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14 Europe regain Ryder Cup to extend USA's 30-year wait



Youha strikes gold at Asiad

Kuwaiti hurdler shares win in photo finish • Olympic chief hails Crown Prince's motivational words

HANGZHOU: Kuwaiti athlete Yaqoub Al-Youha secured the gold medal in the 110-meter hurdles race on Monday during the 19th Asian Games in China. Youha clocked an impressive time of 13.41 seconds, sharing the win with Japan's Shunya Takayama in a photo finish. Meanwhile, the bronze medal went to China's Xu Zhuoyi.

Youha's journey to the final of the 110-m hurdles was marked by outstanding performances, as he topped the qualifiers with a time of 13.69 seconds. With Youha's gold medal, Kuwait's medal tally at the Asian Games has now reached six medals, including two golds, three silvers and one bronze.

President of Kuwait Olympic Committee Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser Al-Sabah said the meeting of HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with the players and his motivational words had a great impact on their achievements in various competitions of the 19th Asian Games.

In a press statement, Sheikh Fahad praised the gold medal won by Youha in the 110-m hurdles at the 19th Asian Games. He expressed hope to continue winning medals and raising the Kuwaiti flag high in all continental and international forums. — KUNA



HANGZHOU: Gold medalist Kuwait's Yaqoub Al-Youha celebrates on the podium during the medal ceremony for the men's 110-m hurdles final event during the 2022 Asian Games on Oct 2, 2023. — AFP

Oil industry 'central' to climate solutions; Kuwait committed



ABU DHABI: The president of the upcoming COP28 climate talks told an Abu Dhabi oil conference on Monday that the fossil fuel industry would play an essential role in addressing the climate crisis. "For too long, this industry has been viewed as part of the problem, that it's not doing enough and in some cases even blocking progress," said Sultan Al-Jaber, the president-designate of the COP28 talks, who is also the head of UAE state-owned oil firm ADNOC.

"This is your opportunity to show the world that, in fact, you are central to the solution," he told the ADIPEC conference of global industry figures and government officials. "This industry can change the global debate... It is time to silence the sceptics by applying scale, capital and technology to deliver outcomes." Jaber urged industry leaders to curb emissions associated with energy production and expand use of renewable energy sources. He also encouraged them to embrace "low carbon solutions" like carbon capture and storage, tools that climate experts say distract from the urgent goal of slashing fossil fuel pollution.

The COP28 talks will be held in Dubai from Nov 3 to Dec 12. Jaber has garnered the support of COP parties including US climate

Continued on Page 6

Medicine Nobel goes to mRNA vax researchers

STOCKHOLM: Researchers Katalin Kariko and Drew Weissman won the Nobel Medicine Prize on Monday for work on messenger RNA (mRNA) technology that paved the way for groundbreaking COVID-19 vaccines. The pair, who had been tipped as favorites, "contributed to the unprecedented rate of vaccine development during one of the greatest threats to human health in modern times", the jury said.

The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic in March 2020 and the first mRNA vaccines were

approved for use against the illness in December that year. Billions of Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna doses have been injected around the world since then. Together with other COVID vaccines, they "have saved millions of lives and prevented severe disease in many more", the jury said.

Kariko, 68, and Weissman, 64, long-standing colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania in the United States, have already won a slew of awards for their research. In recognizing the duo this year, the Nobel committee broke with its usual practice of honoring decades-old research, aimed at ensuring it has stood the test of time. While the prizewinning research dates back to 2005, the first vaccines to use the mRNA technology came out just three years ago.

Continued on Page 6



PHILADELPHIA: Dr Katalin Kariko of Hungary and Dr Drew Weissman of the US, who won the 2023 Nobel Medicine Prize, arrive for a press conference at the University of Pennsylvania on Oct 2, 2023. — AFP

Trump empire under threat as fraud trial opens

NEW YORK: A combative Donald Trump appeared in a New York court on Monday to face civil fraud charges, denouncing the case as a "sham" intended to torpedo his campaign to retake the White House. The fraud trial, one of several legal battles against the 77-year-old Trump, could potentially see the former president barred from doing business in New York state.

Continued on Page 6



NEW YORK: Former US President Donald Trump sits with his attorneys inside the courtroom during a civil fraud case at a Manhattan courthouse on Oct 2, 2023. — AFP

Inferno guts Egypt police HQ, 45 hurt

ISMAILIA: A huge fire ripped through a regional police headquarters in the Egyptian city of Ismailia before dawn Monday, gutting the building and leaving at least 45 people injured. Authorities said they had launched a probe into the cause of the blaze that destroyed the Security Directorate building in the city 110 km northeast of Cairo.

Several people could be seen trapped inside the burning building, screaming for help from the windows, in video footage shared on social media, and emergency crews were later seen deploying a crane to rescue them. No fatalities have been reported from the at least eight-storey tall building that was fully staffed with police when it was engulfed by flames overnight.

Fifty ambulances rushed to the scene, joined by two army planes and military emergency services, according to the health ministry and local media. Crowds of onlookers flocked to the base of the building as the flames raged through it, sending black smoke billowing into the

night sky. Twelve people were treated at the scene, the health ministry said, and 33 more were taken to hospitals in Ismailia and nearby Suez, according to the public prosecutor's office.

Most suffered burns or smoke inhalation in the fire, first reports of which were received at 4:30 am (0130 GMT). By dawn, the building had been reduced to a blackened concrete shell as emergency services hosed it with water to prevent the blaze from flaring up again. Authorities have not said how many police or detainees were inside the building, and security forces later sealed off the area, AFP correspondents reported.

Interior Minister Mahmoud Tawfik

ordered an investigation into the cause of the fire and a "structural safety review" for the building, his ministry said. On social media, Egyptians demanded information and accountability ahead of an expected announcement Monday from President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi that he would run for a third term in December elections. Some called for Sisi, a former army chief, to delay his announcement, but billboards and signs on buses were already displaying messages of support.

Deadly fires are a common hazard in the north African country where fire codes are rarely enforced

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Immediate action promotes better urban future, counters challenges

'Kuwait Cities: Achievements and Challenges'

KUWAIT: Head of Mission of the UN-Habitat to the GCC and Kuwait, Dr Ameerah Al-Hassan, affirmed that the many challenges facing the world require serious and immediate action to promote a better urban future. This came in a statement to KUNA on Monday after the second UN Habitat Forum opened in Kuwait, in partnership with the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Society Development (SCPD), on the occasion of Urban October and the annual World Habitat Day, under the slogan "Kuwait Cities: Achievements and Challenges".

Al-Hassan said that this year's forum focuses on the New Kuwait vision, sustainable urban development, and Urban October, which was set by the UN General Secretariat to highlight the importance of urbanization and boosting sustainability in cities around the world. During Urban October, many events and discussions are organized to focus on urbanization issues and look for sustainable solutions. Al-Hassan noted, adding that the forum highlights the role of private and governmental institutes in achieving sustainable urban development in Kuwait.

She indicated that the event includes recycling, cleaning beaches, and greening, in an initiative by the program to link its work with Kuwait's directions to reach carbon neutrality, implementing the directives of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Kuwait's vision towards a sustainable urban future. For his part, Secretary General of the SCPD General Secretariat Dr Khaled Mahdi said that the event addresses urban development issues and constructing a cohesive infrastructure environment, as they are important policies within the development plan.

He appreciated the UN-Habitat Program's cooperation with the SCPD General Secretariat, pointing out that their participation is part of the ongoing cooperation and partnership with all UN organizations. The United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat) works in more than 90 countries to support people in cities and human settlements, focusing on urban development, and works with governments and local partners to provide solutions. — KUNA



KUWAIT: A picture shows a beach on a recently renovated waterfront in Salmiya area. The second UN Habitat Forum opened in Kuwait, in partnership with the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Society Development (SCPD), on the occasion of Urban October and the annual World Habitat Day, under the slogan 'Kuwait Cities: Achievements and Challenges'. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

In my view

E-books and e-learning

By Azzah Alghamdi

The technological advancements witnessed worldwide have had numerous positive impacts on education, with the most notable being the rise of distance learning and the integration of technology into teaching. The Internet has made it significantly easier for both researchers and students to access educational resources crucial for their studies. However, one concerning trend that many countries are embracing is the widespread adoption of electronic books as an alternative to traditional printed books.

This matter deserves discussion with UNESCO officials to better understand the risks and drawbacks associated with electronic books. It's important to remember that never isn't always better, and some traditional methods and tools, such as paper and pen, remain irreplaceable. When we examine the most significant drawbacks of e-books, the first issue that arises is their impact on eye health. It's widely recognized by medical professionals that extended screen time, as found in e-book reading, can strain the eyes and potentially lead to vision problems. Given that students often engage in lengthy study sessions, especially before exams, this poses a significant health risk.

The use of e-books for kindergarten and primary school children is even more concerning due to their developmental stage. These young learners are more prone to accidents, making e-books vulnerable to damage. Replacing a damaged e-book device quickly can be challenging for families. This same challenge applies to older students. Moreover, e-books require regular charging, which can be inconvenient and distracting when the battery runs out during study sessions. Carrying traditional books is more convenient as they don't require charging, Internet access, or fear of breakage. Students can move freely without being tethered to chargers or specific locations.

Another issue is the difficulty of sharing e-books. If a parent or private tutor wants to assist a student with their studies, they may need another e-book or a traditional book. This process can be cumbersome and disrupt the learning process. Despite the advantages of e-books, many of these conveniences are also available with traditional books. True learners prioritize serious and effective studying, emphasizing comprehension and memorization for exam preparation.

Some argue that e-books could alleviate the issue of heavy school bags, but this can be easily resolved by dividing schoolbooks into chapters or parts, making them more manageable for students to carry. Perhaps the only universally applicable advantage of e-books is when teachers use them instead of students. In this scenario, the teacher can project the e-book onto a display screen, allowing students to follow along during lessons.



KUWAIT: Cancer Aware Nation launches campaigns named the 'blessed month'. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



CAN launches annual awareness campaign

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Since its establishment in 2006, Cancer Aware Nation (CAN) has been initiating its campaigns in the month of October, which Chairman Dr Khalid Al-Saleh has aptly named the "blessed month". On Sunday, CAN hosted a press conference to launch this year's activities centered around breast cancer awareness under the theme "your health is your capital". The event was held under the patronage of Social Affairs and Family Affairs Minister Sheikh Feras Al-Sabah.

Dr Saleh emphasized that the annual increase in cancer discovery rates in Kuwait and GCC countries, ranging from 1 percent to 5 percent, can be attributed to the heightened social awareness about the importance of early detection. He further revealed that 36.9 out of every 100,000 people are affected by cancer, and statistics from the Kuwait Cancer Control Center indicate there are 640 cases of breast cancer among Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti women.

Dr Saleh announced that this year, for the first time, there will be activities organized in Mubarakia in mid-October. These activities will involve the participation of a delegation from the GCC, with the primary goal of promoting awareness about the importance of early detection. He urged women over the age of 40 to contact CAN to learn how to perform self-examinations. Dr Saleh also highlighted CAN's success in changing public perceptions about cancer. Before the establishment of CAN, 36 percent of people believed that cancer was curable; this figure decreased to 6 percent after CAN's inception.

Meanwhile, board member Dr Hussa Al-Shaheen, who is responsible for the campaign, announced that the campaign would run for one month. It includes a festival in Mubarakia on Oct 14, which will last for three days. Additionally, CAN will have a mobile clinic to provide women with training on self-examinations. She also mentioned that there would be several exhibitions at prominent malls such as The



Avenues, 360, Boulevard, Promenade and Assima. Moreover, there will be a themed night event called "we are all for a cancer-free life" at Martyr Hussein Al-Zaabi Children's Park, in collaboration with the Healthy Cities Program in the Faiha health zone.

Dr Shaheen emphasized CAN's commitment to physical activities due to their significant role in preventing various diseases, including cancer. To promote this, there will be a basketball competition for women in recovery, in cooperation with the Public

Authority for Sport and Kazma Sports Club. Additionally, there will be a women's swimming competition at the Disabled Club swimming pool.

Deputy Chairwoman of the Women's Volunteer Society for Social Development, Dr Laila Al-Khayat, expressed the society's dedication to collaborating with CAN to raise awareness about early detection. She urged women to prioritize self-examination, as medical professionals confirm that it significantly reduces treatment time and increases chances of recovery.

Dhman ready to render integrated health services

KUWAIT: Official sources said Dhman Health Hospitals Company said it is ready to render its integrated health services before the end of the year for those working in the private sector. Dhman Health Hospitals Company opened two large hospitals with a capacity of 660 beds as well as 12 centers for primary health care. Arabi Company won 26 percent of the strategic share, while the government owns 24 percent. The remaining 50 percent is for the citizens, which the government will pay on their behalf.

Dhman was established in 2014 as a joint entity between the public and private sectors with a capital of KD 230 million (\$750 million) within a government plan to provide health care for residents in exchange for the annual health insurance they pay, away from that given to citizens by the government. Sources expected the health ministry to start gradually transferring residents working in the private sector to Dhman hospitals starting next year. This will be followed by residents working in the government sector, such as doctors, teachers, legal advisors and others.

Energy conference, exhibition of ADIPEC 2023 launched

ABU DHABI: The ADIPEC 2023 conference and exhibition were launched on Monday in the Emirates capital city of Abu Dhabi. The conference, bringing together energy sector tycoons, aims to address global challenges, take action to decarbonize, and ensure the adaptability of the sector to future demands. Participating in the conference, sponsored by the President of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, is Kuwaiti Oil Ministry Undersecretary Sheikh Nimer Fahad Al-Sabah.

The conference, held under the slogan "Decarbonizing Faster, Together", is scheduled to last until October 5. The conference is acting as an inclusive platform, granting some 2,200 corporations the opportunity to display the latest technology supporting climate neutrality efforts and making room for diverse conversations on the clean energies of the future.

ADIPEC, held only a few weeks away from the UAE-hosted COP28, is an exceptional opportunity to establish partnerships and strike deals, as it has been shedding light on innovation in the field for about 40 years. This year's edition, divided into



ABU DHABI: (From left to right) Occidental CEO Vicki Hollub, Shell CEO Wael Sawan, Total CEO Patrick Pouyane, BP Interim CEO Murray Auchincloss, Eni CEO Claudio Descalzi, and Petronas CEO Tengky Muhammad Taufik take part in a panel discussion during the Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference held at ADNEC Exhibition Center on October 2, 2023. — AFP

four zones of de-carbonization theater, maritime and logistics zone, digitalization in energy zone, and industrialization and manufacturing hall, is designed to facilitate cooperation between sectors, enabling deep-rooted change to take place.

In a statement to the official News Agency (WAM), Christopher Hudson, President of Events and organizer of ADIPEC 2023, mentioned, "Never before have we gathered so many cutting-edge innovations, powerful partnerships, visionary global leaders, disruptive innovators, and thought leaders in

one place, all contributing to a decarbonized energy transition." ADIPEC is hosting some 1,600 leading figures in the sector to speak to more than 15,000 conference delegates.

ADIPEC is perhaps the largest energy and oil sector global event handling challenges facing the sector, whether political in nature or prompted by international conflicts and reflections of such challenges on prices and supply. The conference aims to put forth a roadmap and find future solutions to ensure the sustainability of a safe and less costly sector. — KUNA

Cabinet congratulates Amir

Ministers praise Kuwait's leader's 'wide leadership'



KUWAIT: Cabinet ministers hold a session that was presided by Acting Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Sabah. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Cabinet on Monday congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on the third anniversary of his rise to power, saying his "wide leadership" has placed the nation firmly on the path towards prosperity and development. During the Cabinet's customary session, presided over by Acting Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, Information Minister Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi spoke of national preparations ahead of "Expo 2025 Osaka," a global Japan-hosted event in which Kuwait will be represented through a special pavilion.

The minister heaped praise on state-wide efforts aiming to depict the nation in a "positive light" at the expo, saying that Kuwait was the first Arab nation and the eighth globally to have agreed on setting up a booth at an event of such magnitude. Minister of Commerce and Industry Mohammad Al-Aiban, who doubles as

Minister of State for Youth Affairs, briefed the Cabinet on his recent visit to Hangzhou, China, the site of the ongoing 19th Asian Games, where he met his compatriot athletes to check on their level of preparedness as they represent national colors.

The minister personally surveyed the facilities in the Chinese city, while he has also attended a number of contests in which Kuwaiti athletes took part, saying he was confident in their abilities to elevate the nation to the upper echelons of international sports. Discussing current regional and global happenings, the Cabinet deplored a recent drone attack perpetrated by Yemen's Houthi movement against forces of the Saudi-led coalition, in which some four Bahraini troops lost their lives. Condemning the incident, the Cabinet underlined Kuwait's unflinching support for the measures Bahrain will take in the wake of the attack, saying the country stands in solidarity with its Gulf Arab neighbor. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait University's College of Medicine receives full academic accreditation from the Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Medical Education Programs. — KUNA

KU's College of Medicine receives full accreditation

KUWAIT: Kuwait University announced that the College of Medicine has received full academic accreditation from the Association for Evaluation

and Accreditation of Medical Education Programs (TEPDAD) and is recognized by the World Federation for Medical Education. The acting rector of the university, Dr Fayez Al-Dhafiri, said at a press conference on Monday that this is a great achievement by the Faculty of Medicine. Al-Dhafiri extended his sincere thanks to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince, as well as to all those responsible for this achievement.

He congratulated the entire Kuwait University

The official spokesman of the Ministry of Information, Bader Al-Enezi, said: "Under the direct directives of the Minister of Information and Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs Abdul Rahman Al-Mutairi, the contract was signed after taking the necessary approvals from all the regulatory authorities and ensuring the validity of all procedures for the contract. It is the first of its kind and will yield the highest revenue with expected returns that are unprecedented."

The digital visual and audio media platform is concerned with broadcasting media content in a way that goes beyond traditional methods and models for transferring content through all possible applications. The platform will allow the user to access television content online through his or her subscription.



family for obtaining this full academic accreditation, which is a distinctive step for Kuwait University. The vice rector of the University for Medical Sciences, Dr Osama Al-Said, congratulated the Faculty of Medicine and the Medical Science Center for obtaining academic accreditation, which adds to a long history of achievements. The Center for Medical Sciences includes four faculties, including the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy, Health Sciences, Auxiliary Medical Sciences and Dentistry. — KUNA



Abdul Rahman Al-Mutairi

The subscriber will receive many services, including watching the live broadcast of all Kuwait State TV channels, in addition to listening to all Kuwait State Radio stations, with the possibility of watching new television works as well as listening to new radio programs.

Enezi explained that the operating company will produce and purchase programs, series, and films in accordance with the regulations followed by the Ministry of Information.

Info Ministry signs deal for integrated digital platform

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Information announced the signing of a KD 5.050 million (about \$5.4 million) contract for the establishment of an integrated digital platform for the ministry. The five-year contract will grant the ministry 10 percent of the net profits. The winning company will take care of the construction, operation, and marketing of the platform.

Interior prepares for rainy season

KUWAIT: The Civil Defense Committee held a coordination meeting on Monday to discuss the preparations and readiness of the state ministries to face the torrential rainy season. The department of security media at the Ministry of Interior said in a press release that the meeting discussed the works required to be implemented to deal with the rainy season, deployment plans, the readiness of the relevant agencies, and the speed of their response to face all emergency conditions caused by rain. They also discussed media awareness plans, mechanisms of communication with the public, handling mechanisms, and steps followed in the dissemination of reports and classification in terms of emergency incidents and dealing with them through the operating room. — KUNA



OIC ministerial conference discusses food security

DOHA: The chairman of the board of directors and director general of the Kuwait General Authority for Food and Nutrition, Dr Reem Al-Fulajj, stressed on Monday the importance of participating in the ninth OIC Ministerial Conference on food security and agricultural development in enhancing food security in the OIC (Organization of Islamic Countries). Al-Fulajj said in a statement to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) after the conclusion of the conference in Doha that participation in this conference is "important", especially in light of the challenges facing the world with regards to food security and the impact of food supply chains in times of disaster and crises.

She said the conference was an opportunity to exchange views and experiences to strengthen food security in the OIC member states. She expressed her thanks to the government and the people of Qatar for hosting the conference. The conference came up with a number of recommendations, most notably the importance of enhancing scientific research, the use of modern technology in strengthening the food security system, and concerted efforts in supporting countries facing challenges such as natural disasters.

She pointed to the adoption of a decision to strengthen environmental cooperation within the framework of the organization in the food and agriculture sector so as to build more resilient food systems and work to achieve sustainable development goals through the exchange of knowledge and best practices to enhance food security, productivity, and resilience.

The OIC is the second-largest international organization after the United Nations, with 57 mem-



Dr Reem Al-Fulajj

ber states spread across four continents. It represents the collective voice of the Islamic world and seeks to protect and express its interests in support of international peace and harmony and to strengthen relations. — KUNA

Government to build integrated housing cities

KUWAIT: The Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Housing Affairs, Faleh Al-Ruqabah, said that the public institution for housing welfare is going to build a group of integrated housing cities in partnership with the private sector and international companies during the coming period. He added in a press release on Monday on the occasion of Arab Housing Day that the ministry recently signed a memorandum of understanding in the field of housing development (as part of seven joint cooperation agreements) during the meetings of His Highness Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with the Chinese counterparts.

He explained that the deal will strengthen cooperation through the formation of joint working groups and the sharing of technical information. In addition to working together with the legislative authority to pass a set of laws, the deal will contribute to the provision of housing care to citizens and accelerate the project's implementation. He pointed out that Kuwait is currently implementing a group of huge housing projects, such as the South Saad Al-Abdullah and South Sabah Al-Ahmad projects, which will serve thousands of Kuwaiti families.

He explained that the implementation of the infrastructure of 36,749 housing units has been completed within the northern and central parts of the country, namely in Al-Mullaa, West Abdullah Al-Mubarak, and South Abdullah Al-Mubarak, in addition to the South Sabah Al-Ahmad. The minister added that the projects will be built according to the international and Arab standards. — KUNA

Interior fires 800 Arab employees

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Interior terminated the services of more than 800 Arab expatriate employees, mostly Egyptians, and gave them a month to finish their dismissal procedures. Sources revealed to Kuwait Times that these employees are in the administrative sector, and some of them are in the positions of legal advisers. They were distributed to several departments in the Ministry of Interior, such as the General Administration of Nationality, Passports and Traffic, and the Automated Information Center.

"The decision to terminate their services came from a decision of the Minister of Interior, Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled, with the aim of Kuwaitizing jobs and addressing the demographic imbalance," the sources added. These departments in the Ministry of Interior are looking for Kuwaitis who can replace the expat workers. "The 800 sacked workers represent the first batch, which will be followed by another batch in the coming months. The aim is to replace expatriate workers in sensitive sectors such as the traffic department," the sources indicated.

Kuwait sends 10th planeload of relief materials to Libya

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti Air Force plane took off from Abdullah Al-Mubarak Air Base to Libya on Sunday, carrying 20 tons of various relief and medical materials and an ambulance. This is the tenth airlift carrying aid supplies to help the victims of Hurricane Daniel in Libya. Yousef Al-Maraj, Director of Emergency and Disaster Management at the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, said: "Kuwait will continue to assist Libya as part of the humanitarian effort that was inaugurated based on the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah."

Al-Maraj pointed out that Kuwait is one of the first countries to provide humanitarian support to all, based on its humanitarian and relief role, stressing that "Kuwait is working to intensify its efforts to alleviate the difficult conditions in Libya after Hurricane Daniel, which left thousands dead and caused great destruction to a number of areas." Al-Maraj expressed his thanks to the Kuwait ministries of Health, Foreign Affairs, and Defense for their keenness to constantly communicate, provide for all the needs of the Libyan people, and facilitate aid transfers. — KUNA



Photo of the day



KUWAIT: (Clockwise) Black-winged stilts (*Himantopus himantopus*), a great egret (*Ardea alba*) and house crows (*Corvus splendens*) are pictured in the water at a beach in Kuwait City. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Arab ministers seek ways to help people with disabilities

Ministers discuss legislation, social, health and educational services

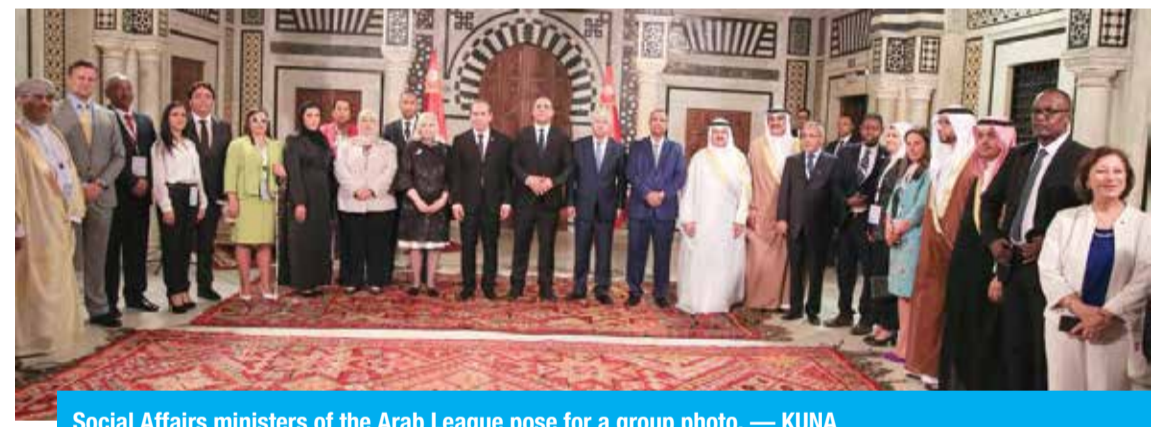
TUNIS: The Arab Ministers of Social Affairs discussed on Sunday the implementation of the second Arab pact for persons with disabilities in 2023–2032 with the participation of the Kuwaiti Minister of Social Affairs, Sheikh Feras Saud Al-Malik Al-Sabah. This came during the high-level forum on the implementation of the second Arab pact for people with disabilities, which was being held under the auspices of Tunisian President Kais in cooperation with the Arab League.

The Arab ministers discussed the exchange of experiences and expertise in order to control the mechanisms to ensure the implementation of the agreements resulting from the decision of the 32nd Arab Summit held in Saudi Arabia last May. The ministers also discussed legislation and policies, so-

cial, health and educational services to assist people with disabilities. The assistant secretary-general and head of the social affairs sector of the Arab League, Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, confirmed in a speech that the outcomes of this forum and its recommendations will be presented at the Arab Development Summit to be held in Mauritania after being presented to the Council of Ministers of Social Affairs in order to work on their implementation.

Tunisian Minister of Social Affairs Malek El Zahi

pledged to work in full coordination with the Arab ministers to move forward with the implementation of the pact for persons with disabilities and harmonize legislation, including helping to implement its provisions. He pointed out that Tunisia is working on drafting new laws, strategies and policies that reflect the changes in the concept of disability and contribute to the implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. — KUNA



Social Affairs ministers of the Arab League pose for a group photo. — KUNA

PAAET and KJA organize training program on media

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) and the Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) organized a joint training program on media. There were lectures from a group of lecturers who specialized in the field of media, with the participation of 25 trainees. Engineer Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, deputy director general of the applied training sector, underlined the joint training program between the commission and the Journalists Association, which is the first of its kind between the two entities.

Al-Tabtabaei explained that the program is be-

ing held for the first time in Kuwait and will last for six weeks. It will be concluded on December 21. The president of the Kuwait Journalists Association, Adnan Al-Rashed, said in a similar statement that the program is for those at the ministries of education and higher education, Kuwait University, private universities and the applied authority.

The trainees will receive diploma certificates approved by the applied authority and the Journalists Association. Al-Rashed praised the cooperation of the authority's leaders for the success of the program. The supervisor and coordinator of the training program, Fatima Al-Azmi, said that the program covers all the skills that workers need in public relations in the educational field. The director of the Ibn Al-Haytham training center, Eng Hamad Al-Hamad, confirmed that the center organizes about 300 courses annually, in which nearly 4,000 state employees participate. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) and Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) organize a joint training program on media. — KUNA photos



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Canada battered by 'never before seen' wildfire season

Silence falls on Nagorno-Karabakh

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The EU-Ukraine foreign ministers meet in the presence of Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky in this Ukrainian foreign ministry handout photo. — AFP photos

EU pledges lasting support for Kyiv

Bloc top diplomats meet for historic first gathering outside its borders

KYIV: The European Union signaled its long-term support for Ukraine on Monday as its foreign ministers convened in Kyiv for a historic first gathering outside the bloc's borders. The meeting came as disagreements grow among EU members over support for Ukraine and as Kyiv's forces make limited gains in a high-stakes counteroffensive against Russian troops.

"We are convening in a historic meeting of the EU foreign ministers here in Ukraine, candidate country and future member of the EU," the bloc's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said in a statement. The purpose of the meeting was to "express our solidarity and support to the Ukrainian people", he said, acknowledging that the gathering "does not have the aim of reaching concrete conclusions and decisions".

Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba hailed the discussions as an important signal of European support. "For the first time ever, the foreign affairs council is going to sit down outside of its current borders — outside the borders of the European Union — but within future borders of the European Union," Kuleba told reporters alongside Borrell. The EU's 27 nations have remained broadly united through the 19 months of war on their support for Ukraine, hitting Russia with 11 rounds of sanctions and spending billions of euros on arms for Kyiv.

'Lasting support'

But there are growing fears of cracks appearing within the bloc as concern also rises over the support of key backer the United States. Hungary, Russia's closest ally in the EU, could now be joined by Slovakia as a potential block to more backing as populist Robert Fico pushes for power in Bratislava after winning elections this weekend.

There have also been tensions between Kyiv and some of its most strident backers on the EU's eastern edge — most notably Poland — over the influx of Ukrainian grain onto their markets. France's top



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky (second left) and Josep Borrell (center) are seen in the EU-Ukraine foreign ministers' meeting in this handout photo released by the Ukrainian Presidential press service.

diplomat Catherine Colonna appeared to address the concerns, saying the meeting was a signal to Moscow of the bloc's determination to support Ukraine over the long term.

"It is a demonstration of our resolute and lasting support for Ukraine, until it can win," she told reporters. "It is also a message to Russia that it should not count on our fatigue. We will be there for a long time to come." The Kremlin, which anticipated a lightning-fast takeover of Ukraine, is counting on Western countries tiring in their support for Kyiv, and predicted Monday that fatigue over Ukraine "will grow".

'Winter protection plan'

Germany's Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock called for the creation of a strategy to insulate

Ukraine from the fallout of a feared campaign of Russian strikes on Ukraine's energy grid in the coming months as temperatures drop. "Ukraine needs a winter protection plan of air defense, generators and a strengthening of the energy supply," she said in Kyiv. "We saw last winter the brutal way in which the Russian president wages this war, with targeted attacks on critical infrastructure such as power plants."

Ukrainian authorities say Russia has launched systemic aerial attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure, a strategy that last year left millions without heating or water. The foreign ministers of Hungary, Poland and Latvia did not attend the summit, a Ukrainian government official told AFP on condition of anonymity. The Polish and Latvian representatives were ill, the official said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered troops into Ukraine in February 2022 and his army swept quick-

ly through large swathes of the south and east of the country but were beat back from the north. In June, Kyiv launched a long-awaited counteroffensive but has acknowledged slow progress as its forces encounter deep lines of heavily fortified Russian defenses. "With every village, every meter that Ukraine liberates, with every meter where it is saving its people's lives, it also paves its way into the European Union," Baerbock said.

On Monday, Ukraine's Interior Minister Igor Klymenko said Russia shelled the city of Kherson in the south, critically wounding a civilian and two police. Police also said a civilian was killed by Russian fire in the nearly encircled town of Avdiivka in the war-battered Donetsk region in the east. Separately, Kyiv's intelligence service said that Ukraine's drones at the weekend had struck a plant that produces cruise missiles in the western region of Smolensk. — AFP



KYIV: This handout photograph taken by the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs shows Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba (right) and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell (center) attending a flowers laying ceremony at the Memory Wall of Fallen Defenders of Ukraine.

Turkey strikes PKK rebels after Ankara blast

ANKARA: Turkish jets launched air strikes inside Iraqi Kurdistan late Sunday, after a blast earlier the same day injured two police officers near the parliament building in Ankara. In the hours following the bombing, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had already vowed that "terrorists" would never achieve their aims.

The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), listed as a terror group by Turkey and its Western allies, claimed responsibility for the blast. It has waged a deadly insurgency against Ankara for four decades. The district targeted in the bombing 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 said.

The interior ministry said two attackers had 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," Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya told journalists outside the ministry. "The other was killed by a bullet to the head before he had a chance to blow himself up." Two police officers were slightly injured in the exchange



ANKARA: Members of Turkish Police Special Forces secure the area near the Interior Ministry following the bomb attack on Oct 1, 2023. — AFP

of fire, but their lives were not in danger, he added. The Ankara prosecutor's office said it had opened an investigation and banned access to the area. Local media were asked to stop broadcasting images from the scene of the attack.

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 Interior Ministry". On Sunday evening, an official in Iraqi Kurdistan reported Turkish army planes bombing parts of the Bradost region and the village of Badran. Turkey's defense ministry acknowledged an "air operation" in northern Iraq to "neutralize the PKK". The ministry said that "20 targets used by terrorists" had been destroyed.

In his opening remarks, Erdogan also slammed the European Union for stalling his country's membership bid, 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. For months, Erdogan has been putting pressure on Sweden to take action against Quran desecrations that have strained relations between the two countries. — AFP

Negligence feared as Spain probes fatal nightclub fire

MURCIA: A Spanish nightclub that was ravaged by fire over the weekend, killing 13 people, had been ordered to shut in 2022, authorities said on Monday, as an investigation began into the cause of the tragedy. The blaze — which broke out early on Sunday in a building housing the Fonda Milagros and Teatre discos on the outskirts of the southeastern city of Murcia — is Spain's deadliest nightclub fire in over three decades.

Murcia city council had in January 2022 ordered the closure of the nightclubs because the company that operated them only had a license for one venue — the Teatre — and not for Fonda, which was created later, deputy mayor Antonio Navarro told a news conference. Navarro said the authorities would get to the bottom of who was responsible, without explaining why the discos were still operating.

Firefighters on Monday combed through the wreckage of the nightclub complex, which was cordoned off with police tape marked "do not cross". Police suspect the fire broke out in the Fonda nightclub and then spread — as patrons raced to escape — to the Teatre and to a third nightclub in the building called the Golden. "The fatalities were all concentrated in a very small area in the Fonda establishment," police spokesman Diego Seral said, adding that a birthday party was being held there at the time. Vid-

eo footage released by the Murcia fire brigade shows the firefighters carrying a long hose approaching fierce flames inside the venue, passing bar tables that still had drinks on them.

The fire appears to have spread through the air conditioning vents "which is why it spread so quickly", said the central government's representative in Murcia, Francisco Jimenez. All the people who were reported missing after the fire have been accounted for, including three people who were at a beach and had their mobile phones turned off, and officials said they did not expect to find any more bodies.

The dead included people from Colombia, Ecuador and Nicaragua, as well as Spain. Police said three of the victims had been identified by their fingerprints. The rest of the bodies will have to be identified using DNA samples from close relatives. "We must be patient with the identification of the bodies ... The bodies are very badly burned and it is going to be very difficult for experts to work on them," Jimenez added.

Officials said four people — two women aged 22 and 25 years old and two men in their forties — were treated for smoke inhalation. The city's bars and restaurants closed on Sunday as a mark of respect for the victims, local hotel-restaurant association Hoytu said. — AFP

International

Silence falls on Nagorno-Karabakh

Lachin corridor all but deserted as refugee exodus comes to end

LACHIN CORRIDOR: Silence has returned to the mountain road down which most of the population of Nagorno-Karabakh fled after the self-proclaimed republic surrendered to Azerbaijani troops. After nine days of fear and panic, the exodus of Armenians is over with the Lachin Corridor that links Karabakh to Armenia all but deserted except for a rare car, said AFP reporters there on a visit organized by Azerbaijani authorities.

On a hill, the Armenian flag flew next to a group of civilian volunteers waiting for the last refugees to arrive. In the middle of a bridge between them and an Azerbaijani checkpoint, sat an armored car belonging to Russian peacekeepers deployed there as part of a peace deal after the 2020 war that Armenia lost. A clapped-out old Russian 4X4 puffed up to the Azerbaijani customs, with a mattress, furniture and a bike strapped to its roof.

Its driver, Sergei Astsarian, showed his ID to the Azerbaijanis, who are equipped with the latest digital technology. The 40-year-old shopkeeper said he finally decided to leave his home in the rebel capital of Stepanakert, which gave up its 30-year separatist struggle after a lightning offensive by Azerbaijani troops. In the past few days, Astsarian said he had been living in the city "alone, like the last of the Mohicans" and was concerned that he might get stuck there forever.

'You can stay'

Despite appeals by Azerbaijan for ethnic Armenians to stay in Karabakh, Astsarian said he left because

there had been no "concrete guarantees", just "verbal" ones. "I spoke to the police and they said: 'You can stay'. I said: 'To do what?'" "But if we want to come back, they said: 'No problem, you can live in your homes. And for those of you who have been living in Azeri homes, there will be new ones built.'"

Tens of thousands of ethnic Azerbaijanis fled Karabakh during a war in the 1990s and many now dream of returning. Astsarian said he hoped to join relatives living in Europe. After a quick inspection, the car crept forward to go under a huge X-ray scanner, before Astsarian drove on towards the Armenian flag, without looking back. But further up the road taken by the more than 100,000 refugees who have fled to Armenia in just over a week there were eerie remains of the exodus.

Abandoned belongings

Strewn on the side of the road were everything from a pink pram to an elegant hat, to a bathtub and a burnt-out Lada — objects abandoned by ethnic Armenians from Karabakh on their flight. There were several Russian checkpoints on the road that winds through the valley and no Azerbaijani soldiers could be seen — only Azerbaijan's internal security forces.

In Lissagorsk, a yellow minibus laden with luggage could be seen stopped under a Russian flag at one of the checkpoints. On board were around 15 elderly men looking out at a foggy road through dirty windows. They declined to say where they were from.



STEPANAKERT: Debris and car seats are strewn along the side of a road on the outskirts of the city of Stepanakert, retaken last week by Azeri troops, in Azerbaijan's controlled region of Nagorno-Karabakh, on Oct 2, 2023. — AFP

There has been very little information filtering through from the rebel capital Stepanakert, known as Khankendi in Azeri, whose population of 55,000 has mostly left after the separatists' surrender last month. The city is still inaccessible to the media for "security reasons".

For the first time in 30 years, a UN

mission visited the enclave on Sunday to assess the humanitarian needs there. White trucks belonging to the International Committee of the Red Cross, among the few humanitarian agencies able to access the enclave, could be seen on the Lachin road. The Red Cross is engaged in "life-saving activities" such as

transporting the wounded and bringing medical supplies, the organization's operations manager Carlos Morazzani said in Geneva on Friday. He said they were also working on transporting the corpses of civilians and soldiers killed in the fighting last month following a "large influx of bodies". — AFP

Separatist officials stay in Karabakh to retrieve victims

YEREVAN: Armenian separatists from Nagorno-Karabakh said Monday their officials would stay in the region after Azerbaijan's offensive for rescue operations, as Yerevan reported "casualties" in a border shoot out with Baku's forces. Separatists say over 200 people were killed in fighting Azerbaijan late last month and that a further 170 died when a fuel depot exploded as scores of civilians fled Karabakh over fears of ethnic cleansing.

After three decades of Armenian control, the separatist authorities have agreed to disarm, dissolve their government and reintegrate with Azerbaijan in the wake of Baku's one-day military operation in late September. Almost all of the around 120,000 residents of the mountainous region fled after Baku's offensive.

The separatist government however said leader Samvel Shahramanyan will stay in Karabakh's main city of Stepanakert with a group of officials "until the search and rescue operations for the remainder of those killed and those missing" were completed. "The government continues to focus on the issue of those citizens who want to move to the Republic of Armenia," the government added in a statement.

Separatist official Artak Beglaryan said "a few hundred" Armenian representatives remained in Karabakh. He said they included "officials, emergency service, volunteers, some persons with special needs."

Separatists in jail

Yerevan reported "casualties" on its side, saying Azerbaijani forces had fired on "a vehicle carrying



STEPANAKERT: A billboard with the image of the Russian President Vladimir Putin and Armenian flags hanging from lamp posts as Azeri police patrol a road leading into the city of Stepanakert in Azerbaijan's controlled region of Nagorno-Karabakh. — AFP

food" for its soldiers in a border region. Armenia said the incident took place near the eastern village of Kut. Azerbaijan rejected the claim.

Yerevan has accused Azerbaijan of conducting a campaign of "ethnic cleansing" to clear Karabakh of its Armenian population. Baku has denied the claim and called on Armenian residents of the territory to stay and "re-integrate" into Azerbaijan, saying their rights would be guaranteed. AFP journalists on Monday saw a convoy carrying water and communica-

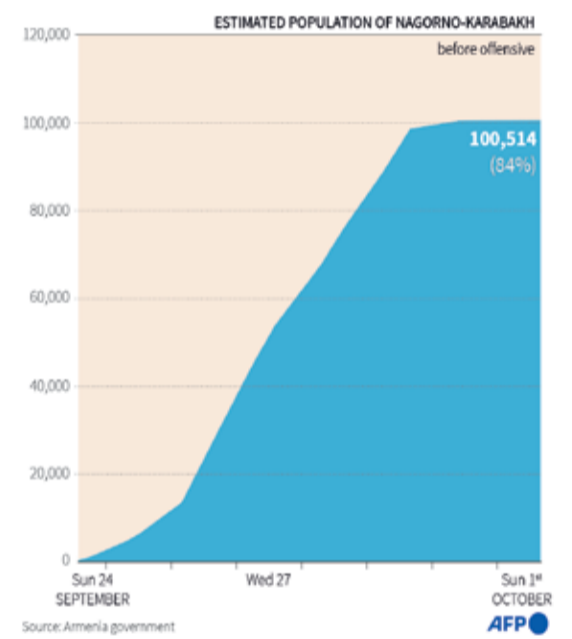
tions workers that was allowed to enter Stepanakert. The convoy was escorted by the Azerbaijani army. They also saw a bus carrying officials who planned to open a "re-integration" office in the city for any ethnic Armenians wishing to register with Azerbaijani authorities. Azerbaijan is holding "re-integration" talks with separatist leaders.

Several senior representatives of its former government and military command have been detained, including Ruben Vardanyan — a reported billionaire

Nagorno-Karabakh: 100,000 refugees have fled to Armenia

As of October 1st at 1600 GMT

■ Refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh since the offensive by Azerbaijan



who headed the Nagorno-Karabakh government between November 2022 and February. His four children released a statement on social media Monday demanding his release "from the illegal imprisonment on the territory of Azerbaijan", saying they "feared for his life and health." Azerbaijan's Prosecutor General Kamran Aliyev said criminal investigations had been initiated into war crimes committed by 300 separatist officials. "I urge those persons to surrender voluntarily," he told journalists on Sunday. — AFP

Oil industry 'central' to climate solutions...

Continued from Page 1

envoy John Kerry, partly by emphasizing his belief that "the phase-down of fossil fuels is inevitable" — a message he repeated on Monday. At the same time top oil executives and officials from major oil-producing countries have advocated ramped-up investment to meet demand and stave off energy shortages.

Kuwaiti Oil Ministry Undersecretary Sheikh Nimer Fahad Al-Sabah affirmed Monday Kuwait's commitment to agreements supporting decarbonization efforts and boosting cooperation to meet future demands, as per the leadership's directives on heading towards renewable energy. Sheikh Nimer stated this to KUNA following ADIPEC's opening ceremony.

The ministry official underscored the importance

of such an event, saying that he is looking forward to the constructive discussions and fruitful negotiations it would promote, especially as leading figures in the sector will be in attendance. ADIPEC, sponsored by Emirati President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, is a platform allowing energy sector to come together with other sectors to find solutions and arrive at future visions.

Haitam Al-Ghais, secretary general of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), told the conference that calls to cease fossil fuel investments were dangerous. "We see calls to stop investing in oil. We believe this is counterproductive," he said. "This puts countries... from Europe and many other parts of the world at risk, because the cornerstone of global economic prosperity today is energy security." Instead, he called for investments of \$600 billion per year between now and 2045 "just for the oil industry". He added: "This is what it requires to be able to achieve energy security for Europe, for the rest of the world." — Agencies

Results of the 2020 presidential election won by Democrat Joe Biden. Trump will then be back in New York state court, this time on charges of paying hush money to a porn star, and later in a Florida federal court, where he is accused of mishandling classified documents after leaving office. Finally, he will also have to answer to state charges in Georgia, where prosecutors say Trump illegally tried to get the southern state's 2020 election results changed in his favor.

In the New York case, Engoron ruled that Trump, his two eldest sons and other Trump Organization executives lied to tax collectors, lenders and insurers for years in a scheme that exaggerated the value of their properties by \$812 million to \$2.2 billion between 2014 and 2021. The judge revoked the business licenses that allowed the Trump Organization to operate some of its New York properties.

Actually enforcing such penalties would be "a major blow to Donald Trump's ability to do business in the state of New York going forward," Will Thomas, a professor of business law at the University of Michigan, told AFP. Trump — who made his reputation and fortune as a real estate mogul in the 1980s — could eventually lose control over many of his company's flagship properties, such as his 5th Avenue Trump Tower in Manhattan. — AFP

Medicine Nobel goes to mRNA...

Continued from Page 1

Unlike traditional vaccines which use weakened virus or a key piece of the virus' protein, mRNA vaccines provide the genetic molecules that tell cells what proteins to make, which simulates an infection and trains the immune system for when it encounters the real virus. The idea was first demonstrated in 1990 but it wasn't until the mid-2000s that Weissman, of the US, and Hungarian-born Kariko developed a technique to control a dangerous inflammatory response seen in animals exposed to these molecules, opening the way to develop safe human vaccines.

The honor is particularly sweet for Kariko, the 13th woman to win the Medicine Prize, who toiled in obscurity for years and struggled to convince her superiors of the need for research on messenger ribonucleic acid. Speaking to Swedish Radio (SR), she said her late mother always had faith in her, listening to the Nobel prize announcements "year after year" hoping to hear her daughter's name called out. "Unfortunately, five years ago she passed at the age of 89. She might be listening from above," Kariko said.

Thomas Perlmann, the secretary general of the Nobel Assembly, called Kariko "an extraordinary and unusual scientist" who "resisted any temptation" to do "something easier". Weissman told AFP he heard the news from Kariko, who received the call from the jury first. "We were wondering if somebody was pulling a prank on us. This is the ultimate — this is the prize I thought of when I was five years old when I started to get interested in how things worked," he said.

In the 1990s, Kariko believed mRNA held the key to treating diseases where having more of the right kind of protein can help — like repairing the brain after a stroke. But the University of Pennsylvania, where Kariko was on track for a professorship, decided to demote her after grant rejections piled up. She carried on as a lower-rung researcher. Much of the scientific community was at the time focused on using DNA to deliver gene therapy but Kariko believed that mRNA was also promising since

most diseases are not hereditary and don't need solutions that permanently alter our genetics.

First though, she had to overcome the problem of the massive inflammatory response in animal experiments, as the immune system sensed an invader and rushed to fight it. Kariko and Weissman discovered that one of the four building blocks of the synthetic mRNA was at fault — and they could overcome the problem by swapping it for a modified version. They published a paper on the breakthrough in 2005.

In 2015, they found a new way to deliver mRNA into mice, using a fatty coating called "lipid nanoparticles" that prevent the mRNA from degrading and help place it inside the right part of cells. Both these innovations were key to the COVID-19 vaccines developed by Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna.

Nobel Committee member Olle Kamppe said the prestigious prize may help sway the opinion of some anti-vaxxers. It "may make hesitant people take the vaccine and be sure that it's very efficient and safe", he told AFP. The technology is now being used to develop other treatments for cancer, influenza and heart failure, among others. — AFP

Inferno guts Egypt police...

Continued from Page 1

and emergency services are often slow to arrive. In Aug 2022, a fire blamed on a short circuit killed 41 worshippers in a Cairo Coptic church, prompting calls to improve infrastructure and response times. Most suffocated while trying to flee the building, and others jumped out of windows to escape the blaze, as firefighters took over an hour to arrive through a maze of alleyways.

Monday's fire in Ismailia raged through one of dozens of new police headquarters that have been built or renovated across the country over the past decade. In March 2021, at least 20 people died in a fire at a textile factory in the capital, after two hospital fires killed 14 people the previous year. — AFP

Trump empire under threat as...

Continued from Page 1

"This has to do with election interference, plain and simple," Trump said as he arrived for the opening day of what could be a three-month trial. "What we have here is an attempt to hurt me in an election."

New York Judge Arthur Engoron has already ruled that Trump and his sons Eric and Don Jr committed fraud by inflating the value of the real estate and financial assets of the Trump Organization for years. New York Attorney General Letitia James is now seeking \$250 million in penalties and the removal of Trump and his sons from management of the family empire. "Justice will prevail," James told reporters before delivering opening arguments. "No matter how powerful you are, no matter how much money you think you may have, no one is above the law," she said.

Trump, arriving in court, denounced the case as a "scam" and a "witch hunt". "It's a sham," he said. "My financial statements are phenomenal." Trump is scheduled to appear before a federal judge in Washington on March 4, 2024 on charges of trying to overthrow the

Canada battered by 'never before seen' wildfire season

Unlike Europe, Canada lacks means to fight huge forest fires: Official

NORMÉTAL: When scientists started pouring over data to assess Canada's fire season this year, they struggled to find the right superlatives. "Never before seen," was thrown around, as was "exceptional in scale, duration" and "huge long-term consequences." "We have shattered all the records on a Canadian scale," says a shaken Yan Boulanger, a researcher for the country's natural resources ministry.

There had never been so many areas burned -- 18 million hectares (70,000 square miles), via 6,400 fires -- or so many people evacuated, at more than 200,000. "It's an impressive wake-up call because we didn't necessarily expect it so quickly, even if the potential was there," Boulanger, a forest fire specialist at Natural Resources Canada, told AFP.

In Quebec, hard hit and less accustomed than the west to very large fires, the shock is immense. No more leaves on the branches, trunks blackened and roots charred: in the spruce forest of Abitibi-Temiscamingue, only a few tufts of moss managed to resist the onslaught of blazes that started in June. As far as the eye can see, there is the same desolate landscape. "There is little chance that this forest will be able to regenerate. The trees are too young to have had time to form cones which ensure the next generation," says Maxence Martin, a professor of forest ecology at the University of Quebec in Abitibi-Temiscamingue. In this remote region, forestry is the main industry, supporting entire towns with the 60,000 direct and indirect jobs linked to it. But both the industry and the wildfires have significantly reshaped the landscape.

Losing one third of forest

"If we continue on the current trend (of fires), by 2100 as much as one third of the boreal forest in Quebec will have been lost," says Martin, slomping among the regrowth starting to poke through the scorched ground. This area is part of a vast ring of greenery which encircles the Arctic, stretching from Canada through Alaska, Siberia and northern Europe to form the largest expanse of wilderness in the world. Fires

here are fueled by drier and hotter conditions caused by climate change. And by releasing greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, these fires in turn contribute to global warming, in a vicious circle. Another particularity of this northern forest: it releases 10 to 20 times more carbon per unit of burned area than other ecosystems. That's helped Canada's emissions reach unprecedented levels, at 473 megatons this year. That's more than three times higher than the previous record, according to data from Europe's Copernicus observatory.

And in the boreal forest, due to the thickness of the humus on the ground, fires can continue to burn for months. "When we explain to people that the fires will only really be extinguished with snow, everyone becomes eager for winter to arrive," Guy Lafreniere, the mayor of Lebel-sur-Quevillon, a small Quebec town of 2,000 residents who had to evacuate twice this summer, says with a smile.

Homes were saved thanks to the nearby lake which halted the advance of the fire. But the whole summer was disrupted, no child finished their school year and hundreds of small chalets built in the forest for weekends and vacations were destroyed. Today the city is surrounded by fire breaks, built during the blazes. A ring of conifers -- which are very flammable -- were chopped down. "We had a helicopter dumping water on the machines as they moved along chopping down the trees, so the machines didn't themselves catch on fire," the mayor recalled.

Overwhelmed

Much of Canada, including the far north, is facing extreme drought conditions. Lightning storms earlier this year triggered hundreds of fires in a single day. Firefighters, authorities and residents were overwhelmed and declared emergencies persisting through the summer. "People had five minutes to leave their homes and hit the road. It was intense and stressful, especially since there was a lot of smoke and we could see the flames very close," says Doris Nolet, in charge of volunteer firefighters from Normetal, another evacuated Quebec village. "It was the first time that we were faced with forest fires. We know how to take care of houses, car fires, but not forest fires," she adds. "We had a strange summer," confirms Omer Riviere, who lives in this village and remains traumatized at having lost his chalet in the forest where "he had old furniture and, above all, so many memories."



NORMÉTAL: In this aerial photo, Omer Riviere and Serge Racette stand in front of Riviere's destroyed hunting camp in West Quebec, Canada. — AFP

For the first time in its history, almost all Canadians were affected by this year's fire season, either directly

or because they had to deal with the smoke, which traveled thousands of miles -- repeatedly polluting the air across North America and even parts of Europe. "We need to think deeply. It's not Europe here, we don't have the means to fight all the fires. They are too far away, too big, too inaccessible -- so we have to be proactive," suggests Natural Resources Canada's Marc-Andre Parisien. While the mega fires of 2023 are now smoldering, they'll almost certainly be back again. — AFP

Hong Kong steps up surveillance to 'tame' activists

HONG KONG: Hong Kong unionist Joe Wong had applied for permission to hold a Labor Day march, but cancelled his request to police in an abrupt U-turn after he briefly went missing. He cannot reveal what led to the change of heart, a result of a confidentiality clause in a sweeping national security law Beijing imposed on Hong Kong in 2020 to quell dissent.

Three years after the law's enactment, activists say Hong Kong's police have stepped up surveillance -- pre-emptively discouraging rallies before applications are filed, paying home visits in the lead-up to days seen as politically sensitive and summoning organizers for warning chats. "It's impossible to organize any large-scale rally and march now," fellow labor unionist Denny To told AFP. "It's certainly a process of taming."

The clampdown on perceived dissent in Hong Kong appears to extend well beyond traditional opposition parties like the League of Social Democrats. It has hit groups like a women's association and even a Cantonese language preservation association whose founder's home was searched last month, with police demanding the removal of a fictional essay depicting a dystopian future Hong Kong. "It appears the striking range has expanded," said Chan Po-ying, leader of the League of Social Democrats.

For some, police visits have become regular occurrences, according to seven activists who spoke with AFP. But details of police conversations cannot be shared due to the law's confidentiality clause. "The impacts are invisible," said To. In response to queries about new tactics deployed by the national security department, Hong Kong police told AFP they "take appropriate actions ... according to the laws".

'For our own good'

Semi-autonomous Hong Kong -- which enjoys greater freedoms compared to mainland China -- once had a vibrant civil society. It bolstered 2019's massive and at times violent pro-democracy protest movement. Since Beijing's crackdown on dissent, which saw thousands arrested, Hong Kong's streets have been clear of marchers. Even events like International Women's Day marches have been dropped. The Hong Kong Women Workers' Association had planned its first post-pandemic rally for March 8, receiving permission after applying for it. But three days later, they withdrew their application. The association is not allowed to say what led to the withdrawal due to the national security law's confidentiality clause. Police told reporters safety could not be guaranteed at the march after they saw comments online suggesting the event be "hijacked". Four members of the League of Social Democrats were warned not to join the march "for our own good", Chan told a radio program at the time.

One activist told AFP police warned him -- as well as a dozen of his acquaintances -- against participating. "Some received phone calls, some had their homes visited by officers carrying a search warrant hinting that if they did not cooperate, they would face more forceful actions," he said. Hong Kong leader John Lee has said groups with no "capability ... should not organize such public events." Activists have also experienced heightened police attention in the lead-up to two key dates in recent years. One is June 4, the anniversary of the Tiananmen massacre in Beijing. The other is July 1, the day Britain handed its former colony back to China 26 years ago. "I asked why they would come to me ... and they said those days were 'high-risk days'," one activist whose group is now disbanded told AFP on condition of anonymity. Prior to the crackdown, massive crowds of people from all walks of life would gather on these two dates every year -- an indication of the relative freedom the city enjoyed. But the annual June 4 vigils were forced to stop, while July 1 this year saw no sign of protests. —AFP



HONG KONG: Police patrol near a carnival at Victoria Park to celebrate the 26th anniversary of the city's handover from Britain to China on July 1, 2023. — AFP

Outcry in Sri Lanka over jail terms for social media misuse

COLOMBO: Sri Lankan rights groups warned Monday that proposed jail terms for spreading misinformation on social media amounted to a wholesale effort to stifle criticism of the island nation's beleaguered government. An "online safety bill" that mandates five-year prison sentences for any social media post government regulators consider to be "false" or causing offence is set to be presented to parliament this week. The draft law compels social media platforms to divulge the identity of any-

mous users accused of those crimes with a 10 million rupee (\$31,000) fine for non-compliance. "This is a very draconian piece of legislation that will have a chilling effect on the entire population," Lasantha Ruhunuge of the Sri Lanka Working Journalists' Association told reporters.

He added that the government was trying to suppress democratic dissent and censor criticism over corruption, mismanagement and abuse of power by politicians and top officials. The bill is listed for consideration on Tuesday but it cannot be debated for at least two weeks to allow challenges to its legality in the Supreme Court.

Ruhunuge's organization is part of a coalition of 18 civil society groups opposing the bill, which would also force internet service providers to block accounts the government considers harmful to the national interest. —AFP



DHAKA: Men receive treatment as they suffer from dengue fever, at the Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital in Dhaka on Oct 2, 2023. — AFP

Bangladesh dengue deaths top 1,000 in worst outbreak

DHAKA: More than 1,000 people in Bangladesh have died of dengue fever this year, the country's worst recorded outbreak of the mosquito-borne disease, which is increasing in frequency due to climate change. Dengue is a disease endemic to tropical areas and causes high fevers, headaches, nausea, vomiting, muscle pain and, in the most serious cases, bleeding that can lead to death.

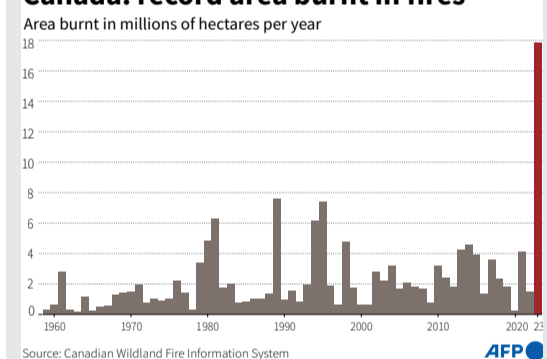
The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned that dengue -- and other diseases caused by mosquito-borne viruses such as chikungunya, yellow fever and Zika -- are spreading faster and further due to climate change. Figures from Bangladesh's Directorate General of Health Services published on Sunday night said 1,006 people had died, among more than 200,000 confirmed cases.

The agency's former director Be-Nazir Ahmed said the number of deaths so far this year was higher than every previous year combined since 2000. "It's a massive health event, both in Bangladesh and in the world," he told AFP on Monday. The new figures dwarf the previous highest total from 2022, when 281 deaths were recorded for the full year. Among the dead are 112 children aged 15 and under, including infants.

Scientists have attributed this year's outbreak to irregular rainfall and hotter temperatures during the annual monsoon season that have created ideal breeding conditions for mosquitoes. "It's not happening only in Bangladesh -- many tropical and sub-tropical countries are experiencing dengue this year," Kabirul Bashar, a zoology professor at Jahangirnagar University in Dhaka, told AFP in September.

The Aedes mosquito that carries dengue thrives at "an optimum temperature for the multiplication of the virus", he added. "Global climate change is playing a role in providing this temperature level." Bangladesh has recorded cases of dengue from the 1960s but documented its first outbreak of dengue hemorrhagic fever, a severe and sometimes fatal symptom of the disease, in 2000. —AFP

Canada: record area burnt in fires



By the numbers: Canada's 2023 wildfires

MONTREAL: From east to west, Canada has endured an historic fire season that began very early in the spring and has lasted for more than five months. Due to its geographical location the country is warming faster than the rest of the world and has faced more and more extreme weather events whose intensity and frequency are rising in part due to climate change. These figures outline how the crisis is unfolding.

18 millions hectares burned

An area the size of Tunisia has already gone up in smoke: more than 18 million hectares have burned, eclipsing the previous record of 7.3 million hectares in 1989, according to the Canadian Inter-agency Forest Fire Centre.

Some provinces like Quebec, although less accustomed to megafires than those in the west, were severely affected. The French-speaking province even holds the record for hectares burned this year at more than 5.2 million, followed by the Northwest Territories in the far north at over 4 million.

In total, Canada has recorded nearly 6,500 forest fires since the start of the year. A large part of them were caused by lightning strikes amid severe drought conditions. By the end of September, their numbers dwindled but some 900 fires were still active, mainly in the west of the country.

Record carbon emissions

Carbon emissions from wildfires reached unprecedented levels (473 megatons), more than three times higher than any previous year, according to European Copernicus observatory data. Canadian wildfires alone in 2023 represent to date a third of global carbon emissions linked to forest fires (1,455 megatons).

Heavy toll

More than 200,000 people have been displaced by wildfires in Canada and eight firefighters lost their lives. In Quebec, the equivalent of 10 years of logging went up in smoke in a few weeks, according to initial estimates, risking a forestry crisis. The industry is currently engaged in a race against time to recover as much wood as possible before the still usable charred trunks are devoured by insects.

In many provinces, the costs of fighting fires have soared. In the west of the country, British Columbia announced Thursday that 2023 is officially its costliest wildfire season ever. These higher-than-expected costs added Can\$2.5 billion to the deficit for the provincial government this year. —AFP

Business

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2023

IMF: Climate goal reliant on private sector investment

\$2tn would need to be invested annually by 2030 to attain 2050 goal

WASHINGTON: The private sector must drastically increase its climate-related investments, most crucially in developing countries, for the world to reach net zero carbon by 2050, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said in a report published Monday. To attain the 2050 goal, \$2 trillion would need to be invested annually by 2030, according to data from the International Energy Agency (IEA) cited in the report.

But this is far above the estimated \$400 billion planned for the next seven years, the IMF said. The report warns that countries, especially ones with emerging or developing economies, will not be able to increase their debt levels by an average of 45-50 percent. "We consider this as fiscally unsustainable," Ruud de Mooij, deputy director of the IMF's fiscal affairs department, said in an online press conference. The good news, he said, is that 90 percent of the technologies needed to reduce emissions by 2030 already exist. But to reach sufficient deployment, according to the report, private sector must double its contribution from 40 percent to 80 percent.

The report is part of the fund's Global Financial Stability Report (GFSR), which will be released in full at the IMF and World Bank's annual meetings, beginning October 9 in Marrakesh. While some emerging countries, such as China and India, have a well-resourced private sector, this is not the case elsewhere, which means creating the conditions to attract international investment will be necessary, according to the IMF. Fabio Natalucci,



The private sector will have to cover a major share of the large climate mitigation investment needs in emerging market and developing economies (EMDEs).

deputy director of the IMF, said more work had to be done to improve developing nations' credit ratings.

He said that about 40 percent of emerging markets are rated sub-investment grade, meaning, for now, "they're not part of the investable universe." The projected investment is a fivefold increase from the current \$400 billion of climate investments planned over the next seven years, and the majority of the required funding needs to flow into the energy industry, the

Washington-based fund said in its report.

"We project that growth in public investment, however, will be limited, and that the private sector will therefore need to make a major contribution toward the large climate investment needs for emerging market and developing economies," IMF economists said in a separate blog post on Monday.

"The private sector will need to supply about 80 per cent of the required investment, and this share rises to 90 per cent

when China is excluded." Insufficient investment into climate mitigation efforts, especially when it comes to increasing renewable energy capacity, has stoked fears that the world – and emerging and developing countries in particular – could fail to achieve its climate goals.

The world can still reach the goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 but "bolder action" is required this decade to triple renewable energy capacity, more than double clean energy investment and

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

GLOBAL FINANCIAL STABILITY REPORT

strengthen international co-operation, the IEA said last month.

The world has to increase clean energy spending to \$4.5 trillion per year by the start of the next decade, from the \$1.8 trillion expected in 2023, to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, the IEA said in its updated Net Zero Roadmap report.

Countries also need to triple the global installed renewables energy capacity to 11,000 gigawatts by 2030, the Paris-based agency said. The IEA last month called for an "equitable transition" that takes into account different national circumstances in which advanced economies reach net zero sooner to allow emerging and developing economies more time. — AFP and Agencies

US manufacturing slumps less than expected in Sept

WASHINGTON: US manufacturing beat predictions to contract by less than analysts expected in September despite continued weakness of new orders, survey data showed Monday. The Institute for Supply Management's (ISM) manufacturing index came in higher than expected at 49 percent in September, up from 47.6 percent a month earlier.

This was 1.0 percent above the median expectation of economists surveyed by MarketWatch, but below the 50 percent threshold indicating growth in the sector. "The US manufacturing sector continued its contraction trend but at a slower rate, recording its best performance since November 2022," ISM survey chief Timothy Fiore said in a statement.

Nevertheless, September marks the 11th straight month of contraction, signaling ongoing challenges in the manufacturing sector. The Federal Reserve has been on an aggressive campaign of interest rate hikes to tackle high inflation since March last year, which hits consumer demand.

Fiore said companies were still managing orders as softness continues, adding that the monthly improvement in September was "a clear positive." The ISM's index for new orders slowed its decline, while the index for new export orders also continued in contraction territory, "but with a marginal increase," Fiore



Workers put engines on the frame as Ford Motor Co fuel powered F-150 trucks are under production at the truck plant in Dearborn, Michigan in this file photo. — AFP

said. Meanwhile, confidence among Japan's largest manufacturers rose as business conditions improved for the second-straight quarter, a key survey showed Monday. The Bank of Japan's closely watched quarterly Tankan survey is considered the broadest indicator of how Japanese businesses are faring.

It reports the difference between the percentage of firms that are upbeat and those that see conditions as unfavorable. A positive figure means more businesses feel optimistic than pessimistic.

Among major manufacturers, business confidence rose to plus nine from plus five three months earlier, the survey showed. The headline figure—the highest level since June last year—came after the first improvement in seven quarters in July, and beat market expectations of plus six. Optimism also grew among non-manufacturers, from plus 23 to plus 27, which was the sixth-straight quarterly improvement and the highest level since November 1991 and against market expectations of plus 24. — AFP

Abu Dhabi's non-oil GDP grew 12.3% in Q2

ABU DHABI: Abu Dhabi's non-oil gross domestic product grew by an annual 12.3 percent to \$41.96 billion in the second quarter of this year, the highest since 2014, as the emirate continues to diversify. The emirate's total GDP for the three months to the end of June also grew by 3.5 percent on an annual basis, underpinning the "competitiveness and resili-

ence" of its economy, which has helped it to ward off global headwinds, the Statistics Centre Abu Dhabi said on Monday.

Non-oil economic activity has carried Abu Dhabi's momentum forward from the first quarter of this year, when it reached a record Dh146 billion, according to government data. The value of Abu Dhabi's total real GDP in the second quarter also hit a record Dh287 billion. The robust growth of non-oil activities pushed the sector's contribution to GDP to 53.7 percent, the Statistics Centre said, citing preliminary data. "The continued strong performance of Abu Dhabi's economy despite mounting challenges in the global economic landscape reaffirms success of the emirate's diversification

strategy and adaptability to market shifts," said Ahmed Al-Zaabi, chairman of Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development. "Our comprehensive strategies, prudent policies, countercyclical measures, and business-friendly ecosystem further enhance Abu Dhabi's position as a rising economic powerhouse and preferred destination for talents, businesses and investments."

The emirate remains committed to delivering the objectives of "our Falcon economy to reach new heights of sustainable development", Al-Zaabi said.

Abu Dhabi has launched several initiatives to improve the ease of doing business as it aims to attract more investment into the emirate and diversify its economy away from hydrocarbons. — Agencies

Evergrande applies to resume HK trading Tuesday

HONG KONG: Heavily indebted Chinese property giant Evergrande said Monday it had applied to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange to resume trading its shares in the city the following morning. Evergrande has become a symbol of China's ballooning property-sector crisis that has seen several

high-profile firms engulfed in a sea of debt, fueling fears about the country's wider economy and a possible spillover globally.

A statement on the Hong Kong bourse website said an "application has been made by the company to the Stock Exchange for the resumption of trading... with effect from 9:00 am on 3 October 2023".

The real estate behemoth announced last Thursday its chief was suspected of "illegal crimes" following the suspension of its shares from trading that day. Thursday's announcement by the company to the exchange came a day after media reports that boss Xu Jiayin was being held by police.

No specific reason was given for the decision to

suspend share trading, which also affected the company's property services and electric vehicle units.

Monday's applications to resume trading applied to the Evergrande Group and its services arm, while there was no such request for the EV unit. It is just weeks since the firm resumed trading following a 17-month halt caused by its failure to publish its financial results.

Evergrande estimated it had debts of \$328 billion at the end of June. The company said last month it was unable to issue new debt because its subsidiary, Hengda Real Estate Group, was being investigated and key meetings planned for debt restructuring were shelved. The firm said it was "necessary to re-

European telecom firms urge EU to make big tech pay

BRUSSELS: The heads of European telecoms firms, including Orange and Vodafone, on Monday urged the EU to make tech and streaming giants pay for the massive amounts of bandwidth they use.

The idea is not new but has ignited a fierce debate. Telecoms giants say that they need more money to maintain and update the infrastructure to meet Europe's voracious data needs, and that it would be fairer if firms like Netflix contributed towards the cost.

But tech behemoths say telecoms companies already get money from customers, while digital rights activists fear making web giants pay would create a two-speed internet. "Big tech companies pay today almost nothing for data transport in our networks, far from covering the costs needed to expand networks," a letter published by the European telecoms lobby group ETNO and signed by 20 CEOs said.

"A fair and proportionate contribution from the largest traffic generators towards the costs of network infrastructure should form the basis of a new approach," they said.

ETNO has previously named Apple, Amazon, Facebook, Microsoft, Google and Netflix as the major culprits. The CEOs said the European Union estimated that at least 174 billion euros (\$183 billion) of new investment is needed by 2030 to meet connectivity targets.

"The telecoms sector is currently not strong enough to meet that demand," said the CEOs, including Orange's Christel Heydemann and Telefonica's Jose Maria Alvarez-Pallete. The European Commission launched a public consultation in February, inviting citizens, non-governmental organizations and companies to make their submissions by May. The EU's executive arm is expected to make the results public before the end of 2023.

The idea of "fair contribution to telecommunication networks" is also divisive within the EU. While earlier this year the European Parliament voiced support for the measure, not all of the EU's 27 member states are on board. Many countries reportedly opposed such a levy on tech firms in June. — AFP

assess the terms" of the plan in order to suit the "objective situation and the demand of the creditors".

Its property arm missed a key bond payment last week, and Chinese financial website Caixin reported that former executives had been detained. The crisis has deepened a broader slowdown in the world's second-largest economy. The property sector has long been a pillar of growth—along with construction it accounts for about a quarter of GDP—and it experienced a dazzling boom in recent decades.

However, the massive debt accrued by its biggest players has been seen by Beijing in recent years as an unacceptable risk for China's financial system and overall economic health. — AFP

Business

Indonesia launches Southeast Asia's first high-speed rail

Widodo hails project as 'a symbol of modernization'



PADALARANG, Indonesia: Indonesian President Joko Widodo (3rd right) accompanied by Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan (4th right) speaks to the press during the inauguration of the Jakarta-Bandung high-speed train named 'Whoosh' at Padalarang station in Padalarang, West Java on October 2, 2023. — AFP photos



Journalists travel onboard the Jakarta-Bandung high-speed train named 'Whoosh' after the inauguration on the way to Padalarang, in West Java on October 2, 2023.

JAKARTA: Indonesia launched Southeast Asia's first high-speed railway on Monday, a delayed, multibillion-dollar project backed by China that President Joko Widodo hailed as "a symbol of our modernization".

With a top speed of 350 kilometers (220 miles) per hour, the bullet train "Whoosh" can get between the capital Jakarta and Bandung in 45 minutes. The 140 km journey would previously have taken about three hours by train. "The Jakarta-Bandung high-speed train marks our efficient, friendly, and inte-

grated mass transportation system," Widodo said during a ceremony at the capital's central station.

"It is a symbol of our modernization in the public transport, seamlessly connecting with other modes of transportation," Widodo said the 600-capacity train was the first high-speed rail transportation in Southeast Asia. It is part of Beijing's Belt and Road initiative—a decade-old program of China-backed infrastructure projects. The president said the name was actually an acronym, standing for a tagline of "Waktu Hemat, Operasi Optimal, Sistem Handal"—

which in Bahasa Indonesia means "Saving time, optimal operation, reliable system".

It was built by PT KCIC, which is made up of four Indonesian state companies and Beijing's China Railway International Co. The project was initially set to cost less than \$5 billion and be completed by 2019. However, delays caused by construction challenges and the COVID-19 pandemic led to a surge in costs. In preparation for its opening, officials have conducted public trials for the new high-speed route.

Last week, Transportation Minister Budi Karya Sumadi confirmed that the government would extend the high-speed train route from Bandung to the country's second-biggest city Surabaya. Last month, Chinese Premier Li Qiang joined Senior Minister Luhut Pandjaitan on a ride aboard the train during his Jakarta visit for summits with Southeast Asian leaders. Pandjaitan told reporters on Thursday that Widodo plans to welcome Chinese President Xi Jinping in the future to ride the train, but did not give more specifics. — AFP

NBK wins Brandon Hall Group Bronze Excellence Award 2023

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) received the coveted Brandon Hall Group Bronze Medal for its excellence in the "Best Advance in Compliance Training" category, acknowledging its outstanding training and development programs. Brandon Hall Group employed an extensive set of criteria to select the winners of the 2023 Excellence Awards. These criteria were developed based on an assessment of the success of the compliance training in satisfying learning objectives and aligning with the business environment. They also examined whether the program's design was rooted in a well-defined business goal and effectively supported compliance objectives. Furthermore, they ensured that compliance training positively influenced both organizational goals and learning outcomes and that the program produced quantifiable benefits and outcomes. Finally, these criteria sought to establish if the overall compliance training program positively impacted both learners and the organization.

Brandon Hall Group is a prominent global research organization headquartered in the United States. For over 21 years, the company has been dedicated to recognizing exceptional initiatives and best practices in various areas, including education, leadership development, the promotion of diversity and inclusion, and numerous other aspects related to human resources.

The Brandon Hall Awards for Excellence in Human Resources Management were initiated over two decades ago and remain a pioneering recognition program in education and development. These awards consistently draw participation from companies spanning various industries and regions worldwide, including government entities, private businesses, joint ventures, and non-profit organizations. Their enduring prestige and widespread recognition underscore their profound importance and esteemed reputation on the global stage.



Ahmed Darweesh

Commenting on this significant win, Ahmad Darweesh, Head of learning and Development expressed his delight: "We are thrilled to accept this prestigious award, which serves as a testament to our unwavering dedication to offering NBK employees top-tier training and development opportunities that align with global standards."

Darweesh emphasized that the compliance training program stands as a crucial initiative in collaboration with IQUAD our digital leaning partner, tailored to meet the training requirements of employees and facilitate their comprehension and adherence to the bank's policies and procedures, as well as relevant laws and regulations. He pointed out that the program's training content is engaging, interactive, and extensive, incorporating various teaching approaches such as videos, simulations, and assessments. These methods ensure a more comprehensive understanding and practical application of compliance requirements.

"The Human Resource Group, in partnership with its training division represented by the Training and Development Department, maintains a strong commitment to enhancing the competence of the bank's personnel in Kuwait and at its overseas branches. This commitment is achieved through a holistic and ongoing improvement of the training programs and systems," Darweesh added.

Darweesh also highlighted that the Training and Development Department continually adapts its ini-

tiatives by recognizing the evolving requirements of the group's workforce. This includes introducing new educational opportunities to foster an open work culture and cultivating an environment that inspires employees to innovate and unleash their creativity.

"The Training and Development Department offers an advanced training process accessible to all employees, regardless of location or job title. Our educational platform, Hub NBK Learning, provides a wide range of learning content spanning various behavioral and managerial topics. One key advantage of this platform is that it allows managers to directly observe the learning process and access the learning dashboard for their respective teams. Additionally, we provide supplementary training materials to assist managers in supporting their employees' learning journeys," Darweesh explained.

"NBK is consistently seeking inventive methods to streamline learning and improve its accessibility to benefit employees, all while placing a significant emphasis on the practical implementation of the acquired knowledge," Darweesh confirmed. Furthermore, he elaborated that NBK has cultivated exclusive training programs through collaborations with prestigious universities and institutions worldwide over the years. This strategic partnership ensures the delivery of exceptional, top-quality training tailored to meet the diverse needs of employees across various functional levels within the NBK Group.



Birkenstock aims to raise up to \$1.58bn in IPO

BERLIN: German sandal maker Birkenstock on Monday set a price for its initial public offering of shares at \$44 to \$49 each, which could see the company raise up to \$1.58 billion. Around 32.2 million ordinary shares will be put on the New York Stock Exchange in the IPO that would value the iconic footwear brand at up to 9.2 billion euros (\$9.7 billion), according to a regulatory filing.

Once unflatteringly associated with sock-and-sandal-wearing Germans, Birkenstock has since become a coveted fashion item, as illustrated in the latest Hollywood blockbuster "Barbie". The stock flotation marks a milestone for the company founded in 1774 to make orthopedic shoes. By 1897, Konrad Birkenstock had made the first flexible sole fitting the contours of the feet.

The company remained in family hands of the founding family until 2021, when it sold a majority stake to private equity group L Catterton and the family holding fund of French luxury magnate Bernard Arnault. But the sandals, with their broad straps and cork and latex soles, had begun to gain international acclaim well before that.

Hollywood and catwalks
Brought to the United States in the 1960s, the sandals were quickly adopted by hippies who took to their no-frills comfort and claimed their utilitarian look as an anti-fashion badge. But it was when supermodel Kate Moss donned them for a fashion shoot in 1990s that the sandals were propelled into standard footwear for A-listers. Brands from Paco Rabanne and Valentino to Celine have customized their versions of Birkenstocks, even putting them on runways. Actress Frances McDormand padded on stage at the Oscars in February 2019 in a yellow pair—vindicating the idea that footwear does not need to be painful to be glamorous.



With hippies and stars alike making up its customers, Birkenstock recorded revenues of 1.11 billion euros (\$1.17 billion) for the nine months ending June 30, up 21 percent from the same period a year earlier. Net profit for the nine months was 129.1 million euros, down 20 percent from 103.3 million euros a year ago.

While other companies have shifted production to places where

labour is generally cheaper, such as Asia, Birkenstock says 95 percent of its products are assembled in Germany. Headquartered in the picturesque city of Linz am Rhein in western Germany, the company has several manufacturing sites in the country, and around 6,200 employees worldwide. According to industry media reports, the IPO could take place on October 11. — AFP

Eni announces large Indonesia gas find

ROME: Italian energy group Eni said Monday that it had made a significant gas find in Indonesia, off the coast of East Kalimantan.

The company said preliminary studies had put the potential of the site at 140 billion cubic meters of gas (5 trillion cubic feet). The find came at the Geng North-1 exploration well drilled to a depth of 5,025 meters in 1,947 meters water depth in the North Galan PSC, around 85 kilometers (53 miles) off the coast. The company said it had found a gas column some 50 metres thick in a Miocene sandstone reservoir "with excellent petrophysical properties".

Eni added that "thanks to its location and significant size, the discovery has the potential to contribute substantially to the creation of a new production hub, in the northern part of the Kutei Basin, to be connected to the Bontang LNG facilities on the coast of East Kalimantan".

Daily future production is estimated at 2.2 to 2.7 million cubic meters. "The ongoing exploration campaign, along with the recent acquisitions, is in line with Eni's energy transition strategy to progressively shift its portfolio mix towards gas and LNG, targeting 60 percent in 2030" compared to 50 percent currently, Eni said. "Indonesia, and South-East Asia in general, play a relevant role in this strategy," it added.

The news comes after Eni announced in July the acquisition of interests, including operatorship, in three blocks in the Kutei Basin, also offshore of East Kalimantan, from US rival Chevron. Eni, operating in Indonesia since 2001, presides over a sizable portfolio of exploration, development and production assets for current production of around 80,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day from its Jangkrik and Merakes fields in East Kalimantan. — AFP

Stocks retreat with US rate worries back in focus

LONDON: Stocks fell in the US and Europe on Monday, with relief that a government shutdown was avoided in Washington proving short-lived as investors focused again on the risks from high interest rates. Hopes that central bankers would start rolling back months of rate hikes have faded in recent weeks, on worries that inflation pressures will persist in coming months, not least due to soaring oil prices. All eyes are on a key speech by Federal Reserve chief Jerome Powell later Monday, ahead of the central bank's next policy meeting at the end of October—but already US Treasury yields were again rising as bond markets softened.

"The Fed and ECB are practically done with hikes. Rather it's all about the risk that rates don't get cut—by enough, or in a timely fashion," analysts at ING said in a research note. Early gains seen in Europe on news of the US government funding deal were reversed after futures trading indicated opening losses on Wall Street, where analysts noted that the latest debt agreement is only a temporary fix for a few weeks.

"Investors are clearly not impressed by the latest kicking of the can down the road. So, the focus has quickly returned to rising oil prices, and high interest rates," said Fawad Razaqzada, a market analyst at StoneX. Even a eurozone unemployment rate that fell to 6.4 percent in August failed to lift sentiment. "It's been a testing time for markets as investors weigh up the likelihood of sticky inflation and interest rates remaining higher for longer," said Russ Mould, investment director at brokerage AJ Bell. — AFP

Business

Green groups target TotalEnergies over Tanzania, Uganda projects

Groups claim 'climaticide' over a controversial oil project

NANTERRE, France: Four environmental groups have taken legal action against French giant TotalEnergies on claims of "climaticide" over a controversial oil project in Tanzania and Uganda, their lawyers said Monday. The groups—Darwin Climax Coalitions, Sea Shepherd France, Wild Legal and Stop EACOP-Stop Total—filed their action on September 22, saying that TotalEnergies "must no longer continue to knowingly, freely and with impunity fuel climate change", lawyers William Bourdon and Vincent Brengarth said.

"It is time to hold the company responsible for its activities," they said, adding that the court action is unprecedented by seeking a criminal judgment "for facts resembling a climaticide, which until now had their place only before civil courts". The groups say that with its East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP), TotalEnergies is liable for charges including destruction, damage or deterioration of property belonging to others likely to create a danger to persons, and failing to deal with a disaster.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) in July urged a halt to the project after TotalEnergies and the China National Offshore Oil Corporation last year signed a \$10 billion deal to develop Ugandan oilfields and ship crude through a 1,445-kilometre (900-mile) pipeline to Tanzania's Indian Ocean port of Tanga.

Rights activists and environmental groups have slammed a deal that has also faced criticism in the European Parliament. TotalEnergies says an estimated 100,000 people displaced by the project have been fairly compensated, and measures have been taken to protect the environment.

The project involves drilling around 400 oil wells in Murchison Falls Nature Park, a biodiversity reserve and Uganda's largest national park.

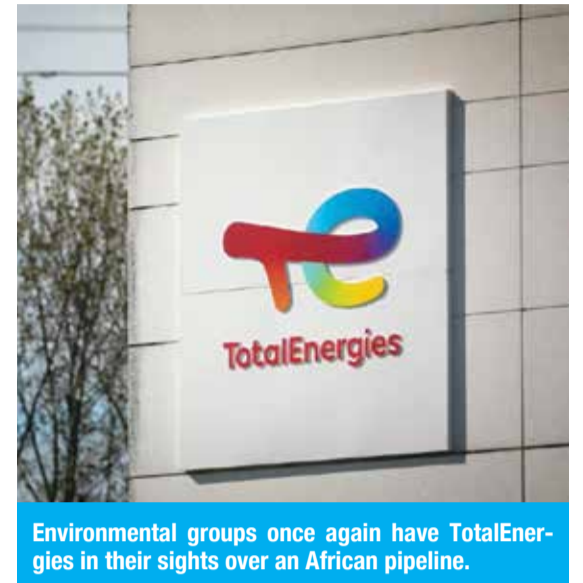
The company said Monday that it was unaware of the latest legal action and what it hoped to achieve, telling AFP that it "conducts operations in accordance with its operating standards and with laws and regulations".

A French civil court earlier this year dismissed

on procedural grounds a landmark case against the firm over the project after several NGOs filed a suit seeking to suspend it.

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has vowed to proceed, saying the landlocked poverty-riven country will enjoy an economic boost from the project. In the latest allegations, the associations say the pipeline would entail "a major impoverishment of local populations" and severely impact the local environment. French NGO Les Amis de la Terre launched a first judicial broadside against the project in 2019.

Saying that the pipeline did not respect the 2015 Paris accord on cutting global carbon emissions, the lawyers in the latest case warned of "chaos" resulting from rising temperatures if such projects went ahead. They urged French authorities to "force TotalEnergies to radically change its investment strategy to drastically reduce fossil investments and massively develop renewable energies". — AFP



Environmental groups once again have TotalEnergies in their sights over an African pipeline.

Ukraine left out in cold by US shutdown deal

WASHINGTON: The future of US aid for Ukraine hangs in the balance after a last-gasp deal to avoid a government shutdown, despite President Joe Biden's attempts to reassure Kyiv it will get what it needs to fight Russia.

Barely a week after President Volodymyr Zelensky was in Washington appealing for more funds, the compromise struck in Congress late Sunday dropped new funding for Ukraine amid opposition from hardline Republicans. Biden and his Democratic party say America has a duty to help Ukraine stand up to Russian President Vladimir Putin's brutal invasion, warning that a failure to do so could embolden other autocrats in the future.

But the issue has become so politicized in Washington that the fate of vital military aid is now in jeopardy, just as Kyiv tries to make progress in its sluggish counteroffensive before winter sets in.

Biden urged Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy on Sunday to "stop the games" and said he "fully expects" him to secure passage of a separate bill for Ukraine funding soon.

"I want to assure our American allies, the American people and the people in Ukraine that you can count on our support. We will not walk away," Biden said in an address from the White House.

Ukraine played down the blow, saying Sunday it was "actively working with its American partners" to

ensure new wartime aid. Josep Borrell, the top diplomat for the European Union—a major US partner in delivering aid to Ukraine—said the bloc was "surprised" by the last-minute deal and "regret (the US decision) deeply, thoroughly."

"I have a hope that this will not be a definitive decision and Ukraine will continue having the support of the US," he said.

Moscow 'celebrating'

The wider signal to the world—that not only Republicans but also some Democrats were willing to sacrifice Ukraine for politics—is damaging, said analyst Brett Bruen. "That ought to worry leaders in Kyiv, and I think in Moscow they're celebrating the signs that our support may be waning," Bruen, president of the Global Situation Room consultancy and a former US diplomat, told AFP.

Ukraine is already nervously eyeing the possibility of a return to the White House by Republican former president Donald Trump, who has previously praised Putin. Top House Democrats said on Saturday that they expect McCarthy to bring a separate Ukraine aid bill for a vote next week, though it was unclear if it would be the \$24 billion Biden originally sought. But that could be more easily said than done. Ukraine's fight for survival has become a political football just over a year from the US presidential election, with questions mounting over aid approved by Congress that totals \$100 billion so far, including \$43 billion in weaponry.

First, there is a bid to unseat McCarthy next week by hardline Republican Matt Gaetz, one of a core of hard-right members of the party implacably opposed to any aid for Ukraine.

If he does survive, McCarthy made it clear on

Sunday that he would hold out for funding to stop immigrants crossing the Mexican border, a key Republican demand. "I'm going to make sure that the weapons are provided for Ukraine, but they're not going to get some big package if the border is not secure," McCarthy told CBS's "Face the Nation" on Sunday.

War fatigue

Even if McCarthy does agree on the Ukraine aid, possibly in a deal with Democrats to allow him to stay as speaker, there is a wider problem—war fatigue. Skepticism is spreading from the hardline Republicans to more moderate lawmakers who say they won't write Ukraine a "blank check."

More worryingly for Biden and Kyiv, inflation-hit American voters appear to have similar concerns about Ukraine. An ABC/Washington Post poll released September 24 showed 41 percent of respondents saying the United States was doing too much to support Ukraine, up from 33 percent in February and just 14 percent in April 2022.

Making the problem even tougher is a Republican impeachment inquiry into Biden over his son Hunter's business deals in Ukraine. The Biden administration's answer is simple—if Russia is not stopped in Ukraine, the rest of the world could be at risk. US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin urged Congress to "live up to America's commitment to provide urgently needed assistance to the people of Ukraine as they fight to defend their own country against the forces of tyranny."

Analyst Bruen added that even a temporary delay on Ukraine funding was a "big boost to the detractors." "I think that, over the long term, is going to prove more problematic," he added. — AFP

Property fallout to continue in China: Fitch

BEIJING: Risks in the near term, as the government's modest policy easing to date is unlikely to drive a sharp turnaround in homebuyers' sentiment, even though it has led to some recent improvements in broader economic indicators, says Fitch Ratings. Several corporate issuer outlooks were revised to negative, remained negative after downgrade, or were placed on Watch Negative since August. Some were in property or its ancillary sectors, highlighting the spreading fallout from the property crisis.

In the engineering and construction sector, state-owned enterprises (SOEs) are gaining market share by investing more in industries aligned closely with policy priorities, even as anemic property investment forces smaller, private construction firms out of the market. Even beyond construction, we believe the private sector's willingness to invest is more sensitive to current economic headwinds, which may shrink its contribution to China's overall growth over time, as capex increases will remain steadier at SOEs, the rating agency said. "All ratings in our China banks portfolio are support-driven and on a stable outlook, although pressure on net interest margins (NIM) is rising. China's September cut to reserve requirement ratios will help lower banks' funding cost and ease NIM pressure, but will be insufficient to reverse the downward margin trend which we expect to continue into 2024. Asset-quality risk remains more contained among large lenders than smaller banks," it stated.



KUWAIT: Dr Ali Merdhi Ayyash Al-Enezi inaugurates Lulu Group's latest Hypermarket at Hawally in the presence of Yusuff Ali MA, Chairman of Lulu Group, Mariam Ismayil Jumaah Al-Ansari and other officials on Sunday.

LuLu opens 15th hypermarket in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Lulu Group opened its latest hypermarket at Hawally in Kuwait. The store, which is also the 15th in the country, was officially inaugurated by Dr Ali Merdhi Ayyash Al-Enezi, in the presence of Yusuff Ali MA, Chairman of Lulu Group, Mariam Ismayil Jumaah Al-Ansari and other officials.

Ambassadors, diplomats, government officials and other dignitaries from various countries including Kuwait, UAE, India, Spain, South Africa, Vietnam, Kenya, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Malawi, Yemen and Tanzania attended the grand inauguration ceremony.

The sprawling 83,000-square feet store is located in Hawally, a major commercial hub in Kuwait. The new store offers grocery, non-food items, H&B, fresh food (chilled and dairy, frozen, fruits and vegetables, meat, and fish), in-house kitchen and other essential services.

Furthermore, a wide range of household items, home furnishings, toys, luggage, party seasonal items, mobile phones and accessories, IT and accessories, BLUSH (premium cosmetics and perfumes) and electronics items are also added to satisfy every customer's desires.

Also present on the occasion were Ashraf Ali MA, Executive Director, Adeb Ahmad, Lulu Financial Group Managing Director, Mohamed Haris, Lulu Kuwait Director, Sreejith, Lulu Kuwait Regional Director and other officials. A large number of people from different walks of life were also present to witness the inauguration.



Lifestyle

Zain announces that it sponsored the recently concluded spectacle, *A Night with Miami*, as a Main Partner. The nation's biggest musical and visual performance of its kind, held at the Arena Kuwait, was produced by Free Jabriya and innovated by a group of national talents and global entertainment industry experts. For five consecutive nights, the popular Kuwaiti band Miami entertained thousands of fans in a one-of-a-kind experience.

- Nation's biggest visual performance, attended by thousands of fans
- National talents and global entertainment industry experts behind the event's success

During the first night of the performance, Zain Kuwait's Corporate Relations Department Manager Hamad Al-Musaibeeh presented an appreciation trophy to Miami stars Khalid Al-Randi and Meshal Laili in recognition of their amazing talents and efforts to make this spectacle a success. The grand event attracted thousands of Kuwaiti fans from all age groups, including the 90s generations that grew up listening to Miami songs, to new generations that are experiencing the band's enduring tracks for the first time.

Zain sponsored this event as part of its strong belief in the private sector's key role in supporting the local entertainment industry by being a part of outstanding performances that bring Kuwait's most prolific artists to the biggest stages. By supporting such projects, the company contributes to boosting domestic tourism and unveiling the



The spectacle attracted thousands of fans.

creativity of local talents who work hard to bring world-class shows to fans.

Zain had a special presence at the event through its dedicated booth, where it welcomed guests before the show and during intermission. The booth was designed with a special nostalgic touch to evoke memories of old

cassette tapes and reflected the concert's vibe in its colors and lighting, giving fans a wonderful opportunity to take pictures and make memories.

'A Night with Miami' featured magical performances of the band's most popular songs, combining performing arts, interactive lighting, striking digital

visuals, interior design, fashion, and other factors that all synced in harmony to bring about a truly spectacular show. Not only that, but the concerts also told the band's origin story, giving the show a special nostalgic vibe.

Zain is always keen on supporting programs that add to the local art

scene, and the company will spare no efforts to shoulder any project with a creative vision that serves the community and contributes to the local entertainment industry.



Zain's booth evoked a nostalgic vibe.



Hamad Al-Musaibeeh recognizes Miami stars Khalid Al-Randi and Meshal Laili.

POLAND TO REBUILD PALACE OF CODEBREAKERS AND CHOPIN

Decades after the Nazis razed it to the ground, a 17th-century palace of kings and codebreakers in the heart of Warsaw will be resurrected by the Polish government for its symbolic value. "This spot which will return to Warsaw's map is to be a proud reminder of what happened here," said project spokesman Slawomir Kulinski. "It's a place that not only changed Poland's history but also the world's," he told AFP, surveying the excavated red-brick cellars of the Saxon Palace.

Built for a nobleman, it became a royal residence and was later home to a young Frederic Chopin. The future composer's father taught at a school inside it. "Chopin wrote his first works while living here," Kulinski said. These include the "Polonaise in G minor" at the ripe old age of seven. "I bet he ran around these cellars with his friends, chasing each other, when he was just a little squirt," Kulinski added.

The palace went on to house the Cipher Bureau where Polish mathematicians cracked an early version of Germany's Enigma machine, contributing to the Allied victory in World War II.



An archaeologist digs at ruins of the Saxon Palace.



Visitors look at the ruins of the Saxon Palace.

Controversy

That rich history has long been invisible, after the building was dynamited by the Germans and replaced by a sprawling emptiness on Pilsudski Square. Visiting foreign dignitaries walk across to lay wreaths at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the sole section of the palace rebuilt after the war. Now the rest will follow, along with neighboring tenement houses and Bruhl Palace, a Baroque building that was one of Warsaw's largest and finest.

Due to open in 2030, the complex will house the upper house of parliament, cultural institutions plus a restaurant and cafes. Critics accuse the right-wing government of using the project - which was initiated by their ally, the president - to promote its nationalist views. They are infuriated by the price tag, arguing that the 2.5 billion zloty (around \$600 million) could be better spent. But others see the reconstruction as long overdue. "It's fantastic. I'm a fan of old Warsaw," lifelong resident Beata Kossakowska told AFP. "Very few buildings of the kind remain, with beautiful architectural ornaments," the 57-year-old said.

Vampire

Like thousands of others this summer, Kossakowska went on a free tour

offered by the company behind the project. The current phase is to uncover whatever treasures may lie underground. "I sometimes feel like Indiana Jones," Kulinski said. Behind construction barriers, excavators pulled up piles of earth while archaeologists scrubbed ceramic shards and animal bones. Nearby, the exposed cellars of the Saxon Palace revealed a maze of walls. The oldest was a segment of a fortification built in case of a Turkish invasion 400 years ago.

But the highlight of the tour was when guide Waldemar Prokop motioned towards a rectangular opening and asked: "Who here believes in vampires?" There, workers had dug up a 17th-century skeleton interred face down, neck shackled, head under a wall - a burial believed to keep the undead in place. Other notable findings include an old diamond ring, turtle soup shells, burnt Wehrmacht chess sets and the Nazi loudspeakers that Poles scornfully dubbed "barkers" (szczekaczki).

Blasthole

Pointing to a row of huge sandstone fragments, Kulinski singled one out for

the perfectly carved circular opening at its edge. "That's nothing other than a blasthole for the stick of dynamite. Made by the Germans with a hand drill... They really used a lot of material to blow it all up and destroy it thoroughly," he said. Poland will be just as meticulous in bringing the site back to life, according to Kulinski, who collects old photos of the capital and calls himself a "Warsaw freak".

The country knows a thing or two about restoration. With the help of archived documents and old paintings as models, Warsaw residents carefully rebuilt the city's historic old town after the war. Churches, palaces, townhouses, marketplaces and even a castle rose from the rubble - a massive effort that made the area a UNESCO world heritage site. "Foreign tourists visit and don't believe it was rebuilt because it's so fantastic," Kulinski said. He believes the Saxon Palace too deserves to be brought back from the dead. "When we first excavated the walls and went inside, it was like, wow!" Kulinski said. "It sent chills down my spine just to get a sense of the history." — AFP



Aerial view of the ruins of Saxon Palace in Warsaw on Aug 23, 2023. — AFP photos

Taylor Swift spotted as rumored beau Kelce's Chiefs beat NY Jets

Taylor Swift has remained mum on her rumored relationship with NFL star Travis Kelce, but the pop superstar was on hand again Sunday as Kelce's Kansas City Chiefs defeated the New York Jets at MetLife Stadium outside the Big Apple. The 33-year-old "Lavender Haze" singer was spotted, clad in crystal-studded denim shorts and a long-sleeved black shirt, entering the building with actors Blake Lively, Ryan Reynolds and Hugh Jackman.



Donna Kelce and Taylor Swift are seen during the first half of a game between the Chicago Bears and the Kansas City Chiefs at GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City, Missouri. — AFP

She was soon ensconced in a luxury suite, with one social media poster getting cellphone video of her playfully sticking out her tongue as she was filmed. InStyle reported Swift had been seen dining in New York with Brittany Mahomes, wife of Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes, the night before the game. Swift sparked a fan frenzy—among NFL watchers and her legion of "Swifties"—when she attended the Chiefs' home game against the Chicago Bears last weekend, sitting in a luxury box alongside Kelce's mother, Donna. —AFP



Elle Fanning (left) and Helen Mirren (right) present creations for L'Oreal Paris. — AFP photos

DAME MIRREN, FANNING, JENNER, RAI AND LONGORIA STARS WHO WALKED L'OREAL PARIS SHOW



US model Kendall Jenner

L'oreal Paris held its show 'Walk Your Worth' at Paris Fashion Week. Stars like Helen Mirren, Elle Fanning, Kendall Jenner, Aishwarya Rai, Gong Jun and more walk the ramp. The L'Oreal Paris fashion show saw some of the biggest celebrities walk the runway near the Eiffel Tower. Each of the brand's spokespeople walked the runway, with other guests including Marie Bochet, Cindy Bruna, Camila Cabello, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, Luma Grothe, Liya Kebede, Katherine Langford, Aja Naomi King, Soo Joo Park and Yseult.

Dame Helen Mirren showcased a wild hair do as she walked in the L'Oreal spring/summer 2024 runway show during Paris Fashion Week on Sunday. The actress, 78, looked sensational in a sweeping silver gown with tastefully cinched waist for the Walk Your Worth show in the French capital.

Sweeping the floor, the sleeves of the garment extended right down to the ground and the garment glistened under the bright lights as the star walked. But it was Helen's voluminous hair which was notably different for the event. Her tresses were crimped and styled so they extended out on either side of her head, with her locks resting on her shoulders.

Accentuating her slender physique in an elegant silver gown, Kendall, 27, inevitably claimed the spotlight as the event got underway.

Meanwhile actress Elle, 25, commanded attention in a plunging gold evening dress with a semi-sheer detail.

Bucking the trend, *Four Weddings And A Funeral* star Andie opted for an edgy black PVC coat over a matching



(From second left) French singer Yseult, French model Cindy Bruna, US model Kendall Jenner and US actress Andie MacDowell present a creation for L'Oreal Paris during a show as part of the Paris Fashion Week Womenswear Spring/Summer 2024 in Paris.

bralette and high-slung PVC trousers. The actress, 65, rounded off her runway look with a pair of chunky silver heels, while dramatic make-up drew further attention to her delicately proportioned features.

Indian actress Aishwarya, 49, was on hand to co-present Sunday's event, and she was appropriately dressed for the occasion in a heavily embellished gold gown with cascading overlays.

Eva Longoria, 48, was also on hand to add some additional glamour to the catwalk, and the Latina star

looked stunning in a layered sheer dress as she joined her fellow ambassadors. Evidently in high spirits, the *Desperate Housewives* actress waved to guests while making her latest promotional appearance on behalf of the cosmetics brand.

Making a surprise appearance at the event, Rochelle Humes walked the runway in a form-fitting sequined gown with a thigh-high slash. The *This Morning* co-host, 34, added to the look with a pair of strappy black heels, while her hair was side-parted and pushed

away from her face. Chinese actor Gong Jun donned an all-black attire decorated in silver embellishments and embroidery. His slicked-back hairdo and dewy skin gave a finishing touch to his ramp look.

Actor Andie MacDowell looked stunning in a black bralette, faux leather pants, and a matching trench coat as she strutted the runway. Her salt-and-pepper curly mane, bold smoky eyes, and minimal glam stole the show.



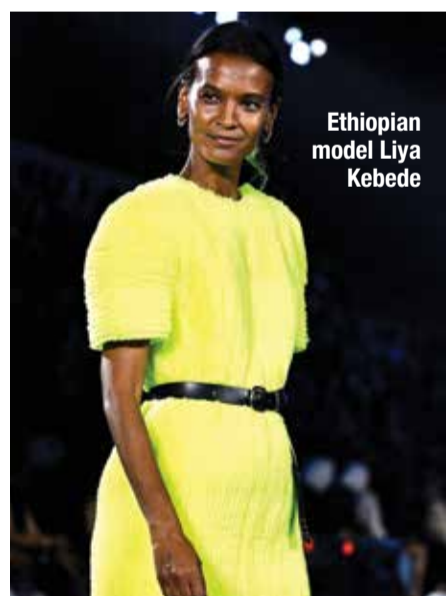
South Korean model Soo Joo Park



Aishwarya Rai Bachchan



French singer Yseult



Ethiopian model Liya Kebede



French model Cindy Bruna



US-Cuban singer-songwriter Camila Cabello



French singer Dadju



US actress Viola Davis and US actor Julius Tennon



British actress Helen Mirren



(From second left) French singer Yseult, US actress Eva Longoria, French model Cindy Bruna, US actress Andie MacDowell, US actress Viola Davis and Indian actress Aishwarya Rai Bachchan present a creation for L'Oreal Paris.



US actress Aja Naomi King



Chinese actor Gong Jun



Actress and film producer Eva Longoria



French alpine skier Marie Bochet



US actress Andie MacDowell



(Left) Danish actor Nikolaj Coster-Waldau

Japan boyband agency to rebrand after sex abuse scandal

Japan's top boyband agency said Monday it will rebrand, erasing vestiges of its late founder who was accused of sexually abusing recruits over decades, by launching a new firm to manage its stars. Boyband empire Johnny & Associates admitted last month that founder Johnny Kitagawa had sexually assaulted teenage boys and young men seeking stardom over decades. The music mogul died aged 87 in 2019, having engineered the birth of J-pop mega-groups that amassed adoring fans across Asia.

The agency will be renamed "Smile-Up" and dedicated solely to redressing survivors of Kitagawa's abuse, before being shuttered, officials said Monday. It will also transfer its talent to a newly formed management company. The agency will "follow through on thoroughly compensating victims and then shut down its business", agency head Noriyuki Higashiyama told reporters.

Higashiyama had hinted last month that he was disinclined to change the agency's name. But such an attitude "just went to show how inward-looking we were", he said Monday, adding he intends to become president of the

new management agency. Its name will be decided by suggestions from fans, another official said. Allegations that Kitagawa abused young men who wanted to be stars surfaced in Japanese media in 1999.

But it was not until this year that they ignited full-on soul-searching, following a BBC documentary and denunciations by victims. "I want to eradicate traces of Johnny Kitagawa off the face of the earth," Julie Keiko Fujishima, Kitagawa's niece, who will spearhead efforts to compensate victims, said in a statement released Monday. "As a family member of the offender, I consider it my duty to dismantle the Johnny's agency," she added.

As of now, 325 people are demanding compensation for Kitagawa's abuse through a hotline set up by an external panel of experts, according to the agency. Compensation will start in November. Scrutiny of Johnny & Associates intensified as a host of brands, including McDonald's Japan, automaker Nissan and beer giant Kirin, dropped the company's stars in recent weeks over the abuse.

Japan's national broadcaster NHK also announced it will "suspend making new offers" to the agency, meaning its top stars may not appear in the TV station's popular year-end music show. The backlash though has garnered the agency's talent some sympathy, with Masakazu Tokura, chairman of Japan's most influential business lobby Keidanren, calling them "more of victims than offenders". —AFP



President of Japanese boyband empire Johnny & Associates, Noriyuki Higashiyama (second right), speaks during a press conference in Tokyo to announce the new company name "SMILE-UP". —AFP

Beckham reveals 1998 World Cup red card still hurts

David Beckham has laid bare the lingering pain he felt he caused to his family following the red card he received at the 1998 World Cup, saying his dismissal left him a "mess". The revelation is contained in a new Netflix documentary series entitled "Beckham", set for release on Wednesday, in which the ex-England midfielder looks back on a career that included spells at Manchester United and Real Madrid. It also looks at his marriage to Spice Girls singer turned fashion designer Victoria.

Beckham, now 48 and the co-owner of MLS franchise Inter Miami, was sent off for kicking the back of Diego Simeone's leg during a last-16 World Cup tie against Argentina. England went on to lose the match following a penalty shootout, with Beckham widely blamed for the defeat in a public backlash that saw him repeatedly jeered by rival fans when in action for United during the following season.

In the documentary, Victoria Beckham said the continued abuse left her husband "absolutely clinically depressed" as the then 23-year-old tried to deal with the fallout alongside becoming a father for the first time in March 1999. Beckham admitted the abuse "took a toll on me that I never knew myself". He said: "I wish there was a pill you could take which could erase certain memories. I made a stupid mistake. It changed my life. "We were in America (on holiday after the World Cup), just about to have our first baby, and I thought, 'we will be fine. In a day or two people will have forgotten'."

Beckham added: "I don't think I have ever talked about it, just because I can't. I find it hard to talk through what I went through because it was so extreme. "Wherever I went, I got abused every single day—to walk down the street and to see people look at you in a certain way, spit at you, abuse you, come up to your face and say some of the things they said, that is difficult. "I wasn't eating, I wasn't sleeping. I was a mess." —AFP

The 10-year-old fashion influencer

Taylen Biggs has close to 1.5 million followers across TikTok and Instagram, a wardrobe full of designer clothes and 15 fashion weeks under her belt—and she's 10 years old. Taylen arrived at last week's Balmain show, one of the hottest tickets of Paris Fashion Week, in a luxurious white jacket-and-skirt combo by the French label, black boots and bag by Karl Lagerfeld and her favorite Vintage Frames shades. She was followed, as always, by her cameraman. Also keeping a discreet distance was her "bodyguard", as she calls him, who also happens to be her father.

"I love fashion and I love meeting new people and interviewing them and seeing what they have to say," she told AFP, before getting down to business with her microphone. Taylen, who lives in Miami, has interviewed the likes of DJ Khaled, popstar Kali Uchis and American Football star Patrick Mahomes, as well as a huge number of models, designers and fellow fashionistas.

She is practically a veteran of red carpets, appearing at everything from the MTV Music Awards to the Superbowl, a regular at New York and Miami fashion weeks, and all over Milan and Paris for the past fortnight. "I really miss my family a lot," she said. "And I miss

Miami. But I don't miss the food from Miami. I'm in love with the food here."

Influencers are now the fashion industry's favored form of media—a direct line to the public and happy to trade goodies for coverage—and age is no obstacle. Taylen's father, Josh Biggs, says he has largely given up his job as a construction contractor in Miami to work full-time as his daughter's assistant. "I travel with her everywhere she goes, I am her shadow," he told AFP. Asked if his daughter has become a business, he says: "People see her through the camera lens... but in real life she's a child first and foremost."

'No qualms'

Taylen landed her first modeling gig when she was 18 months old after her fashion-loving mother, a Colombian who came to the United States when she was 13, posted pictures of her on social media that were spotted by an advertising agency. She now runs her daughter's social media accounts and oversees home-schooling for Taylen and her two younger brothers. "We take school very seriously, it's priority number one," said her father. —AFP



Young model Taylen Biggs attends the 2018 MTV Video Music Awards at Radio City Music Hall on August 20, 2018 in New York City. — AFP photos



Instagram sensation Taylen Biggs arrives for the Nickelodeon Kids Choice Awards Slime Soiree, March 22, 2019 at the Wave House in Venice, California.

Sports

Europe regain Ryder Cup to extend USA 30-year wait

US captain Zach Johnson take responsibility for the loss

ROME: Tommy Fleetwood enjoyed the winning moment as Europe regained the Ryder Cup from a battling United States on Sunday, wrapping up a 16.5-11.5 victory despite a belated American singles charge. The USA remain without a win on European soil since 1993 while neither team have lifted the trophy away from home in 11 years.

With Europe needing half a point to get over the line, Fleetwood moved 2-up against Rickie Fowler with two holes to play after the American dumped his tee shot on the short par-four 16th into the water.

Fleetwood struck his drive into the heart of the green and calmly stroked his eagle putt to the hole-side to ensure Europe a seventh consecutive home victory, before going on to win 3 and 1. "I think relief, pride, joy," said the Englishman. "Proud of everybody that's been involved this week and just proud that I'm one of the people that gets to play a role in what we came here to do."

US captain Zach Johnson took responsibility for the loss. "The defeat is on me, I made some poor decisions and I will reflect. Those 12 guys played so hard and fought for our country," he said. Rory McIlroy and Viktor Hovland led the way with early victories in the Rome sunshine and Jon Rahm also snatched half a point from Scottie Scheffler on the 18th green.

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. "It was stressful as the US put up a fight today so hats off to them. But I am so proud of my 12 guys. We formed a bond from day one and they gave me everything," said Donald.

Europe 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 another. But Europe gathered themselves and ended up halving the singles session 6-6.

The Americans were attempting to pull off the biggest Sunday Ryder Cup comeback, having trailed 10.5-5.5 at the start of the day. But they never recovered from being swept 4-0 in the opening foursomes on Friday, quashing American hopes that their crushing win in 2021 was the start of a period of dominance.

There were jubilant scenes on the 18th green as the final match on the course between Shane Lowry and Jordan Spieth, which was halved, came to an end, with the Irishman hugging several teammates on his way down the fairway.

Europe's big guns fire

Rahm grabbed a crucial half-point from a thrill-



ROME: Europe's English captain, Luke Donald (C) poses with The Ryder Cup and his players after the presentation ceremony following the final day of play in the 44th Ryder Cup at the Marco Simone Golf and Country Club in Rome. — AFP

ing opening tussle with Scheffler by making birdie on the par-five 18th hole after the world number one thinned a chip across the green. 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.

Patrick Cantlay—the pantomime villain after reports he was refusing to wearing 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. Cantlay was roundly jeered on the first hole and mocked again for a reported protest against the 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 Matthew Fitzpatrick, by handing Rose his first loss of the week. McIlroy, who ends the week with four points after his struggles at Whistling Straits, closed out a 3 and 1 victory over Sam Burns despite a late rally from the American.

"This was about redemption and showing what we could do," said McIlroy. 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 14-7 ahead.

Fitzpatrick missed a 19-foot birdie putt to win the

Ryder Cup on the last hole as Max Homa kept the fate of the matchplay showdown just about in the balance. Homa, who was the USA's best player at Marco Simone Golf and Country Club with 3.5 points, bravely opted to take a penalty drop from the rough for an unplayable lie but made a clutch up and down for par.

Brooks Koepka saw off Swedish sensation Ludvig Aberg 3 and 2 and Xander Schauffele beat Nicolai Hojgaard by the same scoreline to keep Europe waiting. But Lowry calmed the nerves by pulling his match with Spieth to all-square on the 16th, clearing the way for Fleetwood to close it out moments later. — AFP

Australia beat Portugal to keep Rugby World Cup progress hopes alive

SAINT-ETIENNE: Australia kept their faint hopes of reaching the Rugby World Cup knockout stages alive with an unconvincing 34-14 victory over minnows Portugal on Sunday. Tries from forwards Richie Arnold, David Porecki, Angus Bell and Fraser McReight, and winger Marika Koroi-bete secured Australia a bonus point and a Pool C lifeline, while Portugal hit back through Pedro Bettencourt and Rafael Simoes.

The Wallabies can still reach the quarter-finals if Fiji lose to Portugal next week without a bonus point. "It was good, the boys dug deep knowing it could be our last game and credit to Portugal, they are a very solid team," Australia's No.8 Rob Valetini said.

"We pride ourselves on the forwards trying to get over their forwards. A lot of things we did at training transferred over to the field, we knew the game was going to be won by the forwards." It was a poignant night for Wallaby prop James Slipper, who

broke his country's record for the most caps at a World Cup.

"I think we are really proud for what we gave, but it is a loss. I am proud, but not happy to be honest," said Portugal captain Tomas Appleton. "We still have one more shot to show what we can do next week, but we are a bit disappointed."

Portugal showed a fearlessness to run the ball from the get-go, even from deep inside their own half. Despite an early penalty from Australia's Ben Donaldson, Portugal deservedly took the lead when, playing with a penalty advantage.

A slick backs move set centre Bettencourt free on the overlap to dive over in the corner. Samuel Marques converted but moments later Bettencourt hit his opposite number Izaia Perese with a high tackle and was sent to the sin-bin.

Donaldson missed the resulting penalty but Australia soon made the extra man count with Valetini offloading to lock Arnold to score next to the



SAINT-ETIENNE: Australia's scrum-half Issak Fines-Leleiwasa (C) runs to evade Portugal's fly-half Joris Moura (R) during the France 2023 Rugby World Cup Pool C match between Australia and Portugal at Stade Geoffroy-Guichard in Saint-Etienne, south-eastern France. — AFP

posts. Portugal became ragged, giving away possession cheaply and Wallaby captain Porecki punished them again, touching down from the back of a short-range driving maul.

And before Portugal were back

up 15 men again, prop Bell launched himself at the line from close in to score Australia's third try. Once they had their full contingent back, the enterprising Portuguese were again the better side. — AFP



Woo Hee-jun

It's kabaddi first, army second for Korean beauty queen Woo

HANGZHOU: Woo Hee-jun has been a beauty pageant queen and a first lieutenant in the South Korean army, but her first love will always be the ancient Indian sport of kabaddi. Woo has packed a lot of experience into her 29 years and now she is hoping to break more ground by helping her country win a kabaddi medal at the Asian Games.

She first fell in love with the tag-meets-rugby sport after seeing children playing it on the streets during a trip to India. And despite being a former Miss Korea finalist who also served for three years in her country's special forces, Woo says kabaddi is "the first priority in my life". "I think kabaddi for me is like a path," she said after Korea started their campaign in Hangzhou with a 43-23 loss to Thailand on Monday.

"I joined the army and I went for Miss Korea in 2019, but I came back to kabaddi because kabaddi means a lot to me when you compare it to other challenges." Kabaddi is a team contact sport that sees players raid into enemy territory and try to tag an opponent and return to safety.

Raiders are only allowed to take one breath and must constantly chant "kabaddi, kabaddi" to prove they are not using more than one puff. The sport is popular in India, Pakistan and Iran but Korea managed to finish fifth at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta.

Woo's colourful background has attracted media attention in Korea and she is hoping to use the spotlight to promote kabaddi at home. "It's not like it's super-popular like soccer or baseball or whatever but it's getting more popular compared with previous times," she said. "There is an increase in athletes and coaches and also good players in high schools and universities and different leagues as well, so I think it's going to develop more."

Woo says she is far more nervous before kabaddi games than she was when she entered Miss Korea in 2019. She says she applied for the competition "for the experience" and didn't care so much about the result. "But for this Asian Games, I still have a significant goal, which is to get a medal," she said.

She says beauty pageants "still have a lot of stereotypes" but found the experience a positive one. "Beauty, for me, is not only about appearance," she said. "It has another meaning in that you have to say your thoughts and you have more confidence to go out and influence people in a good way." — AFP

India ready to raise curtain on Cricket World Cup

NEW DELHI: India target a third World Cup when cricket's global showpiece gets underway on Thursday with the country buoyed by a growing, international self-confidence and with a sport which unites and divides the sub-continent like no other on the verge of joining the Olympic elite.

The epic tournament features 10 nations playing 48 matches over 46 days at 10 different venues. However, the build-up has been far from smooth after arch-rivals Pakistan considered a boycott when India refused to travel across the border for the Asia Cup.

As a result, the announcement of the schedule for the World Cup was delayed until just three months before the first ball was to be bowled. Fears over security for the India-Pakistan World Cup blockbuster in Ahmedabad then saw the match moved back a day, sparking a domino effect of nine rescheduled fixtures.

Pakistan's visit to India is their first since the 2016 Twenty20 World Cup but they were welcomed warmly when they arrived in Hyderabad last week despite only receiving visas just 48 hours before their departure. "It's been a superb welcome. People coming to the hotel and their hospitality has been fantastic," said leg-spinner Shadab Khan.

In an indication of the security tensions, Pakistan's opening warm-up match with New Zealand on Friday was played behind closed doors at an eerily silent 55,000-capacity Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium.

Torrential rain has also caused an early headache with two warm-up games abandoned without a ball be-



AHMEDABAD: Motorcyclists ride past a billboard installed outside the Narendra Modi Stadium, ahead of the 2023 ICC men's cricket World Cup, in Ahmedabad on Sept 30, 2023. — AFP

ing bowled and a third reduced overs affair. The opening match on Thursday between champions England and New Zealand as well as the final on November 19 are being staged at Ahmedabad's Narendra Modi Stadium, named after the prime minister, the world's biggest cricket arena boasting a capacity of over 130,000. India will face Pakistan at the mega-venue on October 14. The city which independence hero Mahatma Gandhi called home for 15 years is tipped as a potential host city should India bid for the 2036 Olympics.

Cricket itself—albeit in its short-format T20 -- is expected to be named an Olympic sport for the 2028 Games in Los Angeles when the International Olympic Committee meets in Mumbai later this month.

The gathering of the best players of India's favourite game will be the sporting culmination of a year that saw India overtake China as the world's most populous country, after displacing former coloniser Britain as its fifth-biggest economy in 2021. — AFP

Kuwait bags more medals at International Bowling Championship

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: President of the International and Asian Bowling Federations, Chairman of Kuwait Bowling Club Sheikh Talal Al-Mohammad Al-Sahab expressed satisfaction for the success of Kuwait International Open Bowling Championship, which is considered as preparation for the World Championship to be hosted by Kuwait soon.

Al-Mohammad who spoke during the awarding of winners valued the benefits the tournament reflected at the Kuwait players' levels as they competed with several internationally ranked players, adding that the tournament that had more than 100 participating and had very strong competitions contributed to improving the technical and physical levels of Kuwaiti players who ended in top places in several categories and hoped for that this contribute to an outstanding level during the upcoming championship.

First place was taken by Sweden's Pontus Anderson, while his compatriot William Svensson was second. In the ladies category Colombian bowlers Juliana Franco was first and Maria Rodriguez second. In the youth category Kuwait the first three places through Abdulrazaq Mohammad, Omar Al-Safran and Adel Abul.

In case A Kuwait won first and second through Adel Abul and Yousef Al-Mansour, as UAE's Abdulla Al-Merri was third.

Sports

Bayern's 'thin' squad faces Champions League test as injuries bite

Bayern remain undefeated in the league, German Cup, Champions League

BERLIN: Injury-hit Bayern Munich travel to Copenhagen on Tuesday in the Champions League, facing a depth problem which is effectively of their own making. Injuries kept first-teamers Serge Gnabry and Matthijs de Ligt out of Bayern's 2-2 draw at RB Leipzig. Gnabry will miss weeks with a broken arm while De Ligt also looks set to miss Tuesday's match. Combine the duo's absence with injury clouds hovering above remaining centre-backs Dayot Upamecano and Kim Min-jae and the Bayern hierarchy may begin to understand manager Thomas Tuchel's persistent complaints about a lack of depth in his squad.

Bayern remain undefeated in the league, German Cup and Champions League this season, but have made a habit of conceding goals against better sides. The German champions have conceded three in meetings with RB Leipzig and Manchester United so far this season, along with two against league leaders Bayer Leverkusen and again against Leipzig.

While Bayern make Tuesday's trip to Copenhagen as strong favourites, it is the kind of midweek fixture that will test their depth as they hope to fight for all trophies on offer this season.

'We'll see'

Despite a transfer window which brought England captain Harry Kane, Serie A defender of the year Kim and Konrad Laimer to Munich, Bayern allowed several players to leave in the summer.

The list of departures included France defenders Benjamin Pavard and Lucas Hernandez, midfielders Ryan Gravenberch and Marcel Sabitzer and right-back Josip Stanisic. After the window shut in early September, Tuchel described his squad as "a bit thin, a bit small" saying it was "thinner than before (the window closed)".

A frustrated Tuchel told Germany's Sky network "it's a courageous squad composition. We'll see if it's enough for the club's goals this season." Complaining about a lack of depth is hardly unusual for managers and in particular for Bayern managers.

Tuchel's predecessors Hansi Flick and Julian Nagelsmann made similar complaints during their tenures—and any transfer window where a club lands Kane and Kim should be viewed as at least in part a success.

However the way in which Bayern allowed the closing of the window to sneak up on them gives some substance to Tuchel's complaints. Fulham's Joao Palhinha was in Munich having pictures taken in a Bayern shirt on deadline day, but needed to fly back to London after the deal fell through.

Stanisic, a local junior who had been getting more and more game time, was allowed to leave for rivals Bayer Leverkusen, who now sit first in the Bundesliga table, with Bayern third.

Like Stanisic, Pavard—a wing-back who said he wanted to leave unless he was played at centre-back—also left without a replacement. Tuchel admitted in September "we wouldn't have let Stani (Stanisic) go if we had known about Benji leaving", despite the 2018 World Cup winner having pushed for a transfer for weeks.

Injuries to De Ligt, Kim and Upamecano forced Tuchel to select midfielder Leon Goretzka and wing-back Noussair Mazraoui in central defence in Bayern's 4-0 German Cup win over Preussen Muenster last Tuesday, an added irony considering Pavard's stated positional aims.

Boateng back?

Bayern's depth concerns were best illustrated on Sunday, when former centre-back Jerome Boateng

was seen training with the side ahead of a possible return. Boateng won the 2013 and 2020 Champions League titles with Bayern but was deemed surplus to requirements in the summer of 2021 and allowed to leave for free.

Bayern announced Boateng's return to training on their website, with German media indicating the club wanted to see if the 2014 World Cup winner would be able to return to the squad. Relegated to the bench last season, Boateng played



BARCELONA: Barcelona's Portuguese forward #14 Joao Felix celebrates with teammates after scoring his team's fifth goal during the UEFA Champions League 1st round day 1 Group H football match between FC Barcelona and Royal Antwerp FC at the Estadi Olimpic Lluis Companys in Barcelona. — AFP

just eight matches with Lyon and is likely to serve as little more than a back-up in Tuchel's side should he re-sign.

Bayern captain Joshua Kimmich tried to put a positive spin on the situation after the Leipzig draw on Saturday, saying "it can be an advantage sometimes when the squad is a little smaller, because everyone is required and everyone is important." "It's still the case with us that we've got players on the bench we can bring in to change the game." — AFP

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Correa brace helps Atletico beat Cadiz with strong comeback

BARCELONA: Atletico Madrid produced a fine comeback from two goals down to beat Cadiz 3-2 and climb to fourth in La Liga on Sunday. Diego Simeone's side were hit twice early on by the Andalusian minnows but dominated the game and triumphed thanks to an Angel Correa brace and Nahuel Molina's strike.

"The comeback today makes me very happy because it was not easy after the two goals," Simeone told DAZN. "The team calmly found the path to victory." Correa missed Thursday's win over Osasuna with a knee sprain he sustained in the Madrid derby triumph last weekend but said he came back as soon as possible to help Atletico. "I wanted to force it, with a bit of pain, to help the team and it turned out well," said Correa, who started in attack in place of the suspended Alvaro Morata. "Today the coach told me that I should play as the number nine to give more freedom to (Antoine) Griezmann."

Atletico were on top from the start, with Griezmann striking the post before Lucas Pires sent the visitors ahead at the Metropolitano. The Brazilian winger finished off Chris Ramos's excellent low cross to the far post, although Atletico were angry a foul was not given in the build-up. Cadiz defender Fali came close to doubling his side's lead with a cheeky lob from inside his own half, which flew over Jan Oblak but also narrowly wide, to the goalkeeper's immense relief. However Roger Marti produced a special chipped finish to beat Oblak and double Cadiz's lead. Correa headed home at the other end from Cesar Azpilicueta's cross to start Atletico's comeback after 32 minutes. Molina then drilled home after a rebound fell into his path at the start of the second half to level the game.

"We wanted to hold on for those first minutes (of

the second half), we knew they would throw everything at us, but it wasn't to be," said Cadiz forward Marti. An Atletico winner seemed inevitable and eventually Argentina international Correa polished off a slick team move, turning home Saul Niguez's cutback.

"(Saul's form) is a prize for his humility, hard work, not giving up ... for all the work he's done in the last few years he deserves the moments he's getting right now," added Simeone. Atletico have played one fewer game than the teams above them and are three points behind third-place Girona. Leaders Real Madrid beat the Catalan minnows on Saturday and are five points clear of Atletico, with champions Barcelona second after their win over Sevilla on Friday. Elsewhere Real Betis earned an impressive 3-0 win at home against Valencia to move seventh. Youngster Assane Diao, 18, scored for the second match running in his second game in the Spanish top flight, with Marc Roca and Ez Abde rounding out the victory.

Five-minute hat-trick

Earlier bottom-of-the-table Almeria threw away a three-goal lead earned by a five-minute Luis Suarez hat-trick in an entertaining 3-3 draw with Granada. The hosts, under interim coach Alberto Lasarte after Vicente Moreno was sacked in the week, took control thanks to the Colombian striker's remarkable rapid-fire treble.

Suarez netted three goals all at the end of the first half, each set up by winger Largie Ramazani, in the space of five minutes and 24 seconds. It was the third-fastest treble of the 21st century in La Liga—Kevin Gameiro holds the record after he scored a hat-trick for Atletico Madrid in four minutes 43 seconds against Sporting Gijon in 2017.

Later Suarez was taken off injured, with Spanish reports saying he has sustained a shin fracture which could keep him out for three months. Granada hit back through Bryan Zaragoza with a penalty, after his teammate Antonio Puertas missed a spot kick earlier in the second half. Ricard Sanchez and Myrto Uzuni completed the comeback for Granada, 19th, two points above winless Almeria. — AFP



MADRID: Atletico Madrid's Spanish midfielder #08 Saul Niguez vies with Cadiz's Spanish defender #20 Isaac Carcelen during the Spanish Liga football match between Club Atletico de Madrid and Cadiz CF at the Metropolitano stadium in Madrid. — AFP

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DOHA: Match in progress between Kuwait and Qatar. — KUNA

Kuwait beat Qatar in Asian qualifiers for Cricket World Cup

DOHA: Kuwait's cricket team won Monday over Qatar's national team, with a score of 130-129 in the Asian competition hosted by Doha, which qualifies for the 2024 Cricket World Cup in the US. Kuwait's team achieved its third victory in these qualifiers, raising its score to six points. Before today's match, it achieved two consecutive victories against the Qatari and Maldivian teams, while it lost to the Saudi team.

In a statement to KUNA, Mahmoud Abdullah said that the match against Qatar's team was strong, especially since the team players had previously played against Qatar. It is worth noting that the tournament operates on a league format with each team engaging in two matches against other participating teams, resulting in six matches per team, as the victory of each match earns a valuable two points, with the team that accumulates the most points progressing to the second stage of the qualifiers in Nepal.

Kuwait's team won against the host Qatari team with a score of 124-123, as well as against the Maldives team with a score of 103-100, while it lost to Saudi Arabia at 174-175. The competition, which includes Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the Maldives, kicked off September 28 in Doha and will last until October 5. — KUNA

Lens clash with Arsenal recalls glory days for resurgent French side

LENS: Lens' Champions League clash with Arsenal on Tuesday will see the French side come full circle in the season that marks their return to Europe's elite club competition after two decades away. The golden era for the Blood and Gold ("Les Sang et Or") came in the late 1990s and early 2000s, before a long stint in the doldrums and then a remarkable recent revival.

Lens were crowned French champions in 1998 for the only time in their history, an achievement which earned them a first crack at the Champions League. In November that year, having already held the Arsenal of Patrick Vieira, Dennis Bergkamp, Nicolas Anelka and Marc Overmars at home, they travelled to London to play Arsene Wenger's side at Wembley.

A Mickael Debeve goal gave them a shock 1-0 win as 8,000 travelling fans celebrated one of the finest results in the club's history. "It was the high point of my career," recalled Debeve, hardly a super-

star, in an interview last year with lensois.com. "They were one of the best two or three teams in Europe at the time. It was like playing against Real Madrid or Barcelona, a team full of internationals. "It was unexpected for us to be playing in such a competition against a team like that."

Spell in the doldrums

Lens were nevertheless denied a place in the knockout rounds by Andriy Shevchenko's Dynamo Kyiv, and two years later Arsenal gained revenge by beating the French club in the UEFA Cup semi-finals. Now, a quarter of a century on from that night at Wembley, Lens will host Arsenal at a packed Stade Bollaert-Delelis, whose 38,000 capacity is famously larger than the entire population of the northern French town.

Lens did have one other crack at the Champions League in 2002/03, beating AC Milan and drawing with Bayern Munich. But decline set in as they suffered three relegations between 2008 and 2015 and spent the best part of a decade in Ligue 2.

It was hard to imagine them returning to this stage, especially given the context in Lens itself. Situated in an industrial region near France's border with Belgium, Lens was a centre of coal production for over a century before the last mine shut in the 1980s.—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, YUNUS, holder of Passport No. M5455095 do hereby change my name to YUNUS (as given name) CALCUTTAWALA (as Surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name YUNUS CALCUTTAWALA and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. **(C#4237) 03-10-2023**

Yavi takes charge in Hangzhou as Hadadi's long reign ends

Kuwait's Yaqoub Al-Youha wins gold in 110m hurdles



HANGZHOU: Kuwait's Yaqoub Al-Youha sprints to victory in the men's 110m hurdles final athletics event during the 2022 Asian Games on Oct 2, 2023. — AFP

HANGZHOU: Bahrain's untouchable world title holder Winfred Yavi surged to the Asian Games 3,000m steeplechase gold medal on Monday, as Iranian veteran Ehsan Hadadi's 17-year reign as discus champion came to an end. Yavi was in a league of her own at the Hangzhou Olympic Stadium, defending her title in a new Games record 9min 18.28sec to back up the 1,500m gold she won on Sunday. It was the highlight of a night where the titles were split between six nations, including China's Li Ling claiming a third straight women's pole vault gold, clearing a new Games record 4.63m.

Yavi stormed to victory ahead of Kenya's Beatrice Chepkoech at the worlds at Budapest in August, then ran the second fastest time in history, 8:50.66, at the Eugene Diamond League last month. But she had no one to push her faster in Hangzhou as she cruised home ahead of Indian pair Parul Chaudhary and Priti, who both clocked personal bests.

"Anything can happen, so today I planned to play the game safe. I had a lot of pressure (with people) saying 'you're going to win,' the 23-year-old said. "So I was careful, and just tried to break the Asian Games record." With the 1,500m in the bag along with the steeplechase, Yavi said it had given her confidence to branch out further.

"It means I'm capable of shifting to different events. I don't need to stay in the steeplechase for a long time, I can graduate slowly, slowly to different events," she said. "Maybe I'll do 5k or 10k road races, and in the future maybe even a marathon."

Olympic gold medallist and three-time world champion Mutaz Essa Barshim was also in good nick, needing just one effort to qualify for the men's high-jump final, where he is overwhelming favourite.

The Qatari leapt 2.19m to lead the field into Wednesday's gold-medal showdown. His chief rival is South Korea's Woo Sang-hyeok, who won last month's Eugene Diamond League in a personal best 2.35m and also comfortably qualified.

India gun for kabaddi revenge against Iran

HANGZHOU: India had been the only country ever to win kabaddi gold at the Asian Games until Iran shocked them five years ago. Now India are gunning for revenge in Hangzhou but Iranian athletes and officials warned Monday they will face a "tough" battle to wrest back the gold.

Kabaddi, rooted in Indian mythology, requires two seven-player teams to send raiders into enemy territory to tag an opponent before returning to safety—all on one breath and taking no more than 30 seconds.

Iran won both the men's and women's golds at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta to stun India, where millions of television viewers watch glitzy and money-spinning professional kabaddi leagues modelled on cricket's IPL.

But Iran are confident they will retain su-

premacypremacy if the countries meet again in a medal showdown in Hangzhou this week. "We come for gold," Iranian player Mohammadreza Shadlouchiyaneh told AFP after beating Pakistan 43-16 in their opening group match on Monday on the courts at Xiaoshan Guali Sports Centre.

"Our team's defence have a good performance, but their raiders are also very good. I think we can control them," he said. "If we play in the final (against India), this is very hard and tough match, because both teams are strong," said Iranian coach Ghilamreza Mazandarani.

Only two players from Iran's victorious 2018 squad are playing in Hangzhou, Fazel Atrachali and Mohammedsmaeil Nabibakhsh. But Mazandarani said this year's team "has a good combination in both sides, in defence also good, raid side also we have good talent."

India are determined to grab back their traditional status as number one in a sport that is revered back home. "Our team will fight and our team will win," India women's coach V. Tejaswini Bai said after a surprise 34-34 draw against Taiwan in their first group

match on Monday. "Today we were a little bit nervous, but from now on we will be more relaxed," she added.

Kabaddi made its Asian Games debut in 1990 at Beijing with India winning every Asiad until Jakarta. It has undergone a money-spinning makeover in recent years, with businesses and Bollywood stars paying big money to recruit players for their franchise teams, and millions of television viewers tuning in to watch. — AFP



HANGZHOU: Iran's Moein Shafaghi (C) competes in the men's team group kabaddi event against Pakistan during the Hangzhou 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou, in China's eastern Zhejiang province. — AFP

match on Monday. "Today we were a little bit nervous, but from now on we will be more relaxed," she added.

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to gold in the women's 59kg class. The 20-year-old then hoisted 135kg in the clean and jerk to finish on a 246kg total and condemn China's Luo Shifang to silver with former snatch world record-holder Kuo Hsing-chun of Taiwan in third. "Like athletes from other NOCs we train in great venues. We are devoted and very committed to our preparation," said Kim when asked how lifters from her country were able to shatter so many world records.

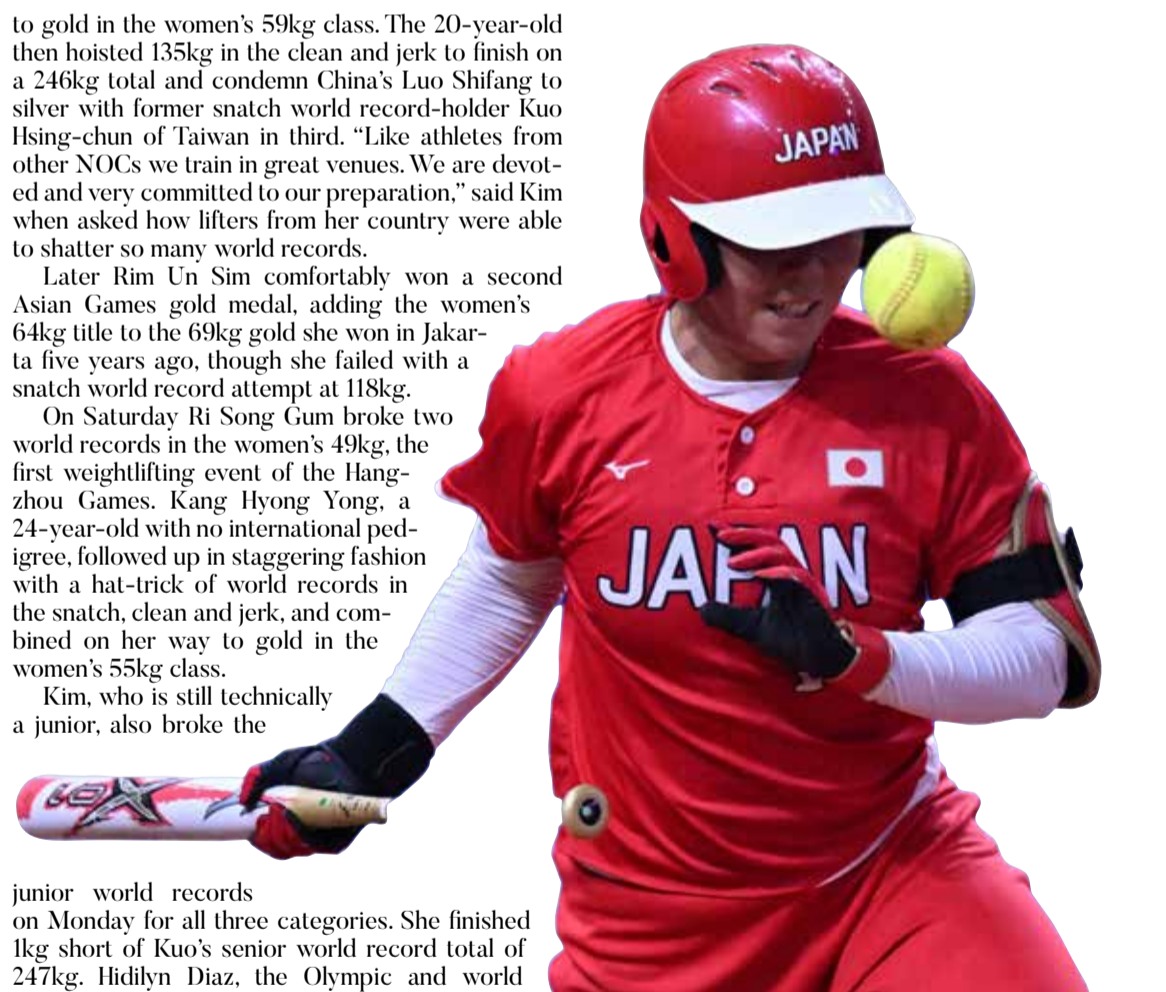
Later Rim Un Sim comfortably won a second Asian Games gold medal, adding the women's 64kg title to the 69kg gold she won in Jakarta five years ago, though she failed with a snatch world record attempt at 118kg.

On Saturday Ri Song Gum broke two world records in the women's 49kg, the first weightlifting event of the Hangzhou Games. Kang Hyong Yong, a 24-year-old with no international pedigree, followed up in staggering fashion with a hat-trick of world records in the snatch, clean and jerk, and combined on her way to gold in the women's 55kg class.

Kim, who is still technically a junior, also broke the

junior world records on Monday for all three categories. She finished 1kg short of Kuo's senior world record total of 247kg. Hidilyn Diaz, the Olympic and world champion in the 55kg division, was fourth.

Diaz, who is the only athlete from the Philippines to ever win an Olympic gold, is building towards the Paris Games. — AFP



Hangzhou: Japan's Minoru Naito hits a ball during the softball women's final event between Japan and China at Hangzhou 2022 Asian Games. — AFP

France hijab ban 'against Olympic spirit'

RIYADH: A group of sports federations from Muslim-majority countries said on Monday that France's move to bar its Olympic athletes from wearing the hijab would "send a message of exclusion". The 57-member Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation (ISSF), based in the Saudi capital Riyadh, voiced "profound concern" over the French decision, which was taken in line with the country's strict rules on secularism.

French Sports Minister Amelie Oudea-Castera said last month the French government was opposed to any display of religious symbols during sporting events. "What does that mean? That means a ban on any type of proselytising. That means absolute neutrality in public services," she told France 3

television. "The France team will not wear the headscarf." The ISSF said in its statement on Monday that the hijab was "an aspect of many Muslim women's identity and should be respected", adding that the French ban could prevent some French Muslim athletes from competing.

"The Olympics have historically celebrated diversity, unity and athletic excellence," the statement said. "By implementing a hijab ban for their athletes, a host would send a message of exclusion, intolerance and discrimination that goes against the Olympic spirit."

The statement urged French authorities "to reconsider this ban" and called for "meaningful engagement with the Muslim sports community in France." The ISSF was founded in 1985 to serve members of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, based in the Saudi city of Jeddah, "in all aspects of sports activities", according to its website. — AFP