in Los Blancos' derby defeat last weekend.

The coach also handed Vinicius Junior his first start after injury. Girona came out with their tails up, looking to capitalise on the boisterous home at-

mosphere at their small but fired-up Montilivi stadium. They almost did, with Yangel Herrera heading narrowly over and Viktor Tsygankov hitting the post in an onslaught inside the opening five minutes. However Madrid took the lead against the run of play to stop the hosts in their tracks.

Joselu converted from close range after Bellingham found the Spain striker with a sublime outside-of-the-boot cross. Four minutes later the visitors netted their second, with Tchouameni given a free header from Toni Kroos' corner, gratefully accepting his first goal for Madrid since joining in 2022. — AFP

Asian Games medals table

Medals table top 20 after day eight of the Asian Games in Hangzhou on Sunday (gold, silver, bronze, total):

China	132	72	39	243
South Korea	30	35	60	125
Japan	29	41	42	112
India	13	21	19	53
Uzbekistan	11	12	17	40
Thailand	10	6	14	30
Taiwan	9	10	14	33
Hong Kong	6	15	19	40
North Korea	5	9	5	19
Indonesia	4	3	11	18
Bahrain	4	1	3	8
Iran	3	12	12	27
Kazakhstan	3	5	23	31
Malaysia	3	4	13	20
Singapore	2	5	4	11
Qatar	2	3	2	7
Kuwait	1	3	1	5
Vietnam	1	2	12	15
Philippines	1	1	7	9
UAE	1	1	4	6

Ten-man Forest battle back for Brentford draw

NOTTINGHAM: Brentford boss Thomas Frank bemoaned his side's inability to hold onto the lead when a man up after a 1-1 draw at Nottingham Forest on Sunday. The Bees looked set for their first league win in five games after Moussa Niakhate was sent off and Christian Norgaard headed in the resulting free-kick.

But Forest fought back despite their numerical disadvantage thanks to Nicolas Dominguez's looping header on his home debut. A share of the spoils keeps Forest one point ahead of Brentford in 11th and 13th respectively in the Premier League table.

Brentford have now dropped eight points from winning positions in their opening seven games of the campaign. "We are just in that spell where we can't get over the line in terms of winning the games. It's a game we clearly should have won," said Frank.

"We can't keep the ball out of the net when it's 11 against 10. That's an unbelievable finish that'll hap-

pen one in 100." Forest nearly got off to a flying start when Taiwo Awoniyi turned home a corner at the back post, but he was rightly flagged offside.

Brentford have struggled in the absence of suspended striker Ivan Toney due to breaches of betting regulations. But the visitors were nearly gifted the opening goal by Forest keeper Matt Turner.

The former Arsenal stopper was caught in possession by Yoane Wissa and bailed out by a goal-line clearance by Willy Boly. Forest's luck looked like it had run out when Niakhate was shown a second yellow card for catching Wissa 11 minutes into the second half.

Norgaard then headed home Mathias Jensen's cross to put Brentford in front. The lead lasted just seven minutes as Dominguez headed in Harry Toffolo's cross. Forest then saw out 13 minutes of added time to cling on to what could be a vital point in securing another season of Premier League football.

"We didn't start the second half well and there were lots of individual mistakes which led to the free-kick and the Brentford goal," said Forest boss Steve Cooper. "Then it's a different game. You're 1-0 down with 10 men but to think that we got back in the game, got the result and seen it out, it ends up being a much better point for us than for Brentford." — AFP



NOTTINGHAM: Nottingham Forest's English midfielder #10 Morgan Gibbs-White (C) tackles Brentford's Nigerian midfielder #15 Frank Onyeka during the English Premier League football match between Nottingham Forest and Brentford at The City Ground in Nottingham. — AFP

Classifieds

Clinics & Hospitals

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913

Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381

Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Hospitals	
Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005

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

Change of Name

I, **Nagidi Jayamma**, holder of passport No. L4905292, do hereby change my name to Tirumani (as given name), Varalashmi (surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name Tirumani Varalashmi and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. **(#4236) 28/9/2023**

Zain celebrates Team Kuwait's triumphant return from China

Company proud of all Kuwaiti athletes' achievements in Hangzhou



Mohammed Al-Aiban, Yousef Al-Baidan, Sheikh Mubarak Al-Faisal Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah and Waleed Al-Khashti with Kuwait's champions.



Waleed Al-Khashti and Hamad Al-Musaibeh with champions Al-Rashidi, Al-Shamma and Al-Shamlan.

KUWAIT: Zain, the proud official partner of Team Kuwait at the 19th Asian Games in collaboration with the Kuwait Olympic Committee, has joined in celebrating the triumphant return of the nation's champions from China at Kuwait International Airport. Most of the athletes have returned, bringing back home Kuwait's first three medals from Hangzhou.

Among the returning champions were Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammed Al-Aiban and Public Authority for Sports GM Yousef Al-Baidan, who were welcomed by Kuwait Olympic Committee Board Member and Head of the Sports Committees Committee Sheikh Mubarak Al-Faisal Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah, Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer of Zain Kuwait Waleed Al-Khashti, along with Zain officials and guests from the local sports community.

Zain was among the first to welcome the returning champions back home in a joyful atmosphere that was full of national pride. Among the return-

ing athletes was gold medalist Abdullah Al-Rashidi (shooting –skeet's men), who was also a silver medalist with Eman Al-Shamma (shooting – skeet mixed team), as well as bronze medalist Yousef Al-Shamlan (Fencing - men's sabre individual).

In addition, Kuwait champions Khalid Al-Mudaf, Abdulrahman Al-Faihan, and Talal Al-Rashidi attained the silver medal in shooting (trap team men), to bring up the total tally of medals for Team Kuwait so far to 4 medals (one Gold, two Silver, and one Bronze). The team still has upcoming competitions in several other sports, and Zain wishes the athletes all the best of luck to bring even more medals back home.

Some notable achievements so far include Yousef Al Shamlan's medal, which is the first in the history of the Kuwait Fencing Association. In addition, Abdullah Al-Rashidi has matched the finals record of 60 points, while also breaking the international record of 149/150 points with Eman Al-Shamma. Al-Shamma is also considered the first female Kuwaiti champion to attain a

shooting silver medal in the Asian Games. Zain was keen on being at the national team's side in China, reflecting a fruitful partnership between the country's private and public sectors to support local athletes in international arenas to inspire them to raise Kuwait's flag high in the biggest competitions and bring gold back home.

Under this partnership, Zain has supported 141 players representing Kuwait in 25 sports: Golf, football, tennis, squash, shooting, archery, cycling, taekwondo, karate, boxing, kurash, judo, fencing, jujitsu, wrestling, rowing, diving, triathlon, handball, swimming, athletics, sport climbing, rhythmic gymnastics, chess, and equestrian.

The Asian Games is a multi-sport event that brings together athletes from across the continent of Asia. It is organized every four years by the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) under the supervision of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). This year, the 19th Asian Games features 483 games in 40 different disciplines.

Zain is proud to support Team Kuwait in this ma-



Zain was keen on welcoming all the returning athletes.

jeor sporting event in collaboration with the Kuwait Olympic Committee. The company is always keen on shouldering sports programs and local athletes to elevate the Kuwaiti sports scene, as it strongly believes in the role played by the sports sector in progressing national economy.

BNK's Sanchez, Lebron win German Padel Open titles

DUSSELDORF: Spanish duo Ariana Sanchez and Paula Josemaria won the women's title at the 2023 German Padel Open title. Meanwhile, their compatriots Juan Lebron and Alejandro Galan won the men's title of the German Padel Open on Sunday. BNK Holding is the official sponsor of Spanish padel players Ariana Sanchez and Juan Lebron.

In an electrifying atmosphere on the center court at the Castello in Dusseldorf, the women's and men's finals offered top class padel. In the all-Spanish women's final, the duo Gemma Triay (world no. 3)/Marta Ortega (6) faced off against the world's undisputed No. 1 team this year: of Sanchez and Josemaria. The match was a rematch of the recent Madrid final. At the Masters final in the Spanish capital, Triay/Ortega lost to their compatriots Sanchez/Josemaria in two sets 3-6 and 6-7 - now they had the chance for revenge just one week later.

After an even start, Sanchez/Josemaria tightened the reins and took the first set 6-3. In the second set, too, it initially looked as if the world no. 1 and no. 2 would bring the match home safely. Triay/Ortega, however, showed comeback qualities and fought their way into

the tiebreak. In the tiebreak, however, Sanchez and Josemaria showed nerves of steel - and the final result was 6-3 and 7-6 for the leading female duo of the World Padel Tour (WPT), just like in Madrid. The two Spaniards thus completed the dozen: the triumph in Dusseldorf was already their twelfth WPT tournament victory this year.

The successful duo Sanchez/Josemaria looked correspondingly happy after the match: "We are very happy about the victory here in Dusseldorf. By winning the first WPT tournament on German soil, we were able to write a small piece of padel history, which makes us very proud," said the two beaming with joy. Ariana Sanchez was also voted the tournament's most valuable player in the women's competition.

The two Spaniards Galan (5) and Lebron (6) entered the grand final in Dusseldorf with the momentum from their semifinal victory against the number 1 duo Arturo Coello/Agustin Tapia. But with Martin Di Nenno (3) and Franco Stupaczuk (4) they had a tough task ahead of them. The two Argentines traveled to Dusseldorf with the recommendation of the Masters tournament victory a week ago in Madrid.



Winners Ariana Sanchez and Paula Josemaria

Lebron and Galan started like fire. Already after 26 minutes, the two led 5/0. Di Nenno and Stupaczuk owned the next two games. But it was no more than a brief revival of the two Argentines. After 38 minutes, Lebron and Galan closed the bag in the first set - 6-2. Whoever thought that Galan and Lebron would now let up was mistaken.

The two Spaniards were determined to win and left no doubt about it. After just 1 hour and 12 minutes, the scoreboard at the Castello showed 6-2 and 6-2. An impressive victory for Galan and Lebron and only their second ever in this year's WPT series. Galan had another reason to be happy, he was named Most Valuable Player (MVP) of the men's competi-



Winners Alejandro Galan and Juan Lebron

tion at the BOSS German Padel Open. Galan and Lebron were also proud after their triumph in Dusseldorf: "Winning the tournament premiere in Germany means a lot to us," the two said at the award ceremony. There will not be a big party. "But after the flight home we will certainly toast the victory again," said the two champions.

Paris in sight as dethroned China duo bounce back with Asiad gold

HANGZHOU: Dethroned Chinese world champions Wang Jianan and Feng Bin bounced back to win Asian Games gold on Sunday in front of a delirious home crowd and then set their sights on the Paris 2024 Olympics.

Men's long jump ace Wang and women's discus star Feng were both toppled at the world championships in August. But they were in a different class on home soil, adding to the hosts' haul of 10 golds so far on day three of the athletics at the 80,000 capacity Hangzhou Olympic stadium.

Another winner for China was Lin Yuwei in the 100m hurdles. Bahrain's 3,000m steeplechase world champion Winfred Yavi was untouchable, winning the women's 1,500m in 4mins 11.65sec, while India claimed two titles on the night. "Happiness. Tears of joy," said Yavi, who will be hot favourite in the steeplechase on Monday after bagging gold ahead of Kenya's Beatrice Chepkoech at the worlds last month in Budapest.

"There were a lot of people cheering, it feels like the Olympics and the track looks like at the world championships," Yavi added. Wang, nicknamed Eddie, leapt an impressive 8.22m on his first jump to show he meant



HANGZHOU: Kuwait handball team lost on Sunday to Bahrain 25-34 at the end of group matches at the 19th Asian Games. Kuwait qualified for the semifinals as the second-placed team of the group with four points. — KUNA

business, and that proved enough to defend his title. India's Murali Sreeshankar (8.19m) and China's Shi Yuhao (8.10m) rounded out the podium. "I was worried about being too nervous but today I performed well and I'll continue to work hard," said Wang, who started his career as a pole vaulter. "The Paris Olympics is my next mission and goal." Wang soared to a mammoth 8.36m in Eugene, Oregon last year to edge Olympic gold medal-



HANGZHOU: Kuwait's Yaqoub Al-Youha advanced to the men's 110-meter hurdles' final at the 19th Asian Games after finishing first in the qualifiers on Sunday with a time of 13.69 seconds. — AFP

list Miltiadis Tentoglou and win his—and China's—first long jump world title. But the Greek star got his revenge by winning at Budapest, with Wang's 8.05m only enough for fifth. Feng was also beaten in Hungary, with Laulauga Tausaga pulling off a surprise win in the discus by beating fellow American and Olympic champion Valarie Allman, with the Chinese thrower settling for bronze.

It followed Feng's stunning victory at the 2022 world

championships over two-time Olympic champion Sandra Perkovic. Feng emphatically bounced back in Hangzhou, throwing a new Games-record 67.93m on her opening attempt. It proved unbeatable.

Teammate Jiang Zhichao (61.04) was a distant second ahead of India's Seema Punia. "It lays the foundation for me to strive for better results in the Paris Olympics," she said. In other action, India's Tajinderpal Singh Toor successfully defended his shot putt title, but left it late. A former navy officer, he sent down three no-throws and was trailing Saudi Arabia's Mohamed Tolo heading into his final effort. But he delivered with 20.36m to win ahead of Tolo (20.18m) and China's Liu Yang.

"I feel really good. My wife asked me to bring her gold, only gold," said Toor, after injuries hampered him at the Tokyo Olympics and then sidelined him from the world championships and Commonwealth Games last year. His teammate and Commonwealth Games silver medalist Avinash Sable stormed to the men's 3,000 steeplechase title in a new Asiad record 8:19.50. Sable, who ran six kilometres (four miles) a day to school as a child before fine-tuning his ability in the army, led from start to finish.

Qatar's Mohamad Algarni won the men's 1,500m in 3:38.36 while China's Zheng Ninali was crowned women's heptathlon champion. Bahrain's 100m hurdles specialist Devynne Charlton, who finished fourth at the world championships, skipped Hangzhou, with China's Lin stepping up to win gold in 12.74. — AFP