

3 Amir congratulates Crown Prince on 3 years of post's assumption

5 Iran women's activist Narges Mohammadi wins peace Nobel

16 Kuwaiti karatekas win gold, silver medals at Asian Games

16 Bader Al-Kharafi honors Asian Games medalists



'ENOUGH IS ENOUGH'

Hamas launches Operation Al-Aqsa Flood against Zionists • Kuwait blames blatant Zionist violations



(Left) Palestinians take control of a Zionist tank after crossing the border fence with the Zionist entity from Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on Oct 7, 2023. (Right) A salvo of rockets is fired from Gaza City toward the Zionist entity. — AFP photos

Op-Ed End the occupation



Rami Tahboub
Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait

We have repeatedly warned against the consequences of blocking the political horizon and failing to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their legitimate right to self-determination and establish their own state. We have also warned against the consequences of daily provocations and attacks including the continued settlers' and occupation forces terrorism, as well as the raids on Al-Aqsa Mosque and Christian and Islamic holy sites.

Security, stability and peace in our region can be attained by ending the (Zionist) occupation of the land of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the 1967 lines, and recognizing the people's right to independence and sovereignty.

(The Zionist entity's) disavowal of the signed agreements and failure to adhere to international legitimacy resolutions led to the destruction of the peace process. That is in addition to the absence of a solution to the Palestinian cause after 75 years of suffering and displacement, the continuation of the policy of double standards and the silence of the international community regarding the criminal and racist practices of the (Zionist) occupation forces against the Palestinian people.

The continuation of the injustice and oppression to which the Palestinian people are exposed is the reason behind this explosive situation and the absence of peace and security in the region. Peace requires justice, freedom and independence for our Palestinian people, the return of refugees and the full implementation of international legitimacy resolutions.

GAZA/SDEROT: Palestinian group Hamas launched a large-scale surprise attack against the Zionist entity on Saturday, firing thousands of rockets from Gaza and sending fighters to abduct prisoners of war as the Zionist entity retaliated with air strikes. At least 200 people were reported killed in the Zionist entity, while Gaza authorities released a death toll of 232 in the conflict's bloodiest escalation in years which also left hundreds more wounded on both sides.

Hamas labelled its attack Operation Al-Aqsa Flood and called on "resistance fighters in the West Bank" as well as in "Arab and Islamic nations" to join the battle. "We decided to put an end to all the crimes of the occupation; their time for rampaging without being held accountable is over," said its armed wing, the Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades, claiming to have fired more than 5,000 rockets.

Hamas chief Ismail Haniya claimed the group was on the "verge of a great victory and a clear conquest on the Gaza front". "Enough is enough," he said in a televised address. "The cycle of intifadas (uprisings) and revolutions in the battle to liberate our land and our prisoners languishing in occupation prisons must be completed."

Kuwait on Saturday expressed deep concern at the escalation in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territories that happened as a result of the occupation's blatant violations and attacks on the brotherly Palestinian people. Kuwait's foreign ministry affirmed in a statement Kuwait's call upon the international community, namely the United Nations Security Council, to shoulder its responsibilities, halt the ongoing violence, safeguard the brotherly Palestinian people, stop the provocative practices by the occu-

pation, namely the recurring desecrations of Al-Aqsa Mosque, and the policy of expanding settlements.

It also affirmed Kuwait's unwavering and principled stance of standing on side of the brotherly Palestinian people in their struggle for attaining their full rights, namely the right to establish an independent state along the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. The foreign ministry warned that continuation of the violence without deterrence may jeopardize the efforts aimed at establishing peace and attaining the two-state settlement.

"We are at war," said Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as the military launched a series of strikes against targets in the blockaded coastal enclave, including several residential tower blocks that were completely destroyed.

Continued on Page 6

Kuwaitis rally in support of Palestine

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: Kuwaitis gathered in Irada Square on Saturday to express their solidarity, support and pride in the Palestinian resistance, as well as their rejection of normalization of Zionist occupation of Palestinian lands. "The Zionist entity has persisted in attacking and desecrating holy sites, disregarding the sanctity of children, women and the elderly over the past years. It is only natural for there to be a reaction to these practices and crimes in the face of the world's silence," MP Abdulaziz Al-Saqobi said.

"Many Arab and Islamic governments, as well as international and human rights organizations, are expected to respond proportionately to the magnitude and brutality of the crimes committed by the Zionist entity. For those who do not understand the language of treaties and agreements, they must understand the language of strength and resilience, as is happening today in Gaza. This resilience is a source of pride for all who adhere to the religion of Islam because the Palestinian issue is not just a matter for the Palestinian people, but also a religious issue. Therefore, every Muslim must support their brothers in Palestine," he said.

"I am honored to represent these people who are always quick to rise up for their nation and key issues, and the biggest issue is of Al-Aqsa Mosque. We must congratulate each other on this victory achieved by our brothers in Palestine, which calls for victory and pride because the nation is alive.

Continued on Page 6



KUWAIT: Kuwaitis against the normalization of ties with the Zionist entity attend a gathering to express their solidarity with Palestine in Irada Square on Oct 7, 2023. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat (More pics on Page 3)



Local

EU Special Representative lauds Kuwait's role in regional security

Di Maio emphasizes the importance of diplomacy

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: During his visit to Kuwait, Luigi Di Maio, EU Special Representative (EUSR) for the Gulf region, emphasized the importance of diplomacy and adherence to international law as the primary means to address the ongoing issue of the Khor Abdullah maritime dispute. Di Maio told Kuwait Times that in a world where the political landscape in the region has seen significant changes, it is crucial to maintain regional security and stability.

"It is reassuring to note that the EU remains committed to fostering a sustainable environment amidst these evolving dynamics. The focus is not only on resolving disputes, but also on creating a framework that promotes stability and cooperation. As partners in this endeavor, supporting diplomatic solutions is paramount, and this stance reflects a dedication to peaceful resolution," Di Maio said. This commitment to diplomacy and cooperation was reaffirmed during a discussion with Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah during his visit. He noted such dialogues are instrumental in strengthening diplomatic ties and finding peaceful resolutions to complex issues.

Meanwhile, Di Maio praised Kuwait's role in regional security and conflict resolution in the region, saying that its commitment to diplomacy and peaceful resolution of conflicts has not only helped maintain stability within its borders, but has also con-

tributed to mitigating broader regional disputes. He stated that the upcoming GCC-EU ministerial meeting scheduled for this month in Oman holds great significance as it is poised to be a milestone event.

"During this gathering, there will be the formulation of a final joint statement, representing a crucial step towards enhancing cooperation between the GCC and EU. The EU's ambitious goal is to address key points that can be swiftly implemented, setting the stage for productive negotiations and joint actions. Optimism surrounds the final statement and its anticipated outcomes. And the joint efforts of the EU and the GCC are not to be underestimated, as together, they account for 20 percent of the world trade," Di Maio said.

Regarding the free trade agreement (FTA) between the Gulf and the EU, Di Maio recognized its historic significance, emphasizing the need to find innovative solutions to enhance economic partnerships. He highlighted the potential role of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) in facilitating trade and logistics between the Gulf and the EU, underscoring the importance of collaboration in a region undergoing transformation.

Regarding the visa cascade, which grants Kuwaitis a five-year multi-entry Schengen visa, Di Maio said that it was hailed as a successful collaborative effort, paving the way for further developments and a Schengen visa waiver for Kuwaitis. He expressed readiness to invest more in accelerating this process,

acknowledging its importance in strengthening ties.

During his visit, Di Maio engaged in fruitful discussions with various Kuwaiti officials, focusing on the five key pillars of his mandate. These pillars encompass investment opportunities, energy and climate, regional security, people-to-people connections and the new level of cooperation between both institutions. Discussions revolved around promising opportunities in renewable energy and technology markets, aligning with both the EU's Green Deal and Kuwait's 2035 vision. This alignment presents a foundation for cooperation in the pursuit of green transitions and climate neutrality.

Di Maio emphasized willingness to enter into agreements that promote bilateral understanding in economics, technology and other sectors, reflecting the new strategic direction of the Gulf region. Notably, the third pillar includes considerations involving Iran in regional security, demonstrating a comprehensive approach. Discussions also touched upon elevating relations among GCC countries, diplomatic academies' collaboration, fostering civil society ties and empowering women.

In light of recent events of burning the Holy Quran, Di Maio said: "It's very important to connect our people and civil societies to foster mutual awareness, respect and collaboration. Both regions need to unite in condemning such actions and work against such events together."

The appointment of Di Maio as the EU Special



EU Special Representative (EUSR) for the Gulf region, Luigi Di Maio addresses the press.

Representative for the Gulf region in May 2023 signifies a commitment to fostering a more strategic EU partnership with Gulf countries. His role includes supporting the High Representative in implementing foreign policy and security aspects of the EU's Strategic Partnership with the Gulf, contributing to regional stability and security through dialogue and long-term solutions. The EUSR will also work closely with the Council and the European Commission to ensure the coherence of the EU's external actions in the region while raising awareness of the EU's role in Gulf affairs.

In my view

Two journeys, two generations: Stories of Fai and Sulaiman



By Yousef Almazzeedi

In the realm of extraordinary journeys, Fai Alomran and Sulaiman Alzayed, both in their early twenties, treaded different paths separated by decades and continents. Yet, their tales converge on the themes of adventure, camaraderie and resilience. This summer, Fai spent 126 days conquering the Pacific Crest Trail. She trudged through snowfalls, wildfires and other daunting challenges. She had tools like Google Maps to keep her on track, WhatsApp to stay connected with family, and Instagram to keep us all updated (and, at times, entertained).

In Sulaiman's era, however, almost 60 years ago, a paper map, an old camera and the occasional telephone booth had to suffice. But just like her steadfast hiking partner Haya made the trail less lonesome for Fai, Sulaiman had three unflinching friends who made the journey a reality. For both, it wasn't just about covering miles; it was about cherishing moments and forging bonds.

Flash back to early in the summer of 1966, in Kairuan where Sulaiman Alzayed, Mahmoud Alnabhan, Hashem Syed Hussain, and Hasan Al-Nasser embarked on a dream road trip from Kuwait all the way to Spain, then back home through North Africa. Their journey, spanning 16 countries, faced its own set of challenges. With no digital aids, they relied on physical maps and the kindness of strangers, like a bus driver in Syria who hosted them for lunch.

Fueled by wanderlust, they had meticulously charted a journey across continents. As they huddled around a large, worn-out map of the world, each country they intended to visit was marked with a circle. Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Italy, Spain, Libya and Tunisia were not just names on a map; they were destinations full of promise and intrigue.

It was Sulaiman's father, Saleh, who kick-started their journey, driving them from Kuwait to Basra. From there, the quartet boarded a bus and maneuvered through the political turbulence of Baghdad (there was a failed coup attempt in the summer of 1966), enduring an unexpected hiccup when they were mistakenly arrested. Their odyssey continued as they marveled at the bustling bazaars in the Hamidiyah Souq in Damascus and the vibrant markets of Istanbul, a true confluence of colors, scents and sounds.

Their European escapade began in Turkey, where East meets West. The eclectic mix of cultures set the tone for their onward journey. In Italy, they were provided with a memory that would be etched in their minds forever. As they entered Pisa and caught their first glimpse of the Leaning Tower, they were overwhelmed. The sheer tilt of the tower was more pronounced than any picture could convey. However, it was North Africa, or the "Arabian Maghreb", that beckoned them next. In Morocco, Algeria, Libya and Tunisia, they immersed themselves in a tapestry of cultures, each more vibrant than the last.

Despite the gap in years, both journeys underscore the human spirit's quest for adventure and connection. Where Fai found solace in sunsets and friendships on the Pacific Crest Trail, Sulaiman and his friends enjoyed the unexpected hospitality of strangers and the shared memories of their road trip. In the end, whether it's a three-and-a-half-month road trip through 16 countries or a 126-day hike along the Pacific Crest Trail, these stories remind us that it's the journey, not just the destination, that truly matters. They are testaments to the unconquerable spirit of our young Kuwaiti adventurers, the beauty of companionship.

International Friends Club welcomes Sierra Leone envoy

KUWAIT: A group of members of the International Friends Club, including the Ambassador of Kenya Halima A Mohamad, as well as a group of ambassador's spouses and diplomats, visited the Ambassador of Sierra Leone, Dr Haji Ayeisha, to welcome her back to Kuwait and wish her well after her long trip abroad for medical treatment. The group members were happy to catch up with her and to wish her all the best as she resumes her duties in Kuwait. They also expressed joy, as they look forward to sharing with her the various cultural and social events in which she plans to take part.

Kuwait pushes to enhance ICT's role in achieving SDGs

NEW YORK: Kuwait on Friday renewed its commitment to boosting the role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs), hoping these technologies would help build a better future for all. This came in a speech delivered by Diplomatic Attache at Kuwait's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York, Ali Al-Khrabit, before the UN General Assembly's Second Committee session on information and telecommunications technologies.

The Kuwaiti diplomat noted that ICTs play a major role in implementing sustainable development goals by

Kuwait calls for more legislations to protect children and civilians

NEW YORK: Kuwait has called upon the international community to bolster efforts to enact more legislation to protect children from violence and poverty. The Kuwaiti stance came in a statement addressed by the diplomatic attaché Shahed Al-Menaifi at a session of the UN third committee (tasked with social, humanitarian, and cultural affairs). Elaborating, the diplomatic attaché

What makes going to school so toxic and frustrating in Kuwait?

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: School is an integral part of young individuals' daily life. Imagine if you were to experience the challenges and the toxicity of this experience for most days of your childhood and the beginning years of your life. This is what high school student Awrad Al-Haddad, Zainab Dashti and AlKawther Ghloom complained to Kuwait Times about their experience in public schools in Kuwait, shedding light on the factors that contribute to toxic environments.

Traffic congestions

Kuwait's roads are notorious for heavy traffic, especially during peak hours. For students commuting to school, this congestion presents a significant hurdle, impacting both their physical and mental well-being. Lengthy periods spent in overcrowded buses or cars can lead to fatigue, stress and reduced concentration levels. "From the beginning of the day, before we arrive at school, we experience daily stress due to the unusual traffic congestion. Also, on our way back home after finishing school, we get stuck in the hot weather and on the road, not to mention that we have to pick up my siblings from another school. I feel like I want to vomit, which makes the school experience from the very beginning to arriving home tiring, exhausting and nerve-wracking," Awrad said. Students may arrive late



Ali Al-Khrabit

providing the necessary tools and technologies to enhance economic growth and improve education, health and environmental protection. He pointed out that Kuwait seeks to meet the needs and fill the gaps in information and communication technologies.

Al-Khrabit stated that Kuwait established the Government Communication Center in 2019 to upgrade the government communication tools and achieve integration and coordination between government agencies to keep pace with the process of development and renaissance that Kuwait is witnessing. He highlighted the effective role of the center in responding quickly to developments

and managing crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which demonstrated the urgent need to develop information and communications technology and to accelerate the transition to a digital society.

"We are still far from achieving comprehensive development, especially in ICTs," he said, noting that half of the world's population has no access to ICTs, especially in the least developed countries, which must be integrated into the digital world to meet the goals of sustainable development. He emphasized the close link between ICT and energy.

"My country seizes this opportunity to renew its commitment to developing energy requirements and supplies in the next two decades," he said. The Kuwaiti diplomat added that Kuwait joined the International Telecommunication Union in 1959 and is a member of the ITU Board for the period 2023-2026, which shows the country's interest in creating a digital world by developing the ICT sector, building advanced digital infrastructure, and establishing a digital society. — KUNA



for school, missing out on valuable learning time and feeling rushed and anxious upon arrival.

Unwelcoming treatment upon arrival

Zainab spoke about the strict dress code and unnecessary enforcement of wearing a specific kind of hijab. "As soon as we arrive through the school gates, the teachers inspect us in an uncivilized manner. I do not understand the reason behind being so rude and checking on the type of hijab we are wearing. Isn't it just a cloth that is supposed to cover hair? Why do we have to wear a specific type of hijab, regardless of whether it is comfortable or not? They do not care that we spend hours studying while feeling uncomfortable. I think this does not align with the level of education. If a girl wears a type of hijab that she is accustomed to, what is the problem with that? Why are we forced to wear a type of veil that is impractical and may cause distractions during studying, in addition to forcing us to remove any accessories we wear, even under our clothes?" she asked.

While the intent behind this rule is to promote discipline and a sense of unity, it can also cause discomfort and hinder students' ability to concentrate. Adhering to specific dress code requirements may prevent students

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child in particular, she said, noting the establishment of the family court and enacting a special law for safeguarding children's rights in 2015. Al-Menaifi reaffirmed Kuwait's resolve to enhance child rights, support efforts by states and organizations to protect children, namely their rights and dignity, and establish "a world suitable for the children." — KUNA



Shahed Al-Menaifi

from expressing their individuality and feeling comfortable in their own skin. Zainab added: "Once, I was wearing a light gold necklace and hiding it under my hijab. At that moment, the inspector came and took out the gold necklace from under my hijab. She took it away and made me sign a warning slip. I don't understand what harm there is in that. I am a girl who wears a lightweight gold necklace and hides it under the hijab, so what is the problem with that?"

Poor infrastructure

Many schools in Kuwait suffer from poor infrastructure, including inadequate air conditioning systems, unclean restrooms and sometimes missing tables and chairs. "Ever since we came back to school this year, the air conditioning is not working. The weather is unbearable — I can hardly focus with my teacher, especially after the breaks when we go out under the sun and then come back to hot classrooms. When I try to fold my sleeves and open my hijab to reduce the heat, I get yelled at from my teachers. It is so suffocating. I have tried to speak to the supervisor more than once about the air conditioning, but no solutions yet," rued Awrad.

Kuwait's harsh weather conditions can create an extremely uncomfortable learning environment. The lack of proper cooling systems can hinder students' ability to focus and contribute to feelings of fatigue, irritability and decreased academic performance. On her part, AlKawther complained about a lack of hygiene: "Unfortunately, there is not enough attention given to cleanliness in the schools in general, especially in the bathrooms. I cannot go to the bathroom because it is very dirty, in addition to doors that do not close. It is very disgusting, and I do not know why the situation is like this in schools. I avoid eating or drinking water the whole time so that I do not have to go to the bathroom," she said.

Amir congratulates Crown Prince

Kuwait marks 3rd anniversary of Sheikh Mishal's nomination as Crown Prince

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable to His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Saturday, congratulating him on the third anniversary of taking up the Heir Apparent position. In the cable, His Highness the Amir lauded His Highness the Crown Prince for his sincere efforts and devotion to the service of the dear homeland, wishing him lasting wellbeing and Kuwait security and prosperity.

In reply, His Highness the Crown Prince sent His Highness the Amir a cable expressing deep gratitude to His Highness the Amir for the heartfelt and sincere felicitations on the occasion. In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince highly commended the country's comprehensive development and pioneering achievements under His Highness the Amir's leadership, wishing him everlasting wellness and success in achieving further progress and prosperity for the dear homeland and its people.

His Highness the Amir, three years ago, designated His Highness the Crown Prince to be the Heir Apparent, his right hand for managing state affairs and leading the march toward further development and prosperity. His Highness Sheikh Mishal, on October 8, 2020, took the Constitutional Oath in front of His Highness the Amir following an extraordinary



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

National Assembly session during which the present 59 MPs unanimously declared allegiance to him as the Heir Apparent.

Over the past decades, HH Sheikh Mishal has held a series of senior positions, serving as Inter-

ior Minister, chief of the National Guards, and accompanying Amir on external missions. HH Sheikh Mishal, born in Kuwait in 1940, is the seventh son of the late 10th Amir Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who ruled the country between 1921

and 1950. He studied at Al-Mubarakiya School and pursued higher studies at the British Hendon Police College in 1960.

Fresh from studies in the United Kingdom, Sheikh Mishal joined the interior ministry ranks, where he climbed from a post to a higher one in the department hierarchy, serving as the head of general inspection from 1967 until 1980. It was turned into the state security department during his service. On April 13, 2014, he was named the second chief of the National Guards with a minister's degree and remained in this post until he was proclaimed the Crown Prince. HH Sheikh Mishal contributed to drafting the National Guards' strategy aimed at protecting the country, its legitimacy, constitution and people.

Moreover, he earned an honorary chairmanship of the Kuwaiti Pilots Society in 1973 and was co-founder of the Kuwaiti Wireless Communication Society and its honorary chairperson. In 1977, he was named by the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as the head of Al-Nibt Poetry Diwaniya. On December 4, 2018, the French Minister of the Armed Forces, Florence Barely, decorated him with the Legion of Honor Medal for his prime role in establishing solid friendly relations between Kuwait and France. — KUNA

Kuwait MPs, Albania officials hold crucial meeting in Tirana

KUWAIT: The delegation of Kuwait-Albania parliamentary friendship met on Friday with Besart Kadia, deputy minister of Europe and foreign affairs for economic diplomacy, in Tirana, the capital of Albania. During the meeting, head of the delegation MP Mohammad Al-Mutairi expressed hope that Albania, which is a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, would back Kuwait's stance on the convention on the regulation of maritime navigation in the Khor Abdullah signed between Kuwait and Iraq in 2012. Iraq's court has recently ruled that the convention is unconstitutional, although the country's parliament endorsed it.

The accord was then submitted to the UN. Kuwait always reiterates the respect for international commitments and the principles of good neighborliness, he said. He expressed hope that Albania would support Kuwait's nomination for UN Human Rights Council membership from 2024-2026. Meanwhile, Kadia called for backing Albania's nomination for the same post in October, referring to the commercial and investment opportunities of his country in all domains, including tourism. The delegation includes MPs Adel Al-Damghi, Osama Shahin, and Falah Al-Hajri. Charge de 'affaires at Kuwait's Embassy to Albania Ambassador Khaled Al-Shami and First Secretary Adnan Al-Ghonaim attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, Kuwait-Albanian Parliamentary Friendship, headed by Mohammad Al-Mutairi, met with the chairman and members of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Albanian Parliament in the Albanian capital, Tirana. During the meeting, both sides assured the strength of bilateral relations, which have lasted for 55 years, as each parliament will continue to direct efforts for further cooperation in all fields.

The tourism cooperation was also discussed during the meeting, which was chaired by Albanian MP Blend Klosi, where he emphasized that the



Kuwait MPs and senior Albanian official Besart Kadia take a group photo in Tirana. — KUNA photos



Kuwaiti MPs meet members of Albanian Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee.

opening of a direct flight line this summer between Kuwait and Albania to attract tourists was successful. He added that he is looking forward to next year's tourism season, hoping Parliamentarians will

seek to push for the cancellation of entry visas for Albanians visiting Kuwait, similar to his country's decision in 2015 to exempt Kuwaiti citizens from entry visas. —KUNA

Kuwait, Saudi info ministers discuss media cooperation

RIYADH: Kuwaiti Minister of Information and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi discussed on Friday with Saudi Information Minister Salman Al-Dosari efforts to broaden bilateral media cooperation. In a meeting held at the Saudi Press Agency headquarters in Riyadh upon an invitation from Saudi Minister Al-Dosari, the ministers mulled means to increase bilateral media cooperation in light of the global media transformations and explored opportunities for honing the skills of media cadres and exchanging expertise. They also touched upon several issues of common interest. Earlier, Minister Al-Mutairi toured the Riyadh International Book Fair accompanied by Saudi counterpart Al-Dosari.

GCC tourism meeting

In another development, the Minister of Information took part in the seventh meeting of the GCC tourism ministers, hosted by Oman. The ministry of information said in a statement that the meeting, held at "Oman Abr Alzaman Museum" (Oman Across Ages Museum) in the district of Minh, addressed issues for joint GCC tourism, namely resolutions that had been issued by the GCC supreme council, the GCC tourism statistics website, and the GCC tourism guidelines. The conferees discussed the tasks of the joint team assigned to carry out the GCC tourism strategy and the joint tourism visas. The meeting was held under the chairmanship of the Omani minister of tourism, Salem Al-Mahrouki, with the attendance of GCC countries' tourism ministers and the GCC chief, Jasem Al-Budaiwai. — KUNA



Kuwaiti Minister of Information and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi discussed with Saudi Information Minister Salman Al-Dosari. — KUNA

Kuwaitis denounce Zionist attacks



KUWAIT: Kuwaitis against the normalization of ties with Zionist entity attend a gathering to express their solidarity with Palestinians in Kuwait City on October 7, 2023. Kuwait on Saturday expressed deep concern at the escalation in Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories that happened as a result of the Zionist entity's blatant violations and attacks on the brotherly Palestinian people. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwait, UK medical bodies agree to exchange expertise

KUWAIT: Head of the Authority for Medical Responsibility (AMR), Dr Salman Khalifa Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, said that his agency conducted a joint cooperation event with the UK General Medical Council (GMC) to exchange expertise and enhance joint cooperation to establish local plans and mechanisms based on the latest international standards. Speaking to KUNA on Saturday, Dr Salman Al-Sabah said that GMC commended AMR's efforts, appreciating the quality mechanisms and standards in the investigations and technical reports it issues.

This commendation came in a report issued by GMC's website in the context of the joint cooperation event that was recently held in Manchester, UK, he explained, noting that the report pointed to the great balance between the mechanisms, standards, and methodologies of AMR and GMC. The report concluded that this balance demonstrates the compatibility of values and dedication to achieving excellence in the field of health care and reflects a common goal of both parties to raise the standards of services provided.

The workshops focused on exchanging experiences and dealing with complaints against health professionals, especially in the fields of examining cases, making decisions, and preparing technical reports, with the participation of GMC's experts, he pointed out. It is worth mentioning that AMR is the organization responsible in Kuwait for expressing technical opinions on all issues presented to it through complaints, reports, cases, and lawsuits connected to medical errors and professional violations committed by professionals or health facilities and imposing penalties through the committees formed.

In 2020, AMR was established pursuant to Law No. 70 of 2020 regarding the practice of the medical profession and its auxiliary professions and the rights of patients and health facilities. As for GMC, it was founded in 1858 and plays a decisive role in granting licenses to doctors, organizing medical education, and investigating complaints against medical professionals. — KUNA

Kuwait sends 13th aid plane to Libya

KUWAIT: The 13th Kuwait Air Force relief plane took off on Saturday, heading to Libya to provide assistance to those affected by Hurricane Daniel. Speaking to KUNA in a statement, Yusuf Al-Meraj, head of the emergency department at the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), said Kuwait continues its aid air bridge to help and support Libyan people in order to mitigate the effects and consequences of the gale. The aid came in the implementation of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's directives, he stressed.

The number of aircraft that took off from Abdullah Al-Mubarak Air Base to Libya has risen so far to 13, he said, noting that the planes carried relief supplies, medical equipment, ambulances and shelter needs. Al-Meraj reaffirmed Kuwait's full solidarity with Libya and its people in the face of floods, expressing appreciation to the Kuwait Air Force for transporting urgent humanitarian aid to those in Libya.

KRCS coordinates with its Libyan counterpart, he said, referring to cooperation between the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs and the ambassadors of the two countries to evaluate Libya's needs. He commended the stances of Kuwait, its leadership and its people to take immediate steps to help those affected and lessen the effect of this humanitarian crisis in Libya. — KUNA



CBK, IBS honor 'Cybersecurity Leaders Program' graduates

CBK, banks support education, training programs

KUWAIT: Under the patronage of the Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Chairman of the Institute of Banking Studies (IBS), IBS honored the graduates of the 3rd cohort of the "Cybersecurity Leaders Program," held from July 16 to October 5, 2023. It is part of the strategic cooperation between the SANS Academy (Cybersecurity Training Institute) and the Bank of International Settlements (BIS). This program is part of the "Kafa'a" initiative launched by the CBK in cooperation with Kuwaiti banks to develop and qualify national cadres through the management of the Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies since 2018, the CBK said in a press release.

The CBK and the Institute have commended the honorees for passing this significant program and called on them to pursue further education and qualification to keep abreast of international developments and to deliver the necessary skills for preserving and protecting networks, systems, applications, and infrastructure.

Furthermore, the institute has stressed that CBK, in collaboration with banks, shall continue to support education, training, and qualitative qualification to provide competencies and distinguished cadres needed for the growth of the national economy, whether through the institute's programs or the Kafa'a initiative, according to the release. The CBK is constantly seeking through IBS to collaborate with

the best international professional institutions to offer training programs and activities, particularly the Kafa'a initiative programs, in line with the highest international standards, it added.

Within this framework, CBK has contracted with SANS Cybersecurity Training Institute Academy, an internationally leading and accredited training academy that offers professional certificates in the field of cybersecurity, and cooperated with BIS's Cyber Resilience Coordination Center, which is the most well-established global financial institution actively engaged in developing the global financial market by taking advantage of CBK's membership to give specialized lectures and trainings on the topic of protecting and securing the financial and banking systems.

The "Cybersecurity Leaders" program comprised practical and professional training and specialized tests from SANS Institute Academy to obtain international certificates (GIAC) in cybersecurity and develop various skills in this field, including acquiring knowledge on the fundamentals of protecting and securing networks, systems, and applications, training on hacker tools and techniques, and acquiring cyber incident management skills, it said.

Moreover, SANS offers insights on developments in the field of cybersecurity worldwide by providing specialized workshops with several ex-

perts in cybersecurity who work in security companies or relevant international institutions, it noted. The program mainly included, throughout all its stages, live exercises on protecting and securing networks, systems, financial and banking infrastructure, and others (Cyber Range Exercises) and CTF (Capture the Flag) competitions.

These training delivery models are the ideal ways to train and acquire the necessary cyber skills in work environments, according to the release. It is worth noting that the participants in this program work within various bodies, both inside and outside the banking sector. Such participants are graduates and fresh cadres, with the active participation of Kuwaiti women representing approximately 25 percent of the total number of participants.

Thus, achieving CBK's strategy to qualify national cadres specialized in cybersecurity and empower women is a strategy that is not merely limited to the consolidation of the banking sector but also the consolidation of all other institutions and sectors in Kuwait. A number of participants spoke about their experience in the program and the knowledge they acquired and expressed their gratitude and appreciation to CBK, IBS, and their employers, who believed in and invested in them. In conclusion, certificates were distributed to all participants. — KUNA

Defense minister calls on navy to be vigilant

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah has affirmed the necessity of maximum vigilance and readiness to safeguard Kuwait's security, including its territorial waters. The minister made the affirmation during an inspection visit to Mohammad Al-Ahmad naval base, where he urged the naval troops to seek higher preparedness and expressed good wishes to them in their service for the homeland under the sagacious leadership of His Highness the Amir, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and His Highness the Crown Prince. Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad, during the inspection, was briefed about the missions accorded to the naval force, overhaul programs and training courses. He also examined some naval pieces, workshops and units. — KUNA



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah during an inspection visit to Mohammad Al-Ahmad naval base — KUNA



Condolences

The Partners, Management
and Staff of



**Al Rashed International
Travel Co. W.L.L**

expresses profound sorrow
on the sad demise of

**Saud Abdulaziz
Abdulmohsin Al Rashed**

who passed away on Friday, 6th October.

On this sad occasion, we extend
our heartfelt condolences to our

Director

**Mr. Bassim Saud Al Rashed
&
Mr. Khaled Saud Al Rashed
Mr. Essam Saud Al Rashed
Mr. Faisal Saud Al Rashed
Mr. Adnan Saud Al Rashed**

And to the bereaving

Al Rashed family

May Allah Almighty bestow mercy on his soul

Kuwait showcases anti-desertification efforts at Expo

DOHA: Kuwait's booth at the International Horticultural Expo 2023 Doha Qatar sheds light on Kuwait's efforts to fight desertification and achieve sustainability. The statement was made to KUNA on Saturday by the head of Kuwait's booth at the event, Abdullah Al-Tamimi. He added that the booth showcases plants that exist in Kuwait's environment. The booth also teaches visitors about the stages of plant growth, methods of recycling water used for plants in the booth, and how to use it for beneficial purposes rather than wasting it, he said. Doha's expo kicked off last Monday under the theme "Green Desert, Better Environment", and concludes on March 28, 2024.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's national flower, Al-Arfaj, was displayed at Doha Expo 2023, signaling sustainability, steadfastness and beauty. The drawing depicting the flower contains the letter K in reference



**جناح دولة الكويت
KUWAIT PAVILION
EXPO 2023 DOHA**

to Kuwait in addition to the letters of the full word Kuwait. The logo colors allude to Kuwait's sands and sea. The green signals the plants' leaves; the yellow is the color of the national flower, Al-Arfaj; and the black and white refer to the wall of the Kuwaiti pavilion at the exhibition. — KUNA



Photo shows some plants at the Kuwaiti booth. —



Kuwaiti pavilion at the exhibition.



Nazi past shakes Dutch royals

Poland, Hungary clash with EU over migration reform

Page 6

Page 7

Irani activist wins peace Nobel

Narges Mohammadi honored for defending women's rights in Iran

OSLO: The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded on Friday to imprisoned activist Narges Mohammadi for her fight against the oppression of women in Iran. Mohammadi's award comes after a wave of protests swept Iran following the death in custody a year ago of a young Iranian Kurd, Mahsa Amini, arrested for violating Iran's strict dress rules for women. A 51-year-old journalist and activist, Mohammadi has spent much of the past two decades in and out of jail for her campaign against the mandatory hijab for women and the death penalty. Speaking to AFP, the head of the Norwegian Nobel Committee urged Iran to release Mohammadi, a call echoed by the United Nations and US President Joe Biden. "I appeal to Iran: Do something dignified and release the Nobel laureate Narges Mohammadi," committee chairwoman Berit Reiss-Andersen said.

Biden hailed her "unshakable courage", saying: "I urge the government in Iran to immediately release her and her fellow gender equality advocates from captivity." "This award is a recognition that ... the world still hears the clarion voice of Narges Mohammadi calling for freedom and equality," he added.

Tehran's foreign ministry condemned the award as "biased and political" noting that the Peace Prize had been "awarded to a person who was convicted of repeated violations of laws and criminal acts." Mohammadi and three other women held with her at Tehran's Evin prison burned their hijabs to mark the anniversary of Amini's death on September 16. The protests had "accelerated the process of realizing democracy, freedom and equality in Iran", a process that is now "irreversible", she told AFP last month in a letter written from her prison cell.

Crackdown

Mohammadi was honored "for her fight against the oppression of women in Iran and her fight to promote human rights and freedom for all," Reiss-Andersen said. "Her brave struggle has come with tremendous personal costs. Altogether, the regime has arrested her 13 times, convicted her five times and sentenced her to a total of 31 years in prison and 154 lashes," she added. Incarcerated



A handout photo provided by the Narges Mohammadi Foundation on Oct 2, 2023 shows an undated, unlocated photo of Iranian rights campaigner Narges Mohammadi.

ed this time since November 2021, Mohammadi has not seen her children, who live in France with her husband, for eight years. "I am very, very proud of my mother, very happy", said her 17-year-old son, Ali Rahmani, at a Paris news conference also attended by his father and twin sister. "The government is trying to break the prisoners in Iran," he said. "This prize is an award for her struggle in Iran." Mohammadi's husband, Taghi Rahmani, said the prize was also "an award for all the men and the women who fight for Woman, Life, Freedom" — a reference to a rallying cry prominent during protests in Iran over Amini's death. "Their voices will never be silenced," he added. The Nobel award "will give them even more strength to express themselves."

Mohammadi is the vice-president of the Defenders of Human Rights Centre founded by Iranian human rights lawyer Shirin Ebadi, who herself won the Peace Prize in 2003. Iran is ranked 143rd out of 146 countries on the World Economic Forum's gender equality ranking. Authorities cracked down harshly on last year's "Woman, Life, Freedom" uprising — the words Reiss-Andersen



PARIS: Iranian journalist Taghi Rahmani (right), husband of Iranian rights campaigner and 2023 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi, speaks, flanked by their son Ali (center), and Reporters Without Borders Secretary-General Christophe Deloire (left), during a press conference on Oct 6, 2023. — AFP

used to begin Friday's announcement, in English and Farsi: "Zan, Zendegi, Azadi".

A total of 551 protesters, including 68 children and 49 women, were killed by security forces, according to Iran Human Rights, and thousands of others were arrested. "This award is a slap in the face of (Iranian supreme leader) Ali Khamenei's regime, which has declared war on its own people," Masih Alinejad, another Iranian hijab opponent, said on Friday.

The uprising, one of the biggest challenges to the regime's power since the 1979 revolution, has continued, albeit in other forms. In what would have been unthinkable

a year ago, women now go out in public without the headscarf, in particular in Tehran and other big cities, despite the risks. A 16-year-old girl is currently in a coma after being attacked on Sunday by female police officers tasked with enforcing the mandatory hijab among other things, according to the Kurdish-focused rights group Hengaw. Authorities have stepped up controls, including using surveillance cameras, and have arrested actresses who post pictures of themselves on social media without the hijab. In September, Iran's conservative-dominated parliament announced heavier penalties for women who refuse to wear it. —AFP

Magnitude 6.3 earthquake kills 15 in Afghanistan

HERAT: A magnitude 6.3 earthquake hit western Afghanistan on Saturday killing 15 and injuring dozens more, officials said, predicting the toll could rise after reports of landslides and victims trapped under collapsed buildings. The United States Geological Survey said the epicenter was 40 kilometers (25 miles) northwest of the region's largest city Herat and was followed by seven aftershocks with magnitudes between 4.6 and 6.3.

Crowds of residents fled buildings in the city at around 11:00 am (6:30 GMT) as the quakes began, lasting just under three hours. "We were in our offices and suddenly the building started shaking," 45-year-old Herat resident Bashir Ahmad told AFP. "Wall plasters started to fall down and the walls got cracks, some walls and parts of the building collapsed." "I am not able to contact my family, network connections are disconnected. I am too worried and scared, it was horrifying," he said.

Men, women and children stood out in the wide streets, away from tall buildings, in the moments after the first quake and remained wary of returning to homes as

aftershocks continued. "The situation was very horrible, I have never experienced such a thing," said 21-year-old student Idrees Arsala, the last to safely evacuate his classroom as the quakes began. In a video statement, National Disaster Management Authority spokesman Mullah Jan Sayeq said "around 40" had been injured in tremors felt across three provinces, in addition to 15 killed. "These are the preliminary numbers. There is the possibility the numbers could increase," he said. Earlier in the day he told AFP there had been landslides in nearby rural and mountainous areas. Public health director of Herat province Mohammad Taleb Shahid put the fatality figure slightly lower at 14, with 78 injured, but agreed the tally would likely rise. "We have information that people are buried under rubble," he told AFP.

Hundreds of fatalities were possible, according to a USGS preliminary report. "Significant casualties are likely and the disaster is potentially widespread. Past events with this alert level have required a regional or national level response," it said. The USGS had earlier reported the first quake's magnitude as 6.2. It had a shallow depth of just 14 kilometers, it said.

Herat — 120 kilometers east of the border with Iran — is considered the cultural capital of Afghanistan. It is the capital of Herat province which is home to an estimated population of 1.9 million, according to 2019 World Bank data. Afghanistan is frequently hit by earthquakes, especially in the Hindu Kush mountain range, which lies near the junction of the Eurasian and Indian tectonic plates. — AFP

Trump denies sharing US nuclear submarine secrets

WASHINGTON: Former president Donald Trump on Friday denied reports in US media that he had shared US nuclear submarine secrets with an Australian businessman in a meeting at his Florida mansion shortly after leaving office. The New York Times, citing unnamed sources, identified the entrepreneur as billionaire Anthony Pratt, who heads one of the world's largest packaging companies.

ABC News, which first revealed the story, said Pratt later shared sensitive details about the US submarines with "scores of others, including more than a dozen foreign officials, several of his own employees, and a handful of journalists." Sources told the Times that Trump's disclosures "potentially endangered the US nuclear fleet."

But Trump dismissed the reports as "false and ridiculous" in a post on his social media platform Truth Social and claimed baselessly that they had been invented by prosecutors trying to damage his chances of returning to the White House. Federal prosecutors already investigating Trump for holding classified material at Mar-a-Lago after he left office, interviewed Pratt twice about the incident, the reports said. Pratt



WAPAKONETA: Donald Trump (center) speaks as Australian businessman Anthony Pratt (left) and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison look on during a visit to Pratt Industries plant opening in Ohio on Sept 22, 2019. — AFP

may now be called by prosecutors to testify against Trump in his classified documents trial, which is due to start next May in Florida.

Pratt met Trump at his Palm Beach club in April 2021, and told the ex-president he thought Australia should start buying its submarines from the United States, ABC reported. In response, Trump allegedly told the businessman the exact number of nuclear warheads US submarines routinely carry, and precisely how close they can get to Russian submarines without being detected, the news outlet said. — AFP

Sultan celebrates 42 years of service in Kuwait, region

KUWAIT: The Sultan Center Food Products Company, the owner and operator of the supermarket chain "Sultan", marks a significant milestone this month with the celebration of its 42nd anniversary. Established by the visionary late businessman, Jamil Sultan Bin Essa, Sultan transcends the identity of a mere supermarket chain; it stands as a cornerstone of Kuwait's modern retail landscape. Four decades have passed since the Sultan greeted its first shopper at its Shuwaikh branch. Today, Sultan is a shopping destination for a broad spectrum of society, thanks to its commitment to con-

- Sultan was founded in 1981 by the late Businessman and entrepreneur Jamil Sultan Bin Essa.
- Sultan operates over 70 stores across the Middle East, including 47 in Kuwait.
- Sultan offers a wide range of high-quality products, along with exclusive offers and rewards.
- Sultan is a cross-generational brand loved by the whole household.

tinuous improvement, its extensive range of quality products and its seamless shopping experience.

To commemorate the anniversary, Sultan announced today special rewards and exclusive offers as a tribute to the enduring loyalty and trust of its customers. Throughout October, all Kannee members stand a chance to clinch rewarding prizes. The grand prize is \$42,000, accompanied by 42 coveted iPhone 15s, and 42 Sultan gift cards, each loaded with KD 100 in purchasing credit. Every Kannee member making a purchase of KD 15 or more between the 1st and 31st of October will

be automatically entered into the enticing draw.

Sultan Center Food Products CEO Ms. Khadija Oubala said: "As we celebrate our 42 years anniversary in the Kuwaiti market, we take immense pride in our pioneering role in Kuwait's retail sector and the broader region. Our journey wouldn't have been possible without the support and trust of our loyal customers. Today's celebration is a heartfelt gesture of gratitude to our dedicated customers who have made Sultan their preferred choice for generations. We deeply appreciate our customers' trust, and we remain committed to delivering the finest

local and international goods that meet and exceed our customers' expectations. Our ongoing commitment includes growth, development, diversity and ensuring access to fresh food and high-quality household products, always."

Sultan embarked on its journey in 1981 with the opening of its first branch in the Shuwaikh area. Today, Sultan is the largest independent retailer on the Kuwait Stock Exchange. It owns and operates a network of over 70 stores in the Middle East. This includes 12 branches in Jordan, three branches in Bahrain and eight branches in Oman. In Kuwait alone, the company operates 47 branches, spanning from Jahra to Nwaiseeb, through three distinct store formats. These include 7 flagship stores, which cater to daily needs in every neighborhood, 11 Sultan Market stores and 29 Sultan Express stores, which offer quick and convenient shopping options.

THROUGH GENERATIONS

سُلطان Sultan 42 YEARS OF SERVICE

International

Poland, Hungary clash with EU over migration reform

EU 'legally raped' Hungary by moving ahead with new measures: Orban

GRANADA: A row over planned changes to Europe's migration rules overshadowed an EU summit Friday, although supporters of the reform vowed opposition from Poland and Hungary would not derail it. The Polish and Hungarian leaders did prevent the leaders from including migration in a joint statement of the summit's conclusions, causing the meeting to end on a sour note.

That forced European Council president Charles Michel to issue a separate statement in his name about asylum policy and border protection, and the French and German leaders said the legislative process on the issue would continue as planned. Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, who hosted the summit in Granada, dismissed concerns about the clash. "The most important thing is what our interior ministers achieved a few weeks ago with the agreement on crisis regulation, because that is what is really relevant in political terms," he said.

But the gathering did hand Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, who is facing a general election this weekend, and Hungary's Viktor Orban a stage on which to brandish populist credentials for their domestic audiences. Morawiecki boasted that

his "veto" on a joint statement on migration "meant that this process will not proceed ... and Poland has a chance to stop it". He said the "illegal migration ... disease has been plaguing Europe for years."

Earlier, Orban claimed Hungary had been "legally raped" by the EU moving ahead with legislation on reformed migration policies on the basis that a weighted majority of countries back it. Poland and Hungary are demanding a right to veto the measures, which are aimed at sharing out responsibilities for arriving asylum seekers across all bloc countries.

France's President Emmanuel Macron said although their opposition blocked any mention of migration in the final declaration, it would have no effect on the proposed bill, which was approved in outline form by member states on Wednesday. "The text has caused disagreements between several member states," Macron acknowledged. But he dismissed the lack of a joint statement on it as "a secondary issue because the matter is moving forward as it should after being passed by majority".

'Current approach not working'
Migration surged to the top of Brussels'

agenda after thousands of asylum seekers landed on the Italian island of Lampedusa in recent months, highlighting the urgency of a unified European response. On Thursday, leaders from across the continent met in the same Granada venue in a broader, continental format, as the European Political Community (EPC), to develop common geopolitical strategy.

But Spain, which hosted both meetings, failed to put migration on that summit's agenda, frustrating several members, notably Italy and Britain which convened a side meeting on the issue. During those sideline talks, Italian Prime Minister Georgia Meloni and Britain's Rishi Sunak, backed by France and the Netherlands, pushed for more work with third countries to prevent boats carrying asylum seekers from even setting off for Europe.

In an op-ed published on Friday in Britain's Times newspaper and Italy's Corriere della Sera, the pair said European nations recognized "the current approach is not working". Insisting their approach was "already delivering results," they urged other leaders to "act with the same sense of urgency" against people-smuggling gangs to slow irregular immigration.



GRANADA: Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz (Front) and Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban arrive for a family photo after a plenary session during the European Council Informal Meeting on Oct 6, 2023. — AFP

Wednesday's EU vote on migration reform saw member states approving a final component of an overhaul of the rules on handling asylum seekers and irregular migrants, setting up a push for the European Parliament to make it law before elections next June. The

EU's new Pact on Migration and Asylum will seek to relieve pressure on so-called frontline countries like Italy and Greece by relocating some arrivals to other EU states. Those opposed to hosting asylum seekers would be required to pay those that do. — AFP

Bedbugs force closure of 7 French schools

PARIS: France has been forced to shut seven schools over growing concerns over an infestation of bedbugs, Education Minister Gabriel Attal said Friday. "Bedbugs were detected at various levels in ... I believe 17 institutions, and currently as I speak to you, seven institutions are closed for this reason," Attal told France 5 television.

The French government has held a series of meetings this week to examine surging numbers of reported bedbug cases at a time when France is hosting the Rugby World Cup and preparing to host

the Paris 2024 Olympics.

Earlier Friday, the Education Ministry said in a statement to AFP that five schools with a total of 1,500 students had been closed. Earlier this week, authorities announced two schools — one in Marseille and the other in Villefranche-sur-Saone outside Lyon in southeastern France — had been shut down for cleaning.

"We have almost 60,000 institutions and we're only talking about a few dozen here, but it's true that cases are piling up," Attal said. "An immediate response is needed, so that we can have institutions treated within 24 hours." He said a list of "approved and recognized" companies had been prepared in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and regional health agencies "so that the heads of schools can have the contacts and have them intervene very quickly."

A municipal library in the northern city of Amiens is due to reopen on Saturday after being closed for several days after bedbugs were detected in public reading spaces, the city's mayor Brigitte Fouré told AFP. A sniffer dog found no trace of the pests after the library was treated, she said.

One-tenth of all French households are believed to have had a bedbug problem over the past few years, usually requiring a pest control operation costing several hundred euros which often needs to be repeated. The blood-sucking insects have been spotted in the Paris metro, high-speed trains and at Paris's Charles De Gaulle Airport. But the individual cases have not been confirmed by the authorities and RMCTV reported that a probe by Paris transport operator RATP had found no bedbugs on its services. — AFP

150 cats found left for dead in UAE desert

DUBAI: Some 150 cats have been found left for dead in the desert in the United Arab Emirates, the animal rights group PETA said on Friday. Activists in the oil-rich Gulf state said dozens of the cats had died, while some were rescued alive.

PETA called on the UAE to act in the face of this "act of cruelty". "PETA Asia is offering a \$5,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of whoever dumped these cats in the desert to die horribly of thirst, starvation, and from the unrelenting heat," Jason Baker, the group's senior vice president, told AFP. Emirati au-

thorities announced on Thursday that they had opened an "investigation into the incident of abandoned cats" in the Abu Dhabi desert. However, they did not specify when these cats were left or how many of them were involved. All "administrative and legal measures" would be used against the perpetrators of this "inhumane" act, the authorities said.

Photos and videos showing cats buried in sand or barely able to stand have been shared on social media. AFP was unable to immediately verify their authenticity. "This act of cruelty must not be swept under the rug like so many others," said Baker, accusing the UAE of "lagging behind other countries" in animal protection, despite the adoption of a new law in 2007. The solution to the problem of stray animals "crisis is spaying and neutering and adopting from overworked and understaffed shelters, which PETA Asia has been asking the UAE to require for years", he said. — AFP

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And to the bereaving
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May Allah Almighty bestow mercy on his soul

'ENOUGH IS ENOUGH'...

Continued from Page 1

"The enemy will pay an unprecedented price," the Zionist premier vowed after Hamas launched its first such combined air, sea and ground offensive, half a century after the outbreak of the 1973 Arab-Zionist war.

Hamas has released images of several Zionists taken captive, and Zionist army spokesman Daniel Hagari confirmed that "there are kidnapped soldiers and civilians. I can't give figures about them at the moment." The Islamist group started the attack around 6:30 am (0330 GMT) with thousands of rockets aimed as far as Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, some bypassing the Iron Dome defense system and hitting buildings.

Hamas fighters — travelling in vehicles, boats and even using motorized paragliders — breached Gaza's security barrier and attacked nearby Zionist towns and military posts, opening fire on residents and passersby. Bodies were seen lying on the streets of the town of Sderot near Gaza. "Send help, please!" one Zionist woman sheltering with her two-year-old child pleaded as militants outside opened fire at her house and tried to break into their safe room, Zionist media reported. AFP journalists witnessed armed Palestinians gathered around a burning Zionist tank and others driving a seized Zionist Humvee military vehicle back into Gaza.

An AFP journalist in Gaza saw smoke billowing from the remains of a residential tower following Zionist strikes, which Gaza's interior ministry said contained 100 apartments and was completely destroyed. The aid group Doctors without Borders said one strike had hit the enclave's Indonesian hospital and an ambulance outside Nasser Hospital in southern Gaza, causing multiple deaths. The escalation follows months of rising violence, mostly in the occupied West Bank, and tensions around Gaza's border and at contested holy sites in Jerusalem.

Air raid sirens wailed across southern and central Zionist territory, as well as in Jerusalem, where multiple incoming rockets were intercepted by air defense systems. In Tel Aviv, an AFP photographer saw a gaping hole in a building, with residents boarding a bus to seek safety in a hotel. Rocket impacts left cars burning beneath residential buildings in the Zionist city of Ashkelon, north of Gaza.

Among the dead was the president of a regional council for Zionist communities northeast of Gaza, who the council said was killed in a gun battle with attackers. Schools will remain closed on Sunday, the start of the week in the



A ball of fire and smoke rises above a building in Gaza City on Oct 7, 2023 during a Zionist air strike. — AFP

Zionist entity. The conflict sparked major disruption at Tel Aviv airport, with American Airlines, Emirates and Ryanair among carriers with cancelled flights.

In northern Gaza on Saturday, hundreds of people fled their homes, carrying food and blankets, an AFP correspondent said. At Gaza City's Al-Shifa hospital an AFP journalist saw eight bodies in the morgue, while another reporter witnessed the funeral of a ninth person killed in Khan Yunis in southern Gaza. In the West Bank, two Palestinians were killed, in Ramallah and Jericho, and around 50 wounded in clashes with Zionist forces and settlers, the Palestinian health ministry and Red Crescent Society said.

In Zionist-annexed east Jerusalem, some Palestinian residents cheered and blew their car horns as sirens blared. Western capitals condemned the attacks by Hamas, which the European Union, United States and the Zionist entity consider a terrorist group. UN Security Council chair Brazil said it would call an emergency meeting.

But Hamas drew support from other foes of the Zionist entity, with Iran's supreme leader declaring he was "proud" of the Hamas action. Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, which fought a war against Zionist entity in 2006, hailed the "heroic operation".

US President Joe Biden was briefed on the "appalling Hamas terrorist attacks", said the White House, stressing that Washington would ensure the Zionist entity has the means to defend itself. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen called the attack "terrorism in its most despicable form". UN Middle East peace envoy Tor Wennesland said the assault had led to "a dangerous precipice" and called for all sides to "pull back from the brink". — Agencies

Kuwaitis rally in support of ...

Continued from Page 1

Therefore, the first message from the Kuwaiti people to our brothers in Palestine is that we pray that Allah grants you victory, and with Allah's permission, victory will be achieved. Our message to our brothers is that we support them financially, morally and politically, and we pray for them. Greetings to the ministry of foreign affairs, which issued a statement inviting us to take pride in Kuwait and its people and government for standing with the Palestinian cause," MP Hamad Al-Matar said.

"Today, it has been proven conclusively that there is no alternative but to liberate the entire Pal-

estinian national territory. Today, it has been proven that the Palestinian weapons and resistance are united in confronting the enemy. It has been proven that corrupt, subservient and despotic systems are complicit. It has been proven that popular solidarity in struggle is the only option for the Arab nation in confronting humiliation, occupation and aggression," said Ahmed Al-Deen, Secretary General of the Kuwaiti Progressive Movement.

"They want to destroy any idea of resistance and want to establish that there is no other way except normalization, which means humiliation and degradation for the nation. Unfortunately, today they want the oppressed not to scream out against their oppressors. But they will fail in that, as we will uphold dignity and principles and will not normalize with this horde," Mohammed Al-Dosari, a representative of the Popular Action Movement, said.

International

Nazi past shakes Dutch royals

Royal popularity drops to 38%, less than half what it was in 2020

THE HAGUE: Revelations that the Dutch king's grandfather was a card-carrying member of Adolf Hitler's Nazi party have stunned the Netherlands and its royal family, whose popularity was already in free-fall. Prince Bernhard, husband of the former queen Juliana, had insisted until his death in 2004 that he had never signed up to the Nazi party. "I can swear with my hand on the Bible: I have never been a Nazi," Bernhard told daily De Volkskrant in an interview just before his death aged 93. He added he had "never paid a subscription fee and never had a membership card". But the card, dated 1933 and confirmed to AFP to be genuine by the royal household, shattered these claims. Historian Flip Maarschalkerweerd, former head of the royal archives, unearthed the membership card in the prince's personal files stored at his sumptuous Soestdijk Palace residence. Born in 1911 in Jena, Bernhard von Biesterfeld was living in Berlin at the time he signed up to the Nazi party. He married crown princess Juliana in 1937 after meeting her at the Berlin Olympic Games a year earlier and introduced her to the good life with fast cars, luxury holidays and designer clothes.

During the war, he headed the Dutch resistance from London, where the government and his mother-in-law, Queen Wilhelmina, resided in exile. After Juliana became queen in 1948, he

was made inspector general of the armed forces and conducted official and unofficial economic missions for the government. Internationally, he was best known as founder of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in 1961. He was its president until 1977.

Two weeks after his death came revelations that he had fathered two illegitimate daughters and had a string of affairs, in the bombshell interview in De Volkskrant, where his part in a 1970s corruption scandal also came to light. "I was surprised that Prince Bernhard kept the document and that it is still in the archives of the royal family," Rick Evers, a Dutch royal specialist, told AFP.

He said that the emergence of the card would not have happened without the consent of the current King Willem-Alexander. "These are private archives, not national ones. He decides what to do with them." The country's main Jewish group, CIDI, and a parliamentary party have demanded an enquiry into Bernhard's Nazi past but Prime Minister Mark Rutte has so far rejected the appeals.

The CIDI said the revelations "add another black page to a painful part of the recent history of the Netherlands". For his part, Willem-Alexander told reporters: "I imagine that the news has a major impact and that it prompts a lot of emotion, especially in the Jewish community."



THE HAGUE: Dutch King Willem-Alexander (left) and Queen Maxima attend the presentation of the annual prizes of the Orange Fund on Oct 4, 2023. — AFP photos

'Too little openness'
For Jolijn Oliemans, a 41-year-old personal trainer passing by the splendid Noordeinde Palace, where Willem-Alexander has his office, the news came as a sort of betrayal. "It is also that he has always denied it, which is difficult for many people and that there has been too little openness about it," she told AFP.

There were some calls on Dutch social media to abolish the royal family in the wake of the revelations and polls show their popularity is waning. According to a September Ipsos survey, only 38 percent of the Dutch said they still had "real confidence" in the king. This was down from nearly 80 percent in 2020. More than a quarter of those surveyed

called for the Netherlands to become a republic.

Several dozen protesters booted the royal family during the traditional Prince's Day celebrations in The Hague last month. The family is still recovering from gaffes during COVID. In October 2020, the king and queen flew to Greece for a holiday, as the country declared a partial COVID lockdown. The couple returned a day later, following an outcry in the Netherlands after news of the trip became public. Two months earlier, the king faced accusations that he was out of touch with the COVID struggles of the ordinary Dutch, when he was pictured on a Greek island without a facemask and not keeping social distancing. — AFP

UN, Red Cross want bans, curbs on killer robots

GENEVA: The United Nations and the Red Cross this week issued a joint call for urgent new international rules to protect humanity from the potential "terrible consequences" of autonomous weapons. UN secretary general Antonio Guterres and Mirjana Spoljaric, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, on Thursday said getting to grips with so-called killer robots was a global "humanitarian priority".

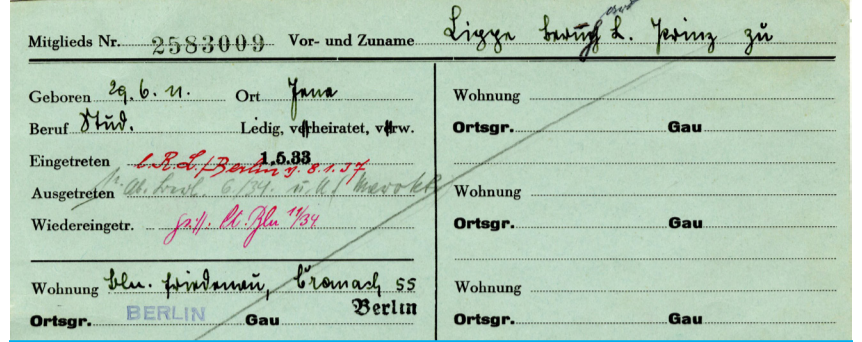
They called on states to establish specific bans and restrictions on autonomous weapon systems by 2026, "to shield present and future generations from the consequences of their use".

Autonomous weapon systems — generally understood as weapon systems that select targets and apply force without human intervention — "pose serious humanitarian, legal, ethical and security concerns", they said. Guterres and Spoljaric said their development and proliferation had the potential to change the way wars are fought and thereby fuel global instability.

"By creating a perception of reduced risk to military forces and to civilians, they may lower the threshold for engaging in conflicts — inadvertently escalating violence," they explained. "We must act now to preserve human control

over the use of force. Human control must be retained in life and death decisions. The autonomous targeting of humans by machines is a moral line that we must not cross. "Machines with the power and discretion to take lives without human involvement should be prohibited by international law."

The UN and ICRC chiefs said their concerns had been heightened by the increasing availability and sophistication of new technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, which could be integrated into autonomous weapons. The pair called for a ban on autonomous weapon systems which function in an unpredictable way — for example weapons controlled by machine-learning algorithms — calling them "an unacceptably dangerous proposition". — AFP



This handout photograph released by the Royal Collections of The Hague on Oct 5, 2023, shows a scan of Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands' original NSDAP party membership card, from his private archives.

KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN
Ministry of Works

الوزارة العامة
وزارة الأشغال

(KUWAIT FUND FOR ARAB ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT)

The Ministry of Works would like to announce the following tender:

TENDER TITLE	TENDER NO.	INITIAL BOND (BD)	TENDER DOCUMENT FEE (BD)	TENDER BOX CLOSING DATE / TIME
WIDENING OF BUDAIYA HIGHWAY (AMAS ACCESS IMPROVEMENT - PACKAGE 3)	RDS-22/0136	5,000/-	100/- Non-Refundable	Sunday, 10 Dec 2023, 1:30 PM

- Tenders are invited from Contractors mentioned as follows:
 - Kuwaiti Contractor Registered Under Class A for Roads Works for Contractor Classification in the State of Kuwait.
 - Kuwaiti Contractor Registered Under Class A for Roads Works for Contractor Classification in the State of Kuwait JV Bahraini Contractors Registered Under Category AA for Road Works as per Ministry of Works, in the Kingdom of Bahrain.
 - Kuwaiti Contractor Registered Under Class A for Roads Works for Contractor Classification in the State of Kuwait JV Foreign Company.
 - Bahraini Contractors Registered Under Category AA for Road Works as per Ministry of Works in the Kingdom of Bahrain.
 - Bahraini Contractors Registered Under Category AA for Road Works as per Ministry of Works in the Kingdom of Bahrain JV Foreign Company.
- Tenders who are willing to participate in this tender shall download the tender documents online from the Bahrain Tender Board E-Tendering System through the above-mentioned website starting on Sunday, 08th October 2023. For further information, please contact Tel. 17545184.
- Interested Tenderers should comply with the Legislative Decree No. 36 and 37 of 2002 with respect to Regulating Government Tenders and Purchases and also according to the provision of the Law Regulations of The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development.
- The scope of works includes the construction of about 6.5km of 3 lane dual carriageways of Budaiya Highway (from Al Qadam Roundabout to Janabiya Highway), 4 new traffic signals to replace existing roundabouts, modifications to existing traffic signal at Janabiya Highway, block paved service roads on both sides in commercial areas, Storm drainage network including a lift station, block paved foot paths, street lighting and diversion / protection of existing utilities. The project also includes the construction of footbridges on Budaiya and etc as mentioned in tender documents.
- Tenders shall submit their bids electronically as per the Tender Board E-Tendering Supplier Guideline on or before the above-mentioned date.
- Tenders shall be submitted in Two (2) separate file envelopes i.e. Technical Response (File Envelope A) & Financial Response (File Envelope B). The Technical Response shall not contain any financial information related to the Tender.
- Tenders are to supply copies of the following:
 - Tenders shall deliver the Original Bid Bond (hard copy) to the office of the Tender Board, located at Arcapita Building 551, Ground Floor, Road 4612, Block 346, Bahrain Bay, Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain before the closing date, and shall upload a copy of the same along with the bid in the system.
 - Or as alternative to Bid Bond Submission, tenderers shall submit vide Direct Transfer as mentioned in Tender Documents
 - Any other items listed in the Instructions to Tenderers.
 - All submitted documents should be marked with company stamp.
- Tenders shall remain valid for 180 days from the closing date and Initial Bond should be enclosed for the above mentioned value in the form of certified cheque, bank/insurance company guarantee or Direct Bank Transfer, valid for the duration specified in the tender documents.
- Tenders not complying with the above conditions and requirements as well as terms and conditions mentioned in the tender documents will be rejected.
- This advertisement should form part of the Tender Documents.

CONDOLENCES

The Board, Management and Staff of



Al Rashed International Shipping Co. K.S.C.C

expresses profound sorrow on the sad demise of

Saud Abdulaziz Abdulmohsin Al Rashed

who passed away on Friday, 6th October.

On this sad occasion, we extend our heartfelt condolences to our Chairman

Mr. Bassim Saud Al Rashed

&

Mr. Khaled Saud Al Rashed

Mr. Essam Saud Al Rashed

Mr. Faisal Saud Al Rashed

Mr. Adnan Saud Al Rashed

And to the bereaving Al Rashed family

May Allah Almighty bestow mercy on his soul

Business

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2023

Kuwait trade mission seeks to open new horizons in Canada

Canada-Kuwait Business Summit held in Toronto



TORONTO: Vic Fedeli, Dherar Al-Ghanem, Reem Al-Khaled, Aliya Mawani, Ruba Al-Sayegh and other officials during the Kuwait-Canada Business Summit in Toronto on Oct 4, 2023.

TORONTO: Canada-Kuwait Business Summit was held in Toronto on Oct 4, 2023 in the presence of Ontario's Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade Vic Fedeli, Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry Board Member Dherar Al-Ghanem, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Canada Reem Al-Khaled, Canadian Ambassador to Kuwait Aliya Mawani and Deputy Chairperson of Arab Canadian Business Council Ruba Al-Sayegh, in addition to nearly 100 individuals from the Canadian business sector.

Ghanem was pleased with the meeting to discuss means of strengthening and developing investment and commercial relations between Kuwait and Canada through the participation of entities within the Kuwaiti trade mission that includes representatives of specialized companies in insurance, banking, investment, industry, oil, gas and renewable energy, in addition to representatives from the health ministry, Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), social security and National Fund for Supporting and Developing Small and Medium Projects.

Ghanem mentioned the Kuwaiti private sector's awareness of the important role Toronto plays, par-

- **Al-Ghanem: Summit explored means to strengthen bilateral trade, business relations**
- **Kuwait's total foreign direct investment in Canada reached \$1.7bn in 2022**

ticularly in the economic aspect, as Toronto bourse is one of the best markets in the world. It also has a diversified economy and attractive investment environment, adding the Kuwait business sector is keen on discovering new opportunities in Toronto as it is the commercial gateway between North America and the rest of the world, especially since it is advanced in the field of e-commerce and the knowledge economy, which attract capital and encourage innovators to enter the world of business in Toronto.

Ghanem said the program aims at opening new horizons to deepen relations in vital sectors and attract experiences and the vast Canadian knowledge in the fields of industry, services, financing and industrial technology, especially since Kuwait is con-

sidered a major investor and business partner of Canadian economy, as total direct foreign investment in Canada reached US\$1.7 billion in 2022 and was on the top of the list of the top 10 in Asia. In addition, trade reached US\$600 million in 2022 with the possibility of it growing.

Fedeli welcomed the Kuwait trade mission and expressed pleasure for having the meeting in the distinguished presence of both Kuwaiti and Canadian sides, which reflects mutual interest and gives indications on the possibility of opening new horizons for commercial and investment cooperation. He said this is a suitable opportunity due to the legislative developments that were made recently with regards to reducing taxes to attract more business.



Developing Kuwait's industrial scene part of state's vision

KUWAIT: Kuwait, through its development vision, had set a course towards cultivating talents and developing the industrial sector in the country. The various challenges that the world went through made Kuwaitis realize that expanding non-oil income was a necessity to seek progress and bolster the economy. The Kuwaiti industrial sector, throughout the years, has achieved strategic security for the country, covering the national need for a variety of products, including food and medical commodities.

Speaking to KUNA on the issue, acting director general of the Public Authority for Industry (PAI), Mohammad Al-Adwani, said that the authority took heed of the government's vision to diversify income in the non-oil sector, revealing that the authority had future plans to implement technical decisions to bring Kuwaiti products up to standard in terms of energy consumption and efficacy.

He stressed that it was important to establish laws and legislation to create an independent entity for specification and standards to ensure the best quality of products and support national production. Al-Adwani revealed that the PAI had taken a strong stride towards establishing such an entity in a similar fashion to other countries in the region.

On his part, the head of specification and standards at PAI Falah Al-Hajraf said that the authority was keen on encouraging local industries to create products of exceptional standards. Such encourage-



Falah Al-Hajraf



Huda Al-Baqshi



Mohammad Al-Adwani



Musab Al-Nisf

ment would boost the national economy and commerce, he affirmed, adding that this procedure would close the commercial gap between Kuwait and the global market. He added that PAI conducted regular national inspections of factories to ensure that they were following national guidelines for products and safety measures.

Meanwhile, the General Manager of the Kuwait Industries Union (KIU), Huda Al-Baqshi, said that the industrial sector was very vital for all countries, noting that the COVID-19 pandemic had reflected the necessity of such a sector in diversifying income and developing the economic scene. She affirmed that the Kuwaiti industrial sector had promising potential, adding that the sector had achieved its goals in organizing the flow of necessities and products in the local market.

She revealed that the KIU had launched an initiative during the COVID-19 pandemic by establishing warehouses and administrative facilities for

the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers and utilizing locally produced material. On the amount of bank funding for the industrial sector, chairman of the board for the Industrial Bank of Kuwait (IBK), Musab Al-Nisf, revealed that the bank had provided, since its establishment in 1974, around \$1.44 billion in loans for industrial projects and facilities until the second quarter of 2023.

He said that the period between 1974 and 2022 saw the construction industry come in first with 21.6 percent of loans, followed by the oil and gas industry by 11.6 percent, and food production by 9.9 percent in third place. The IBK is keen on also supporting industrial ventures by Kuwaiti youth. Al-Nisf affirmed, noting that until June 30, 2023, the IBK had funded 2,197 small industrial projects with investments of KD 255 million. Al-Nisf added that around KD 193.4 million was approved to fund small project portfolios, with the total amount and investment costs reaching 75.85 percent. — KUNA

FTX co-founder testifies against Bankman-Fried

NEW YORK: Sam Bankman-Fried knowingly used FTX clients' funds without permission to invest through his personal hedge fund, the disgraced crypto titan's former business partner testified in court on Friday.

Zixiao "Gary" Wang, a co-founder of FTX with Bankman-Fried, has already pleaded guilty to multiple counts related to the crypto trading platform's stunning collapse, and has agreed to cooperate with federal prosecutors. He is the first major witness to appear at his former partner's trial, which began on Tuesday in New York and could last up to six weeks. The 31-year-old Bankman-Fried, known as "SBF," has been charged with seven counts of fraud, embezzlement and criminal conspiracy, and if convicted could face more than 100 years in prison.

In November 2022, his cryptocurrency exchange platform imploded, unable to cope with massive withdrawal requests from customers panicked to learn that some of FTX's funds had been committed to risky operations by Alameda Research, Bankman-Fried's personal hedge fund. Wang, who was technology chief at the time of the collapse, on Friday described Bankman-Fried as willing to break the law and lie to enable FTX and Alameda to post strong growth and profits. — AFP

India's CB holds interest rates despite inflation

MUMBAI: India's central bank left interest rates unchanged again Friday despite an inflation spike that has sparked official concern over the impact of higher food prices caused by extreme weather. The benchmark repo rate has stood at 6.50 percent since February, following a series of hikes by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to curb rising prices last year.

Inflation spiked at 7.4 percent in July before moderating to 6.8 percent the following month, still well above the RBI benchmark. The bank

had "identified high inflation as a risk to macro-economic stability and sustainable growth" and "remains resolutely focused on aligning inflation to the four percent target", RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said.

Prices for food staples—including wheat, rice and tomatoes—have shot up in recent months, partly because of floods, record-high temperatures and pest attacks in production belts.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told parliament in July that the government was taking steps "to contain high prices which are hitting common citizens". The government has put curbs on some rice exports to put downward pressure on prices. Food prices have since eased but "the overall inflation outlook is clouded by uncertainties from the fall in" domestic sowing of key crops and "volatile global food and energy prices," Das said.

India's inflation peaked at 7.8 percent last year in the wake of the global economic fallout from the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which prompted spikes in food and oil costs. The World Bank this week said India would nonetheless remain one of the world's fastest-growing economies this year, with strong domestic demand and investment helping it weather inflation. India overtook Britain last year to become the world's fifth-largest economy, and recorded 7.8 percent growth for the June quarter, the most recent figure available.

The world's most populous country is grappling with increasingly frequent extreme weather events—which scientists attribute to climate change. India's weather department has declared a heatwave almost every year in the last decade, with temperatures sometimes touching 50 degrees Celsius (122 degrees Fahrenheit). — AFP



MUMBAI: A vendor selling bananas counts a wad of Indian rupee notes at a roadside stall in Mumbai on October 6, 2023. — AFP

Business

EU's richest country Luxembourg grapples with severe housing crisis

Sky-high cost of buying or renting a home has made living impossible

LUXEMBOURG: Luxembourg's residents may be classified as the wealthiest in the European Union, but the sky-high cost of buying or renting a home in the country has made living there nearly impossible for some.

The crisis has become the number one concern in the Grand Duchy of 660,000 people—smaller than Rhode Island, the smallest US state—as it goes to the polls on Sunday. Pascale Zaourou, a teacher and mother of three children, had to wait five years before being able to access coveted social housing.

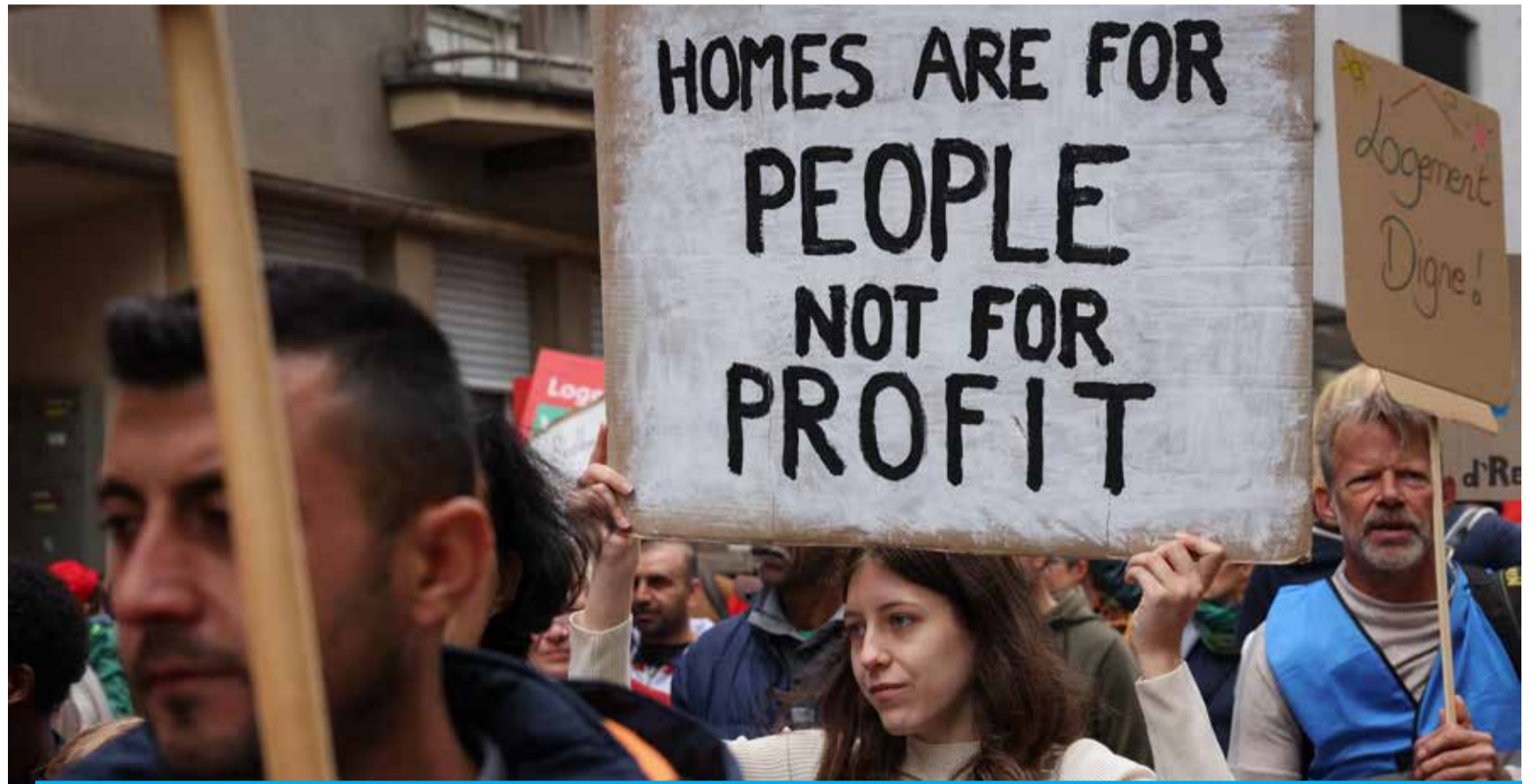
"On the private market, renting an apartment with two rooms costs at least 2,000 euros—it's difficult with only one income," she told AFP at a recent demonstration in Luxembourg City. "Affordable housing is scarce, especially for young people and single-parent families," she said. Antoine Paccoud, a researcher at the Housing Observatory, which compiles data guiding government policy, backed up that sentiment.

"More and more Luxembourgers are crossing the border to live in Germany, Belgium or France just because rents and property prices are lower," he said. The situation is jarring for a country with a flourishing economy based around financial services. Net average earnings for a single worker in Luxembourg were 47,000 euros (\$49,000) annually in 2022, according to estimates from the EU's statistics agency—the highest in the bloc. In the capital city, new-build flats sell for 13,000 euros per square meter (around \$1,300 per square foot) and older ones go for 10,700 euros. The average cost of a house is 1.5 million euros. Rents increased by 6.7 percent between June 2022 and June 2023, much faster than the inflation rate of 3.4 percent over that period.

Philippe Poirier, a political analyst at the University of Luxembourg, told AFP that housing has become "the question that overshadows all others" at the legislative elections. He ticked off "the scarcity of housing and land, the cost of construction or purchase, and the high rents" as the key problems.

The two major political parties hoping to spearhead the next government have pledged action.

Prime Minister Xavier Bettel's Liberal Party promised to create a super-ministry for housing, wants



LUXEMBOURG: A protestor holds a placard which reads 'homes are for people not for profit' during a 'Faites du Logement' event organized by the Wunnrech coalition in Luxembourg on September 23, 2023. — AFP

to tax vacant properties more, and invest in social housing. Socialist leader Paulette Lenert—the health minister in the current coalition government—is pushing for huge investments in affordable housing.

But the structural problems with housing run deep and changing them will not be easy. Paccoud said a lack of inheritance tax and only symbolic duties have encouraged owners to sit on land without developing it. "0.5 percent of the resident population, or 3,000 people, own half of the buildable land," he

said. "These owners are holding on to their land as long as possible because prices are increasing."

The economic opportunities on offer also bring in droves of foreign workers, which helps drive up the cost of the limited housing pool.

Around half the people living in Luxembourg are not citizens of the country. There is a wide gulf in terms of home ownership rates between native Luxembourgers, at 80 percent, and foreign residents at just 50 percent. While many Luxembourgers have

nearly guaranteed jobs working for state institutions, foreigners have to deal with the changeable job market. "Those who are at the bottom of the scale in Luxembourg are rather the resident foreigners," Poirier said. As a result, and despite the high salaries and an official minimum wage of 2,571 euros a month, Luxembourg ranks in the top three in the eurozone in terms of risk of poverty for single-parent families with one income, according to a recent report by the Chamber of Employees. — AFP



A woman walks past a currency exchange office in Moscow. Russia's currency fell against the dollar, weakening further on signs the country's economy is facing slower growth and stubborn inflation as the fighting in Ukraine drags on. — AFP

Ruble falls further but Putin says economy 'stable'

MOSCOW: The ruble fell further against the dollar on Friday, a day after Russian President Vladimir Putin said the sanctions-hit country's economic situation was "stable". The Russian currency fell by as much as 101.46 rubles to the dollar in morning exchanges before paring down some losses.

The ruble crossed the psychological threshold of 100 to the dollar on the Moscow financial exchange on Tuesday, a level it briefly hit in August. It rose again midweek but resumed its fall late on Thursday, just as Putin was speaking at the Valdai political conference in the Black Sea resort of Sochi. "We have overcome all the problems that emerged after the implementation of sanctions against us and we have started a new stage of development," Putin said.—AFP

Ghana, IMF agree second loan payment of \$600m

ACCRA: Ghana has reached agreement with the International Monetary Fund on the terms for a second payment of \$600 million out of its \$3-billion credit deal, the IMF said in a statement on Friday. Payment of the second portion of Ghana's loan will come after the IMF board's final approval and bring the total disbursed since May to \$1.2 billion, the IMF said.

Ghana signed a deal with the IMF in December as the country sought to shore up its public finances and better manage debt to emerge from its worst economic crisis in decades. "The authorities have adjusted macroeconomic policies, successfully completed their domestic debt restructuring operation, and launched wide-ranging reforms," IMF mission chief Stephane Roudet said in a statement at the end of his team's review in Accra. "These actions are already generating positive results." Ghana will have access to about \$600 million in financing once the mission's review is approved by the board, the statement said. The country's economic situation will be a major election campaign theme as it heads to the ballot box next year with President Nana Akufo-Ado stepping down after two terms.—AFP

NBK to attend annual meetings of IMF, World Bank Group

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) will participate in the annual meetings of the board of governors of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank scheduled to take place in Marrakech, Morocco, between Oct 9 and 15.

NBK's delegation will be led by Isam Al-Sager, Vice Chairman and Group CEO of National Bank of Kuwait Group, Salah Al-Fulaj, CEO of National Bank of Kuwait - Kuwait, Sulaiman Al-Marzouq, NBK-Kuwait Deputy CEO and Omar Bouhadiba, CEO, International Banking Group at NBK Group.

The bank's delegation will take part in the annual meetings, focusing on discussions regarding significant economic and financial challenges. Among the key topics on the agenda are investment in education, the acceleration of climate financing efforts, the promotion of inclusive growth, and addressing issues related to food and fuel crises.

This year's annual meetings will also address a multitude of critical subjects. These include strategies for building economic resilience in uncertain times, particularly in the context of a fragile global economy marked by heightened uncertainty. Policymakers are tasked with forging a more resilient future through actions such as enhancing social safety nets to protect the most vulnerable populations, advancing governance and accountability, fortifying policy frameworks, and tackling the challenges posed by climate change.

The 2023 annual meetings will also engage in extensive conversations regarding transformative reforms, underscoring the increasing need for structural adjustments to enhance economic growth. These reforms are geared towards facilitating a transformation that not only encourages inclusivity and diversification but also effectively tackles the urgent challenge of climate change, all while promoting and facilitating digital transformation.

Furthermore, there will be discussions on strategies for collaborative actions aimed at reinforcing shared priorities, including but not limited to tackling climate change, food insecurity, and increasing pandemic preparedness. The delegation will participate in the symposium organized by the Global G30 in conjunction

with the IMF and World Bank Group annual meetings. The meetings bring together central bankers, private sector executives, and academics to discuss issues of global concerns.

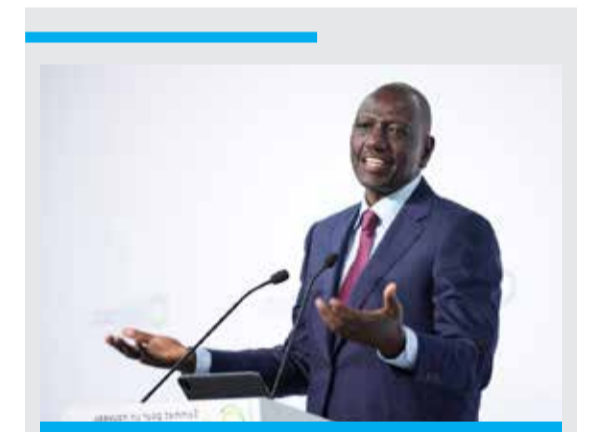
The delegation's participation in the Institute of International Finance (IIF) meetings will encompass a diverse array of topics. These subjects include discussions on tightening monetary policies, financial markets volatility, global geopolitical tensions, and strategies aimed at bolstering the resilience of the banking industry while fostering sustainable and broadly inclusive economic growth.

On the sidelines, the NBK delegation will engage in several one-on-one meetings with senior international officials. These meetings will be centered on addressing the key challenges currently facing the global banking and financial industry. Additionally, the delegation will take part in a joint reception ceremony for Kuwaiti banks scheduled to take place on Oct 12 in Marrakech.

The IMF and the World Bank Group annual meetings bring together central bankers, ministers of finance and development, parliamentarians, private sector executives, civil society, and academics to discuss issues of global concern, including the world economic outlook, global financial stability, poverty eradication, inclusive economic development, and the effectiveness of international aid. These meetings encompass a wide array of activities, including seminars, regional briefings, press conferences, and numerous other events dedicated to addressing topics related to the global economy, international development, and the global financial system.

The annual meetings feature several significant committees, with the most notable ones being the Development Committee, the International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC), the Group of Ten, the Group of Twenty-Four, and the Group of Thirty. The IMFC meeting, in particular, is slated to tackle a range of critical issues. These include evaluating the current state and potential future trends in the global economy's performance, as well as examining developments in international financial markets and the types of risks that could impact these performance trends. Moreover, discussions within this committee will focus on formulating key policies aimed at mitigating the consequences of such risks.

NBK actively engages in international forums and meetings, driven by its strong commitment to staying informed about the most recent global developments, activities, and events related to the global economy, international development, and the global financial system.



Kenyan President William Ruto

Kenya's Ruto to ask China for \$1bn loan, debt restructure

NAIROBI: Kenyan President William Ruto will ask China for a \$1-billion loan and a restructured debt payment plan, his deputy said Friday, despite having criticized his predecessor's heavy borrowing from Beijing. One of East Africa's largest economies, Kenya has accumulated more than 10.1 trillion shillings (\$68 billion) in debt, a figure equivalent to 67 percent of its gross domestic product. The cost of servicing the debt, mainly to China, has ballooned as Kenya's currency has fallen to record lows of around 148 shillings to the dollar, according to treasury data.

Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua said Ruto would travel to China and ask for "more time to repay the debt slowly" and \$1 billion to complete road projects delayed by financing shortfalls.

"We are a responsible government, we can't say that we won't pay the debt," Gachagua told a local language radio station. "He will speak to them requesting at least one billion dollars to be able to pay contractors," he said.

It was not immediately clear when Ruto would make the trip to Beijing, but the president has not visited the East Asian economic giant since winning a closely fought election in August 2022. China is Kenya's second-largest lender after the World Bank. Beijing bankrolled Kenya's most expensive infrastructure project since independence 60 years ago, loaning \$5 billion to construct a railway line from the port city of Mombasa to Nairobi and Naisvasa that opened in 2017. It also financed the construction of a new port terminal in Mombasa.

The projects, among others, fuelled concerns that Nairobi was taking on more debt than it could afford. Ruto railed against the borrowing of his predecessor Uhuru Kenyatta on the campaign trail, and pledged to find other ways to spur development to deliver the infrastructure Kenya needs. China has rejected suggestions its lavish lending was trapping cash-strapped governments in debt dependency. During a visit to Kenya in July, Beijing's top diplomat Wang Yi praised the two countries' economic partnership and described it as a "win-win".

Kenya is one of the most dynamic economies in East Africa but about a third of the population lives in poverty. Economic growth slowed last year to 4.8 percent from 7.6 percent in 2021, buffeted by the global fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and a devastating regional drought that hit the country's vital agriculture sector.—AFP



Africa will get a 'stronger voice' at IMF: Georgieva

IMF and World Bank to hold meetings in Marrakesh this week

ABIDJAN: Sub-Saharan Africa will have a "stronger voice" at the International Monetary Fund as it will get a third seat on the global lender's executive board, IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva told AFP. Georgieva delivered the news ahead of next week's IMF and World Bank meetings in Marrakesh, Morocco—the first gathering on the continent since 1973. The IMF executive board, which is chaired by Georgieva, is responsible for conducting the Washington-based institution's day-to-day business and currently has 24 directors.

The United States, as the world's biggest economy, has the largest share of votes, followed by economic powers Japan, China and western Europe, ahead of other regions and developing nations.

"I have some good news for Africa. We are advancing a preparation to have a third representative of sub-Saharan Africa in our executive board," Georgieva told AFP in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, on Thursday. "Ultimately, what it will mean is (a) stronger voice for Africa," the IMF's managing director added.

The World Bank has also announced that it will create a third seat for African nations on its own board, a decision to be made official at the October 9-15 meetings in Marrakesh. The IMF and World Bank will tackle the thorny issue of institutional reform in Morocco as they face growing calls to better address debt and climate change in poorer countries.

Georgieva said growth in sub-Saharan Africa decelerated this year to three percent. "The impact of the war (in Ukraine) was devastating, especially coming on top of COVID," she said. "Countries with limited fiscal capacity were particularly severely im-

acted." Inflation, which soared in the wake of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, caused "additional hardship on people", Georgieva added.

Moscow's invasion sent food prices soaring as both Russia and Ukraine are major exporters of agricultural goods. Georgieva praised countries "for being very prudent in dealing with inflation", which has gone down in many nations, and prioritizing public spending in a way that allows them to lower deficits. "We expect some brighter prospect for sub-Saharan Africa in 2024," the Bulgarian economist and former European Commission vice president said.

"But it is hard. We still see that food prices are particularly high and that translates into (a) terrible fate of 144 million people having difficulty into feeding themselves or their families," she said.

She warned against measures such as price caps or subsidizing fuel to help people cope with inflation as they "ultimately benefit rich people even more than poor people". "What we want is countries to win the fight against inflation," Georgieva said. "It's not going to happen if we throw more money without the good fundamentals for the economy to run efficiently," she added. Instead of subsidies, she said, "what we are strongly recommending is ... to give direct support to the poorer part of population". While the IMF has continued to provide special assistance since the COVID pandemic broke out, including through zero-interest loans, she said she would ask nations and the private sector to "do more" to help developing countries.

The World Bank warned in a report on Wednesday that sub-Saharan Africa's economic outlook



ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast: Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara (right) and Kristalina Georgieva (left), the general director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), speak during a meeting at the presidential palace in Abidjan on October 5, 2023. — AFP

"remains bleak". The institution warned that the region could face "a lost decade of growth", pointing to "rising instability", with "increased incidences of attempts to destabilize governments by unconstitutional or violent means in recent years". The Sahel region in particular has been the scene for more than a decade of a jihadist insurgency that has fuelled military takeovers in Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso.

Despite the coups, Georgieva defended the IMF's decision to maintain aid to those countries due to "humanitarian concerns". "We have a responsibility to make sure there is minimum financial capacity," she said. "Because the regimes are not there sufficiently for their people. It's not an excuse for us to forget about the men, women children who need us." — AFP

US stocks rebound to finish higher after jobs data

NEW YORK: Wall Street stocks rebounded to join major European indexes in positive territory Friday, after an initial sag as traders digested a hotter than expected US jobs report. The latest employment figures showed that the US economy added 336,000 new jobs last month, virtually double what was expected and raising concern that interest rates would be kept higher for longer. Labor Department data also showed that the US unemployment rate stayed unchanged at 3.8 percent, maintaining pressure on policymakers looking to cool the economy.

But on the plus side for traders, who now put the prospect of higher rates before year-end at just over 40 percent according to CME Group, wage growth fell back slightly. The employment report initially pushed major US indexes into the red, as markets assessed the prospect that a strong job market could pressure the Federal Reserve to hike interest rates again to tackle stubborn inflation.

However, markets swiftly reversed course, finishing higher. The Dow closed up 0.9 percent, while the S&P 500 jumped 1.2 percent and the Nasdaq rallied 1.6 percent. Initial shock from the strong jobs figures "caused the market to go down," due to potential implications for Fed interest rate policy, CFRA chief investment strategist Sam Stovall told AFP.

But as the day wore on, investors took a closer look at the numbers, "sort of like peeling aside the leaves of an artichoke," he said.

After spotting that "the inflation component, the wages component, came in much weaker than expected," they likely lifted their expectations for a "soft landing"—when the Fed tames inflation without plunging the country into a damaging recession. The yield on the 10-year US Treasury note, which spiked to new multi-year heights just after the report, moderated later in the session.

Major European indexes spent the day in the green, paring early gains after the US data emerged but then finding a second wind. London advanced 0.6 percent, Frankfurt closed with a 1.1 percent gain and Paris added 0.9 percent. In Europe on Friday, data showed factory orders rose more than expected in its biggest economy Germany during August.

High inflation, elevated energy costs and weaker demand from key market China have all been weighing on Germany's crucial manufacturing sector in recent months. The country entered recession at the start of 2023, and economic growth stagnated in the second quarter. A slew of weak indicators since then added to fears of a prolonged slowdown. Among individual companies, Pioneer Natural Resources surged 10.5 percent following reports that the shale producer was close to being acquired by ExxonMobil in a megadeal that could be worth \$60 billion. Meanwhile, ExxonMobil shares dropped 1.7 percent. —AFP



LOS ANGELES: A customer photographs a gas pump after fueling up at a station with prices above average at over seven dollars a gallon at a Mobil gas station in Los Angeles, California, on October 5, 2023. — AFP



Loai Muqames, Johair Marafi and Afrah Al-Arbash pose for a group photo with a representative of the Ministry of Commerce and the ABK team.



The winner of the annual draw is announced.

ABK announces Abdelaal as winner of Alfouz draw

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) proudly announces the successful conclusion of its highly-anticipated Alfouz draw account annual grand draw event, held at The Avenues on Friday, Oct 6. The event, which witnessed an overwhelming response from the public, showcased a range of exciting activities and the reveal of the distinguished winner of the KD 5,000 monthly salary for 10 years.

The highlight of the event was the announcement of the grand prize winner Mohammed Elmitwalli Abdelaal who expressed his delight and gratitude for this opportunity provided by ABK. The grand prize reflects ABK's eagerness to reward its loyal customers with significant and impactful incentives. The event saw a remarkable turnout, attracting a diverse audience, including families, individuals, and ABK accountholders. Participants had the chance to participate in a variety of engaging activities throughout the day, creating a festive and celebratory atmosphere.

ABK has continually provided its customers with exceptional benefits through Alfouz, captivating depositors with exciting opportunities to win. In addition to the grand prize, the account offers a KD 10,000 weekly draw where the Bank has expanded its offering by adding an attractive monthly draw of KD 20,000 and a quarterly draw of KD 100,000, raising the stakes for even greater rewards.



Part of the competitions during the ceremony.



Johair Marafi



Loai Muqames

ABK recognizes the importance of customer satisfaction. In line with this, ABK now offers customers an increased chance to win, enabling them to engage in the draws with every KD 10 deposited, compared to the previous requirement of KD 100. This adjustment significantly amplifies the chances for customers to seize remarkable financial benefits and prizes.

Commenting on the successful event, Loai Muqames, CEO-Kuwait at ABK, said, "We are delighted with the tremendous success of our account and event. Alfouz provides an excellent opportunity for us to provide customers with the ability to both save money and win worthwhile prizes that help them achieve their financial goals. In this spirit, our event was an incredible celebration of our customers and their loyalty and we thank each of them for their continued trust in ABK."

On her part, Johair Marafi, Acting General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, said, "We are thrilled to witness the incredible response received for the Alfouz account annual grand draw event. This event is a testament to our dedication to providing our

customers with unique rewards and experiences. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Mohammed Elmitwalli Abdelaal, our grand prize winner, and express our gratitude to all our customers for their continued support."

ABK remains dedicated to offering innovative banking solutions and exceptional services to its valued customers. By conducting these types of events, ABK continues to foster strong relationships within the community and reiterates its commitment to recognizing and rewarding customer loyalty.

Since its establishment in 1967, ABK has progressed to become one of the leading Kuwaiti banks in the region that offers a wide array of personal, corporate, and private banking products and services. ABK also provides a broad range of local, regional, and global investment solutions and services through its subsidiary, ABK Capital. Across the region, the Bank offers individuals and corporates the convenience of comprehensive banking and financial services in the Egyptian market through ABK-Egypt's network of 44 branches. This is in addition to ABK's three branches located in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) in the United Arab Emirates, servicing both Kuwaiti and Emirati individual and corporate clients.

ABK is a strong supporter of Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Banking Association's 'Let's Be Aware' awareness campaign. Through its various initiatives, the Bank aims to promote financial inclusion by educating Kuwaiti society about customer rights, responsibilities, and the different types of banking and special needs services. Additionally, ABK consistently provides strategic information on how to avoid banking and financial fraud, loan application requirements, digital services, and more.



A huge crowd attends the mega event.

German factory orders rebound

FRANKFURT: German factory orders rose more than expected in August, official data showed Friday, in a rare bit of good news for Europe's largest economy as it battles an industrial downturn. New orders jumped by 3.9 percent month-on-month, federal statistics agency Destatis said, rebounding sharply from an 11.3-percent fall in July. Analysts

surveyed by FactSet had expected a smaller increase of 1.5 percent.

Destatis said the increase was driven by a nearly 38-percent jump in demand for "computer, electronic and optical products", while orders in the automotive industry dipped by 0.7 percent.

The economy ministry said that while factory orders had been "volatile" lately, there were signs the country's industrial slump "may have bottomed out in the third quarter". "A gradual economic recovery should then begin at the turn of the year," the ministry said in a statement.

High inflation, elevated energy costs and weaker demand from key market China have all been weighing on Germany's crucial manufacturing sector in recent months. Germany tipped into a recession at the start of 2023, and economic growth stagnated in the second quarter. A slew of weak indicators since then have added to fears of a prolonged slowdown.

The International Monetary Fund has predicted that Germany will be the only major advanced economy to shrink this year. Germany's leading economic institutes said last week they expect gross domestic product to contract by 0.6 percent in 2023. — AFP

Lifestyle

Rapper Drake says taking break from music over health issue

Canadian rapper Drake said Friday he is taking a break from music, just hours after dropping his latest album, in order to focus on recurring stomach issues. "I probably won't make music for a little bit, I'm gonna be honest," he said on his SiriusXM radio show Table For One, adding: "I need to focus on my health first and foremost... I need to get right." "I've been having the cra-

ziest problems for years with my stomach," he explained.

The 36-year-old Grammy Award winner had just released his latest studio album "For All The Dogs." Long-awaited, it features Bad Bunny, J. Cole, SZA, Lil Yachty and a Frank Ocean sample. His five-year-old son Adonis drew the artwork for the cover and was featured in a music video for a new single off the

album called "8AM in Charlotte." He also raps on the track "Daylight."

Drake's hiatus has forced the cancellation or postponement of several upcoming concerts in the United States, according to his website and Ticketmaster. But Friday and Saturday shows scheduled in Toronto, where fans were already seen lining up, appeared to still be a go. Drake mentioned that he would

also meet unspecified commitments. "I got some other things I need to do for some other people that I made promises," he said. Otherwise, he said, "I'm gonna lock the door in the studio for a little bit," Drake said. "I don't even know what a little bit is. Maybe a year or so, maybe a little longer." —AFP



Canadian rapper Drake performs onstage at the 2016 iHeartRadio Music Festival at T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP

'Rust' producers ordered to hand over Baldwin contracts

Producers of the movie "Rust" must hand over documents including Alec Baldwin's financial contracts, a judge ruled Friday, as prosecutors investigate the fatal on-set shooting of a cinematographer. Baldwin was holding a Colt .45 during rehearsals for the low-budget Western in New Mexico when it discharged, killing Halyna Hutchins in October 2021.

Manslaughter charges against Baldwin—an actor and producer on the film—were dropped in April, and the court hearing Friday concerned an ongoing separate case against the movie's armorer. But prosecutors could still refile charges against Baldwin in the future, and told a judge Friday that information including how "Mr Baldwin



Alec Baldwin

himself benefits financially from keeping production costs low" could be relevant.

Prosecutor Kari Morrissey also accused producers of having "intervened, interfered or obstructed the criminal investigation" since the day of the fatal shooting. Abigail Wolberg, a lawyer

for the producers, told the judge that documents detailing "how Alec Baldwin was paid" were irrelevant to the case against Hannah Gutierrez-Reed, the armorer, and burdensome in terms of time and money.

The producers' petition said the request from prosecutors for financial documents and private correspondence was "an obvious phishing expedition." But Judge Mary Marlowe Sommer ruled the producers must turn over the documents by October 20. Gutierrez-Reed has pleaded not guilty to involuntary manslaughter and evidence tampering charges.

A lawyer representing Gutierrez-Reed said Friday that any documents shedding light on why his client had been denied more time to train actors including Baldwin in on-set use of firearms "could be quite important." Baldwin has repeatedly denied any responsibility for the shooting. He and fellow producers are facing multiple civil proceedings over the death. —AFP

NFL star Kelce 'on top of world' as Taylor Swift scrutiny swirls

NFL star Travis Kelce says he is "on top of the world" as he navigates a whole new level of celebrity since kindling a rumored romance with pop icon Taylor Swift. Swift's appearance at the Kansas City Chiefs' last two games—at home to the Chicago Bears and on Sunday at the New York Jets—galvanized her legion of fans and the NFL has unrepentantly played up to what it called "a pop cultural moment."

Kelce, whose remarks on the blossoming friendship had lately been confined to conversations with his brother Jason on their "New Heights" podcast, spoke to reporters at the Chiefs' training facility on Friday and said he was happy to ride the wave. "I was on top of the world after the Super Bowl, and right now I'm even more on top of the world," said Kelce, who turned 34 on Thursday. "It's fun."

Kelce, who as a tight end helped Kansas City to a Super Bowl triumph over Jason's Philadelphia Eagles in February, has seen his social-media following and jersey sales skyrocket. The Kelce brothers' mother, Donna, has also been drawn into the whirlwind, fielding questions on whether Travis and Taylor really are an item and just what she and the singer talked about as they watched two Chiefs games from luxury suites. She told CNN on Friday the attention was "unreal." "I tell everyone that it's kind of like an alternate universe that I just happened to be in," she added.

'Focus is winning'

Despite his two Super Bowl titles and status as a well-known podcast personality, it's a new level of celebrity for Kelce. "We're learning with the paparazzi," Kelce said. "It comes with it. You've got a lot of people who care about Taylor, and for good reason. You just have to keep living and learning

and enjoying the moments." Kelce said the attention wouldn't distract him from his job, noting that the Chiefs have won three straight games since opening the season with a loss to the Detroit Lions, a game he missed with a knee injury.



Taylor Swift

"At the end of the day, I've always been pretty good about compartmentalizing and being able to stay focused," he said. "I'll keep rolling with that. 'I'm having fun with it ... making sure my focus is winning the game, and I don't see that changing anytime soon.' That will be music to Chiefs fans' ears—but plenty of 'Swifties' will be more concerned over whether the 12-time Grammy winner will turn out on Sunday at the Vikings' US Bank Stadium in Minneapolis—where she played two sold-out concerts in June.

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey told TMZ this week that his city would love to have her back. "It's possible she will have to console Travis Kelce after the Vikings beat the Chiefs, but there are plenty of great spots across town for them to go on a date and lift their spirits!" —AFP



Musicians perform during the 15th Victoires de la Musique classique awards ceremony (France's best classical artists of the year), at the Halle au Grain in Toulouse, southwestern France. — AFP photos

In tune: Classical concert-goers' hearts, breathing synchronize

People who listen to music together often report feeling a powerful connection to each other as a result of their collective experience. A new study published in the journal Scientific Reports on Thursday now finds that physical responses—including heart rate, breathing and the electrical conductivity of skin—synchronize between audience members at classical concerts. Individuals who rated more highly for personality traits such as openness were more likely to synchronize, while those with neurotic dispositions were less likely to align.

"When we talk about very abstract things such as aesthetic experiences, how you respond to art and to music, the body is always involved there," Wolfgang Tschacher, a psychologist at the University of Bern who led the research as part of the Experimental Concert Research project, told AFP. This theory is known as "embodied cognition"—the idea that the mind is not only connected to the body but that the body influences the mind—which, while arguably intuitive to lay people, has been controversial in scientific circles.

To investigate, Tschacher and colleagues observed 132 audience members across three classical concerts. All three played the same string quintet pieces: Ludwig van Beethoven's "Op.

104 in C minor," Johannes Brahms' "Op. 111 in G major," and "Epitaphs" by the contemporary composer Brett Dean. The authors used overhead cameras and wearable sensors to monitor the participants, who filled in questionnaires about their personalities before the concert, and whether they enjoyed the performance and what their mood was afterward.

Overall, they found statistically significant synchronization on several measures—people's hearts beat faster or slower during the same musical passages, as did their levels of "skin conductance." Skin conductance is closely related to the body's flight or fight response. When it's high it indicates a state of arousal and can be linked to goosebumps on the skin; when it's low we are in a state of relaxation.

The cameras even caught alignment of body movements, which the authors wrote "appears noteworthy, as the audiences of all concerts were seated in dimmed lighting" and spread out due to the pandemic. However, though people's breathing rates aligned, they did not actually inhale and exhale in unison.

The power of music

As one might expect, people whose personality types indicated "openness

to new experiences" and "agreeableness" were more disposed towards synchronizing with others. Those who rated highly for neuroticism, "a person who tends towards fearful behavior, warding off things, being more depressed," in Tschacher's words, were less likely to synchronize—but so too were extroverts, which might seem counterintuitive.

"Extroverted people are very social, they tend to intermingle with people, they want to be in power, and they want to have a certain self-value," he said, adding he had seen this result in previous research too. While extroverts are outgoing, they focus less on the music. For Tschacher, the findings are more evidence in favor of the "embodied cognition" theory and also help explain why public parades or military marches help build cohesion between participants. And he expects the effects would be "even stronger" in other musical genres. "There are additional reasons that people will synchronize in pop concerts, people move, they dance, and that's that is synchronized by the music and that would give even clearer results," he said. —AFP



Members of the audience follow a concert of Daniel Barenboim, Argentine-born classical pianist and conductor, and German pianist Igor Levit with the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, at the Waldbuehne at Olympiapark in Berlin.



Members of the audience arrive to take their socially distanced seats in the auditorium for a performance by German baritone Christian Gerhaher and German pianist Gerold Huber.



(From left to right) US actor Justin Chon, US filmmaker Lee Isaac Chung and US actor Steven Yeun attend a press conference on "Korean Diasporic Cinema" at the 28th Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) at the Busan Cinema Center in Busan. — AFP

South Korea's filmmaking diaspora: Telling their 'own stories'

The rise of South Korean diasporic cinema has allowed the artists involved to feel less alone, one filmmaker told Busan International Film Festival attendees on Friday. Six films from the diaspora are unspooling as part of a special sidebar this year in the South Korean port city, including Isaac Chung's Oscar-winner "Minari" and Celine Song's Sundance favorite "Past Lives".

Since "Parasite" became the first non-English-language film to win a Best Picture Oscar, films made by the Korean diaspora have experienced a remarkable surge, with filmmakers delving into culture-spanning narratives that encompass their varied experiences. "(The) main thing it's done, at least for myself, is to know that as I tell my own stories, people are finding common ground to relate with one another," Justin Chon, who directed 2021 adoption drama "Blue Bayou", told reporters.

He has since directed four episodes of the successful Apple TV+ series "Pachinko", the story of an ethnic Korean family living in Japan, based on the novel by Min Jin Lee. When "other immigrants and minorities in the United States are telling their stories, the only thing it does is signal to me that I really wasn't alone this entire time", he said. "Minari" director Chung said as a second-generation Korean-American, he had always felt "a loss of a place that I don't fully understand that is far away from me".

Korean-American actors Steven Yeun and John Cho were unable to comment on their American projects due to the ongoing Screen Actors Guild strike, but both freely discussed why they believed the work stoppage was important. "I think the

strike is a very righteous act of making sure that we ensure and protect artists and those who are living an actor's life and a writer's life," Yeun said.

"And there are many people who don't have safeguards... I sit here with so much privilege to be here and to be able to talk about it." Cho, who starred in the 2018 thriller "Searching" which is screening at this year's BIFF, said artificial intelligence—a key concern for striking actors—has "put people out of work" in the entertainment industry. "When I go to see a movie (it's) to see people enacting a human drama and to have an experience with an audience watching human expression," he said. "And so behind the scenes, if we start taking out people, the art form is going to suffer."

Collaboration

The festival's diaspora section features several intriguing collaborations between diasporic and South Korean artists as well as those from other nationalities. "Burning" (2018), for example, is based on Japanese writer Haruki Murakami's novel, directed by acclaimed South Korean filmmaker Lee Chang-dong, and stars Yeun. Korean-Canadian director Song's "Past Lives" (2023), meanwhile, co-stars South Korean actor Teo Yoo and Korean-American actress Greta Lee.

Yoo, who is fluent in English, on Thursday candidly expressed the challenges he faced in trying to present himself as an appealing love interest to the American audience. In "Past Lives", he plays a South Korean character who speaks English with a heavy accent and less-than-perfect fluency. —AFP

Lifestyle



Salvador Jorgensen (left), a marine ecologist and professor at California State University Monterey Bay, and his research assistant Dylan Moran, use a drone to search the Monterey Bay for Great White Sharks near Santa Cruz, California.—AFP photos



Dylan Moran, a research assistant at California State University Monterey Bay, searches the Monterey Bay for Great White Sharks near Santa Cruz, California.



Dylan Moran, a research assistant at California State University Monterey Bay, explains notes about Great White Sharks.



Climate change draws great white sharks north, threatening ecosystem

There never used to be young great white sharks basking off the busy beaches of central California, but as climate change starts to bite, warmer waters are enticing them north—with possibly catastrophic consequences for a whole ecosystem. Despite their fearsome reputation, brought about in part by the “Jaws” movie franchise, the main risk from these predators is not to swimmers and surfers—or even the local police chief—but to otters.



Shorebirds fly over the Monterey Bay near Santa Cruz, California.

“What we’ve been finding is that over time the number of bites on sea otters has increased in this region drastically,” says marine ecologist Salvador Jorgensen of California State University Monterey Bay. “That’s having a real impact on the sea otter population.” And—in an illustration of how interconnected ecosystems are—that could have far-reaching consequences

es for all kinds of species in this wild-life-rich area.

Warm water

Great white sharks are some of the most majestic, most studied, and most feared of ocean dwellers. Growing to around 16 feet (4.9 meters), they roam the world’s seas thousands of feet deep to satisfy a voracious appetite for seals, sea lions and dolphins. They live for upwards of 70 years and give birth to litters of live pups, who are left to fend for themselves from an early age.

But because white sharks are endotherms—warm-bodied, like mammals—youngsters are vulnerable to the cold of the ocean depths, and spend their time in warmer pockets of water in coastal regions. Until a decade or so ago, that meant juveniles would only be found as far north as southern California. But, says Jorgensen, that’s changing.

“We documented the sudden occurrence of much smaller sharks than had ever been seen here before,” he told AFP in Monterey Bay, hundreds of miles (kilometers) north, where he attaches acoustic transmitters to individuals that allow him to track their travels. “As ocean temperatures have been warming through a series of El Ninos, and heat waves, many species have been shifting their range further north further towards what were historically cooler areas.” That’s what brings them into contact with sea otters, who hang around in the rich kelp forests offshore.

Sea urchins

“Smaller sharks are transitioning from eating fish and squid to a point where they’re going to start eating marine mammals,” says Jorgensen. “To an inexperienced shark, an otter may seem like the right target, but it turns out that otters don’t have a rich blubber layer, (so) once they’re bitten, they’re actually not consumed. But often those interactions are fatal for the otter.”

Aside from this being bad news for the individual, it’s terrible news for the otter population—setting off a cascade effect. Otters forage for sea urchins, a species that left unchecked will graze a kelp forest into a barren desert, killing

of young sharks in Monterey Bay offers a chance to see a truly impressive creature up close. “The excitement is always there,” he said. “It’s like the first time I saw a shark, it never goes away. If I go out and see a shark, I’m excited.”

tion of just how rapidly we are altering our planet, with the unchecked burning of fossil fuels. “I’ve always thought that this is a very tangible way that people can understand climate change,” says Jorgensen.



This undated aerial handout photo provided courtesy of Salvador Jorgensen shows Jorgensen out on a boat with students Kaitlyn Yee and Dylan Moran.

a vital marine habitat that provides food and shelter for a suite of invertebrates, fish, mammals and birds. Without the otters, the kelp dies; without the kelp, scores of ocean species struggle.

Climate change

For Eric Mailander, an amateur scientist and boat skipper who helps Jorgensen tag great whites, the presence

While the very visible presence of these enormous creatures so close to the shore can raise concerns among humans, Mailander says people don’t need to be too worried—despite the creature’s reputation. “Jaws’ scared the bejesus out of me. But I want people to know not to fear them. Just go look at them.”

For Jorgensen it’s a vivid illustra-

“People who live on that beach, bring their children there, never had a bunch of sharks swimming 20 feet away, and now it’s a regular sight. “You can’t look out at the ocean and think that climate change is not happening.”—AFP



This handout photo shows a box of tortoises that was seized from an airline passenger by Taiwan customs officials at Taoyuan International Airport near Taipei. — AFP photos

Otter madness: Animals smuggled on flight from Thailand to Taiwan

Thailand has suspended an airport worker after a traveler smuggled more than 30 live animals—including two baby otters—onto a flight to Taiwan. The mobile menagerie, which also included 28 baby tortoises and a marmot, was seized when the Thai Vietjet flight landed at Taipei’s Taoyuan airport. Local media reported that the unusual cargo came to light when several of the animals escaped and were found crawling around the plane’s cabin. Bangkok’s Suvarnabhumi airport said the animals slipped through screening due to human error.

“We have examined the CCTV and found that the smugglers were two foreigners who had their luggage

scanned through an X-ray machine,” the airport said in a statement issued late on Thursday. “One of the staff was suspicious so they assigned another to open the luggage. However, they didn’t check the luggage and allowed the passengers to go through.”

The staff member who failed to inspect the bag properly was suspended while a probe was carried out, the airport said. Taiwanese authorities said they were investigating the two suspected smugglers. Thailand is a major transit hub for wildlife smugglers who often sell the animals on to China and Vietnam.—AFP



This handout photo shows a baby otter that was seized on October 4 from an airline passenger by Taiwan customs officials at Taoyuan International Airport near Taipei.



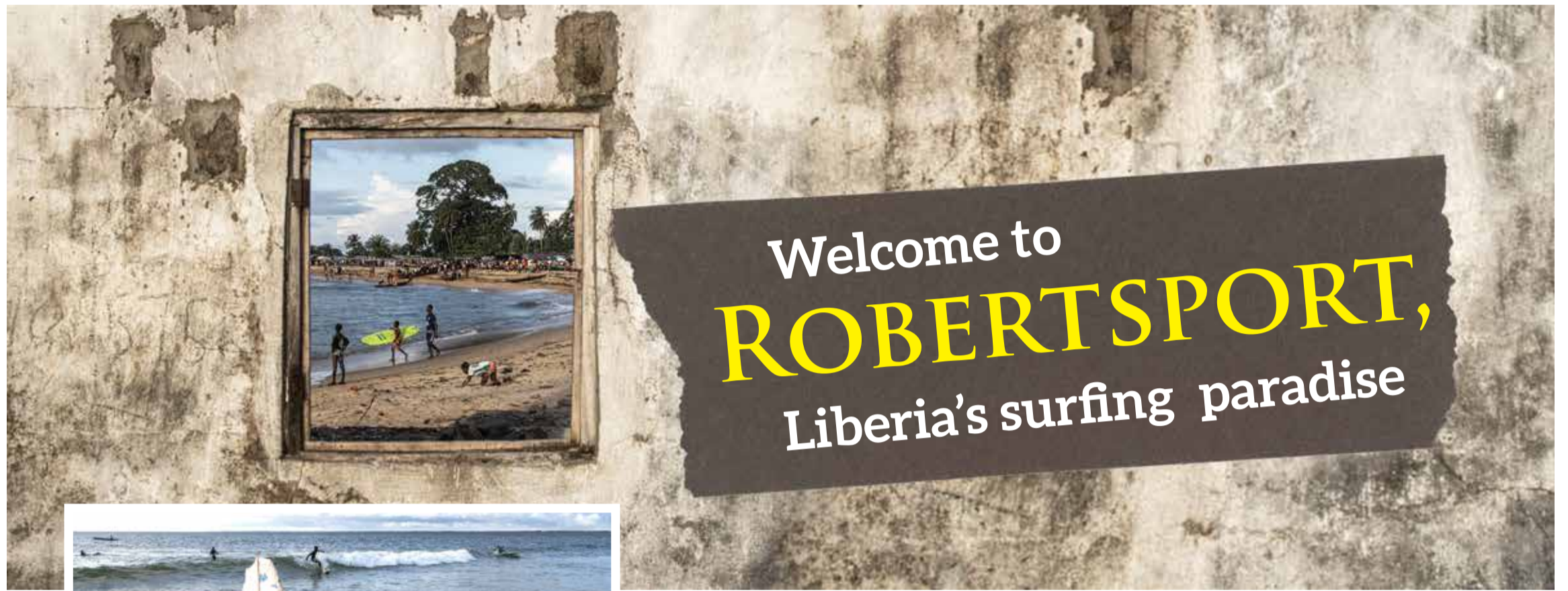
Oscar (right) teaches a young girl how to paddle during a surfing lesson along the beach in Robertsport.



Young surfers sit in a circle learning about the ocean during a surf lesson.



A man walks up to a church to see the waves coming into the bay in Robertsport.



A young surfer enters the water with a broken surfboard in Robertsport.



Two surfers enter the water.



Fishermen and surfers sort a fishing net before a surf in Robertsport.



Two surfers wait to enter the water.— AFP photos

With his broken surfboard pointed skywards, a child steps out into the sea. In recent years, the fishing village of Robertsport has become a popular spot for lovers of the sport from Liberia and beyond. Experienced surfers give lessons to young people in this town in the southwest of the country, teaching them about the ocean, swimming and catching waves. A local club, along with the NGO Provide The Slide, supply them with boards.

On a beach dotted with rocks, Oscar, shirtless and lying on the sand, uses his arms to show a young girl standing next to him how to row in the water. His wide strokes make marks on the ground. Surfing is also about knowing your surroundings. Sitting in a circle, young surfers learn about the ocean during a lesson on the beach. Behind them, fishermen try to get their boats back on dry land. The fishermen and the surfers share the beach in harmony — lined up in single file, they pull a



fishing net together — and some of the fishermen are also surfers themselves. After the introduction on dry land, it's time for action. Boards under their arms, two surfers step into the water, ready to do battle with the waves. Samuel is al-

ready at work, successfully completing his turn. Offshore, another youngster, stretched out on his board, paddles quietly alongside a canoe.—AFP



Surfers walk along the beach towards a surf spot.

Michelin to rate hotels as well as restaurants

From stars to keys—the Michelin Guide will start rating hotels in the same way as restaurants, it announced on Thursday. The editors say they want to create a “trusted reference” that helps travelers cut through the vast array of online hotel suggestions. Director Gwendal Poullennec said the original Michelin Guide, launched in 1900, “was created to enlighten travelers at a time when there was a lack of information.

“Today, by contrast, they find themselves confronted by a mass of infor-

mation. Our users spend on average 10 hours in front of screens to prepare a trip and consult more than 10 platforms—it’s an obstacle course,” he said. Poullennec took over the guide in 2018, the same year it bought Tablet Hotels, a US-based site offering boutique hotel stays around the world.

Their teams have been working together to create an initial selection of



5,300 hotels across 120 countries, with the best due to receive their awards in the first half of 2024. Rather than the stars awarded to the top restaurants, the best hotels will get keys based on several criteria including architecture, individuality, service, comfort and price.

As with restaurants, these will be decided by teams of anonymous inspectors. These days, the Michelin Guide makes most of its money through referrals from its website, taking one euro per reservation. Hotels will pay a 10 to 15 percent commission to Michelin for reservations through its site, Poullennec said, vowing that editorial and sales team will operate independently.—AFP

Japan cooking show recognized by Guinness as longest-running

A 65-year-old cooking show in Japan has been recognized by Guinness World Records as the longest-running culinary program, broadcaster NHK said. Since its inception in 1957, NHK’s “Kyo no Ryori,” or “Today’s Cooking,” has featured about 46,600 recipes, often reflecting the zeitgeist of the times from economic downturn to women’s empowerment. “What should I cook for dinner tonight?” is, I think, the perpetual question for everyone,” chief producer Mayumi Yanai told reporters Friday as a Guinness certificate was presented at a Tokyo ceremony.

The show aims to “answer that question sincerely and align itself closely

to our family audience,” she said. The cooking show mirrored the changing times, including Japan’s shrinking population and family size. While it originally featured recipes for five people, a family of four later became the standard, before meals for two took over.

Its first episode in 1957 introduced Western-style curry with oysters, as a time when one in four Japanese people were said to struggle with malnourishment. The global oil crisis of the 70s also influenced the show, which responded by coming up with an array of low-budget recipes for its audience in a financial bind. —AFP

Sports

Gymnastics' all-around queen Biles claims 21st world title

Spectators witness another extremely rare occurrence



ANTWERP: US' Simone Biles competes on the Balance Beam in the Women's Individual All-Around Final during the 52nd FIG Artistic Gymnastics World Championships, in Antwerp. — AFP

ANTWERP: US superstar Simone Biles continued her spectacular return from a two-year break by claiming her 21st world title with all-around gold at the world gymnastics championships on Friday. Already a winner of team gold on Wednesday, the American produced a dominant display to score 58.399 points and secure the title ahead of defending champion Rebeca Andrade of Brazil (56.766), with American teammate Shilese Jones taking bronze (56.332). Biles obtained the best score on three of the four apparatuses, with the uneven bars the exception.

It was the 27th time she has medaled at worlds and the 26-year-old gymnast was teary-eyed as she stood on the podium with her sixth all-around world crown. "Actually, I had something in my eye today that I couldn't get out, I swear it's true," she told reporters. "But I was emotional, because 10 years ago I won my first worlds and now we're back here," said Biles of her return to Antwerp where she opened her world tally in 2013, winning four medals, including two golds. "It means everything to me, after everything I've put in to get back to this place to feel comfortable and confident enough to compete." With two more days of competition, everything suggests her medal collection will be further enriched since she still has four apparatus finals come. Biles has made a breathtaking comeback, two years after the Tokyo Olympics marked by her episode of "twisties", a temporary mental block whereby gymnasts lose their sense of where they are in the air.

Arriving in Japan as the big favorite thanks to her four gold medals won five years earlier in Rio de Janeiro, Biles broke down and withdrew from four of the

five finals. Back at the highest level, the 1.42m Texan is gearing up for the Paris Olympics after taking advantage of her break to take care of her mental health. "I was actually less nervous today," said Biles. "I was so much more nervous for team finals just because that's when everything occurred (in Tokyo) so I was a bit traumatized from that, so today I felt a little bit more relaxed. I'm happy that's over."

"She still has difficulties, she's not perfect," said her coach, Frenchwoman Cecile Landi. "(But) she proves to everyone that she can be better than before. She is like wine, she gets better with age." During qualifying last weekend Biles added a new line to her legend by becoming the first woman to complete a Yurchenko double pike vault, which now bears her name as the "Biles II". On Friday, spectators at Antwerp's Sportpaleis witnessed another extremely rare occurrence when Biles tripped on the mat while preparing for a simple leap towards the end of her floor routine.

The incident, accompanied by murmurs of surprise from the crowd and which drew a smile from the American, came with the gold effectively already secured. "I just tripped, clumsy," she said. "I'm like that outside of the gym, so I'm not surprised it happened. 'I felt like my legs were so heavy and I couldn't pick them up.'" The podium was entirely composed of black gymnasts for the first time. "We had a black podium of girls, so I thought that's amazing: 'Black girl magic!'" she smiled. "Hopefully it just teaches all the young girls out that you can do anything you put your mind to if you train hard." Biles' 34 world and Olympic medals make her the most decorated gymnast in history. — AFP

Watching IPL on TV helps Pakistan get into India groove

HYDERABAD: Pakistan players may be banned from competing in the Indian Premier League but TV footage of the lucrative tournament played a part in the team's opening World Cup win. Of the 15-man Pakistan squad, only all-rounders Mohammad Nawaz and Agha Salman had ever visited the country before this World Cup. Nawaz was part of the team which played at the 2016 World Twenty20 while Salman turned out for the Lahore Lions in the 2014 T20 Champions League.

Current captain and star batsman Babar Azam was initially named in the 2016 T20 squad but with-

drew with an injury. "We have come to India for the first time so we don't have much of an idea of playing in India," admitted Saud Shakeel, man of the match as Pakistan defeated the Netherlands in Hyderabad on Friday. "But we have seen a little bit of the IPL and some matches in Hyderabad so that helped." Shakeel certainly had few problems adapting to his new surroundings with a fine 68 in the 81-run win which helped Pakistan to victory over the Dutch.

Mohammad Rizwan also made 68 in a 120-run stand after Pakistan were reeling at 38-3 in Hyderabad's Rajiv Gandhi Stadium. Pakistan opens Fakhar Zaman and Imam-ul-haq fell for 12 and 15 respectively while Azam managed just an 18-ball five. "The tournament has just started and we are playing in Hyderabad," said Shakeel. "Everyone knows that the ball stops early on here on this pitch. There are chances of losing a wicket." Pakistan next face Sri Lanka on Tuesday, also in Hyderabad, before their eagerly-awaited clash against arch-rivals India in Ahmedabad on October 14. — AFP



HYDERABAD: Pakistan's Haris Rauf (left) bowls during the 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup one-day international (ODI) match between Pakistan and Netherlands at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad on October 6, 2023. — AFP

Russell delighted with second in chaotic end to Qatar qualifying

DOHA: A delighted George Russell qualified in second place for Sunday's Qatar Grand Prix following a late and confusing deletion of the best laps by rival McLaren drivers. When the chequered flag waved to end Friday's qualifying session, defending champion Max Verstappen was fastest for Red Bull ahead of Lando Norris of McLaren with Mercedes' Russell third and Oscar Piastri fourth in the second McLaren.

The decisions to scub out the fastest laps by the two McLarens were not communicated to the drivers or organizers before the top-three finishers began to gather for their post-session broadcast media interviews — at which point Norris withdrew, knowing he had exceeded track limits on his best lap. That left Russell to declare he was delighted to finish third on the grid — not knowing that he was promoted to second.

"It was a really tricky day for everybody," he said. "The new tarmac was really slippery and all the sand is blowing onto the track. We went out in qualifying and the lap times were just immense compared to the times we were doing this morning. "That was good fun! And I'm really happy to be P3." Looking ahead to Sunday's race, for which Verstappen claimed pole position, he said: "Lando and the McLarens are really quick at the moment. We know Red Bull and Max are in a league of their own, but our fight is with Ferrari to secure P2 in the constructors' championship."

At one point, he turned to look for Norris. "Where is Lando?" he asked. "He seems to have disap-

peared!" In a bizarre turn of events, Piastri was then interviewed although he was demoted from third position during the broadcast. He will start sixth while Norris fell to 10th. Norris later said: "I just had a correction and oversteer and went off. The team have done a good job. I just messed it up. Not a good day for me." Piastri said: "I'm not particularly happy with myself. Very, very scruffy on that last lap. Bit more on the table, but I'll take a top three."

'Very, very strange'

Hamilton said he felt that Norris deserved to have kept his place after taking issue with the severity of the penalties when drivers exceed the limits. "I feel Lando should be up here really," he told reporters. Hamilton, who was elevated to third long after the chaotic sequence of broadcast interviews, was also



Australia's captain Pat Cummins

'Chilled out' Aussies are no longer angry young men

CHENNAI: Australia skipper Pat Cummins said Saturday his team are content to go about their game "quietly", in contrast to the ultra-aggressive style of earlier Australian sides. Five-time winners Australia kick off their World Cup campaign against hosts India in a much-awaited Sunday clash in Chennai. Australia have long been known to play an aggressive brand of cricket with on-field sledging part and parcel of their game, but Cummins and company have displayed a softer version.

"It's more a reflection of who we are as a people. With every team you have different characters," Cummins told reporters. "Our guys are pretty chilled out, so I am always proud saying the players out there in the field are similar to who they are off the field." Asked about the in-your-face attitude of past greats, including the late Shane Warne and former captain Ricky Ponting, the fast bowler reflected on the team's more restrained posture. "Times change, that's 20 years ago," he said. "That doesn't come naturally to our guys, we want to go about our work quietly."

However, the World Cup could prove a different ball game, he added. "I think you're going to see some boys get fired up at different times. We're all passionate. We're all ridiculously competitive," he said. "So, I never really mind if a couple of our boys are puffing the chests out and getting themselves into the contest." Foreign teams on Indian soil must also contend with the home side's immense and impassioned fanbase, but Cummins said he was up to the challenge. — AFP

one of four drivers to be investigated for allegedly driving too slowly in Q1 along with Yuki Tsunoda, Liam Lawson and Piastri. Ferrari's Carlos Sainz was also called to see the stewards for baulking Verstappen in Q2 in an incident that resulted in the Dutchman claiming that he almost crashed.

Hamilton discussed his car's erratic performance. "It's confusing because we were nearly out of Q1, which is incredibly frustrating in that moment, but then we get into Q2 and all of a sudden we're right up there. "So it's very, very strange, but it's really great for the team for us to be up there and George did a great job today. "So for us to be so close is pretty awesome. I mean, for me, it was a relatively average qualifying session — Q1 and Q3 particularly. I was able to put together the lap, but it came too early, in Q2, so I wish I had that for Q3." — AFP



LUSAIL: Red Bull Racing's Dutch driver Max Verstappen drives during an extra practice session ahead of Qatari Formula One Grand Prix at the Lusail International Circuit on October 7, 2023. — AFP

News in Brief

Kuwait to host hockey tourney

KUWAIT: The Winter Games Club said Kuwait would host the international tournament of 2024 - due in April. The club president, Fehaid Al-Ajmi, said in remarks to KUNA that the decision came during a meeting of the International Ice Hockey Federation's general assembly currently held in Hungary. Kuwait was represented at the assembly by the club technical director, Mishaal Al-Ajmi. Fehaid Al-Ajmi indicated that Kuwait earned the honor to host the games due to full preparedness to organize the international games in the country. — KUNA

Kuwaiti secures 2nd place

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Rashed Al-Dawas came in second in annual world Jet Ski championship for the Pro 1100 stock category, in Arizona's Lake Havasu, the United States. Al-Dawas, while speaking to KUNA via phone call on Saturday, expressed his great joy at this momentous achievement, mentioning that the championship commenced last Monday as part of the International Jet Sports Boating Association (IJSBA). He explained that the championship includes more than 33 categories and some 240 contenders are vying for the top spots, and added that he will also be competing in other categories over the course of next few days. Rashed Al-Dawas had accumulated many titles over the span of four years, latest of which was first place winner at Al-Sharjah championship last month. — KUNA

Birmingham down West Brom

LONDON: Birmingham came back from a goal behind to beat West Brom 3-1 on Friday to leapfrog their local rivals and climb into the Championship play-off places. Carlos Corberan's Baggies were bidding for a third straight win and took a fifth-minute lead thanks to John Swift's sixth goal of the season at St Andrew's. But the hosts leveled midway through the first half as Juninho Bacuna netted from the spot after a very controversial penalty was given for a foul by Cedric Kipre on Koji Miyoshi despite it appearing the Birmingham player had slipped without any contact. That decision turned the game and Dion Sanderson headed home to put the Blues ahead seven minutes before half-time. — AFP

Griffin grabs two-shot lead

LOS ANGELES: Ben Griffin posted an eagle and seven birdies in his nine-under par 63 on Friday to seize a two-shot lead midway through the US PGA Tour's Sanderson Farms Championship. Griffin, who stepped away from the game to work a desk job in 2021 but returned to secure his tour card last year, rolled in a 65-foot eagle putt from the fringe at 14 to join a group sharing the lead at 12-under. He birdied the 15th for the outright lead and rolled in a 15-foot birdie at 17 to pad his advantage, taking his 36-hole total at the Country Club of Jackson to 14-under 130. "I maybe had, like, one kind of hiccup and was able to get up-and-down. Other than that, I kept the ball in front of me," Griffin said. "It was just really solid." — AFP

Scally's Gladbach grab a point

BERLIN: USA defender Joe Scally's stunning goal with two minutes remaining snatched a 2-2 draw for Borussia Moenchengladbach at home against Mainz on Friday. Gladbach opened the scoring through Florian Neuhaus but Mainz netted in each half, first a spectacular strike from Brajan Gruda and then a solo effort from Aymen Barkok, to take the lead with 15 minutes left. Scally's late goal, just his second in 65 games with Gladbach, stole a point for his side, leaving Mainz winless after seven games. "It was a difficult game for us. Of course we wanted to win, but to get the 2-2 at the end, of course it's important," Scally told DAZN. "I'm very happy to get my first goal of the season after not getting one last year. "It was a nice goal." Coming into the match after a first league win of the season at Bochum, Gladbach started well, Allassane Plea spurning two clear chances in the opening 20 minutes. — AFP

Kim Hyo-joo maintains lead

LOS ANGELES: South Korean Kim Hyo-joo fired four birdies in a three-under par 68 on Friday to maintain a two-shot lead in The Ascendant LPGA in Dallas, Texas. The world number seven, who has five top-five finishes this year but has yet to add to her tally of five LPGA titles, had a 36-hole total of 10-under par 132, two clear of Paraguay's Sofia Garcia with Celine Boutier and Lexi Thompson sharing third another two strokes back on 136. "My shots were better than yesterday, but unfortunately the score wasn't as good," said Kim, who teed off on 10 and birdied three in a row at 17, 18 and one. She added a birdie at the third, but gave that stroke back at the next hole with her only bogey of the day. "I did hit the green a lot more, so I'm satisfied with that," she said. "I was at the top of the leaderboard a couple times this season but weekend play hasn't been as good sometimes. "This week, I'm hoping to focus more on my play and play as well as I did on the first day and today and finish strong." — AFP

Sports

Top seeds make strong start Shanghai Masters

Alcaraz and Medvedev sail through to third round

SHANGHAI: Top seeds Carlos Alcaraz and Daniil Medvedev made strong starts to the Shanghai Masters on Saturday, both winning in straight sets to sail through to the third round. Italy's Jannik Sinner is also through after battling out an intense first set - saving four set points - against the United States' Marcos Giron. Alcaraz dominated his first set against 73rd-ranked Gregoire Barrere, winning it 6-2. But the Frenchman regained ground in the second, sending 20-year-old Alcaraz scurrying from side to side of the court.

The world number two kept his cool and drew ahead towards the set's end, finishing it off at 7-5. "I just had one practice and then the match, you know, it's kind of new for me," Alcaraz said of his Shanghai debut. "But I felt really well on this court here in Shanghai, I've been playing great tennis." Alcaraz is looking to close the gap on the absent Novak Djokovic at the top of the rankings with strong performances in China.

Medvedev, the world number three and defending champion, beat Chile's Cristian Garin in straight sets 6-3, 6-3 to proceed breezily to the third round. Garin put up a valiant defense, with several hard-fought rallies inducing gasps from the crowd, but ultimately the 98th-ranked player struggled with the Russian's relentless pace. "(There's a) long tournament ahead, with a lot of strong players, starting from my next match," said Medvedev at the end. "But the goal for sure is to try and win this beautiful trophy one more time."

Rugby-mad Fiji dreams of WCup knock-out glory

SUVA: Fiji's fairytale World Cup campaign has captured the imagination of the rugby-mad Pacific nation, where fans are willing their fleet-footed rugby heroes into the knock-out stages. An upset win over Australia has left the Flying Fijians on the verge of making the quarter-finals of a World Cup for the first time since 2007. The capital Suva is buzzing with rugby talk.

Carletta Yee, 16, who captained her school's under-18 girls team to the final of Fiji's national schools competition earlier this year, says the form of the men's national team has fuelled her rugby ambitions. "It's very inspirational, we didn't expect them to go that far," she told AFP. "They have proved us wrong and we are all expecting them to continue to prove us wrong." Fiji are the reigning Olympic men's Sevens champions. Fijian rugby players tend to excel at the abbreviated game with slick handling, fast feet, crunching tackles and a desire to run the ball from anywhere—often ending with outrageous tries. But under head

coach Simon Raiwalui, their 15-a-side national team has stepped up by beating England at Twickenham in a warm-up game before stunning Eddie Jones' Australia 22-15 at the World Cup and carving out a 17-12 win over tier-two side Georgia.

A narrow nail-biting loss to Wales, decided in the dying seconds, has been their only World Cup defeat. Fiji need just one point against Portugal on Sunday to confirm second place in Pool C on the head-to-head rule, having already beaten Australia. The Fiji Rugby Union estimates there are 60,000 senior players nationally and Yee is one of around 20,000 school children who play the game. The budding rugby talent is inspired by how the Flying Fijians are faring in France.

'Role models'

"Qualifying to the knock-out stages would show the younger players that it is possible for them to reach that stage too and play against the best in the world, because we've seen our players and our role models do it," she said. "A lot of the sides the team is playing against have much better facilities and more resources, which are very limited here in Fiji, along with the level of coaching and development that our country has, but it has never stopped us."

Lucky butterfly

Medvedev won the 2019 title, but for the next three years the tournament was cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. "I'm definitely happy to be back in Shanghai," he said. "I honestly feel great and I want to stay here as long as possible." Medvedev is popular with Chinese fans, a chemistry on display when the indoor match was interrupted briefly after a red-and-white butterfly distracted the Russian from serving. The crowd giggled as he played up his surprise for comic effect, before carefully handing over the insect, which had settled on one of his tennis balls, to great applause.

"I'm a little bit, not scared of insects, but, like, I don't like when they go on me," Medvedev said at a press conference afterwards, though he added it was "perfect for me" upon hearing they were a symbol of good luck in China. The Russian next plays 26th-ranked Sebastian Korda, who beat him at their last meeting. "He was very dominant, in a way, and that's how he plays, so it's going to be interesting for me," said Medvedev. "I'm in a good shape now, so I will try to do better than last time and try to win."

Sinner prevails

Sinner, who defeated both Alcaraz and Medvedev on his way to winning the China Open this week, had a more challenging route to the third round in his Shanghai Masters debut. The world number four snatched a nail-biting first set 7-6 (9/7), before coming back strong in the second set for a quick 6-2



SHANGHAI: Daniil Medvedev of Russia hits a return against Cristian Garin of Chile during their men's singles match at the Shanghai Masters tennis tournament in Shanghai on October 7, 2023. — AFP

victory. "(Giron) is a very, very good player... The first set is never easy, I got lucky a little bit but sometimes you need a bit of luck," Sinner said after the match.

"In the second set I was able to raise the level a bit... so I'm very happy with that." Fourth seed Ste-

fanos Tsitsipas is also through to the next round after a straightforward job dispatching Australian qualifier Rinky Hijikata 6-4, 6-2. "I was very confident and very sure of what I was doing and what I was following and it worked out pretty well," Tsitsipas said. — AFP

Japan go full Samurai for a must-win match

NANTES: Japan have called on their inner Samurai spirit to take on Argentina in a mouth-watering winner-takes-all climax to Pool D of the Rugby World Cup in Nantes on Sunday. England are confirmed as pool winners, meaning a straight shoot-out between the Brave Blossoms and Los Pumas for second place and a spot in the quarter-finals, both teams having lost to the English. "This is going to be one of the biggest games since Jamie (Joseph) been coaching the team. If we lose, it's the end of us, so that means we're going into the death zone," said Japan team director Yuichiro Fuji.

Fuji said players had been embracing the way of the warrior in discussing game plans at team presentations in the place of coaches. "It was (prop Keita) Inagaki this week, and he talked about how it's going to be the 'Samurai Time', where once we pull the sword out, it's going to be to die or win, and how we have to drop our katana (sword) on them to defeat them," Fuji said.

Argentina coach Michael Cheika, who led the Wallabies to the 2015 final and 2019 quarters, was typically less melodramatic. "It's a normal week, important of course. We are ready," the Australian deadpanned. "We are clear about our preparation, our way of playing and also the particular things we have to prepare for the Japanese team." Cheika, who made 11 changes from the team that routed Chile 59-5 to revert to the starting XV that lost 27-10 to England, added: "They are more than capable of challenging us in every area. We have to challenge them in every area as well."

"Japan are a very competitive team in every area, with an attack and defense system that is very different from other teams. "Japan were in the quarter-finals of the last World Cup and we were not. We are very hungry to be in that position. We know about the bad taste of not being there and we really want to be there. We will do our best to be ready." Japan coach Joseph said there had been a three-year build-up to Sunday's match, with the Brave Blossoms targeting a second successive quarter-final spot after first advancing to the knock-out phase on home soil in 2019.

"We've just got to go play 80 minutes of rugby and make sure we play that rugby the best we can and play our style of rugby," said Joseph. "It's like a quarter-final or semi-final for us already because the losing team goes home." Japan's skills coach Riki Flutey, the New Zealand-born England and British and Irish Lion centre, called Argentina "an awesome team". "They're very physical, have a very good defense - one of the best in the world. They've got dangers all over the field and we know they've got lots of threats." — AFP



LAMI, Fiji: Carletta Yee, who captained her school's under-18 girls team to the final of Fiji's national schools competition earlier this year, poses with a rugby ball as she sits in her home in Lami. — AFP

On Suva's streets, quarter-finals talk is never far away. "They can do it, and I trust them to do it," said street vendor Sairusi Tokaniono, adding that the narrow defeat to Wales showed what the team can do. "From that game, I knew they have what it takes to make it to the quarter-finals and even beyond."

At O'Reilly's, an Irish pub in central Suva that shows live rugby on big screens, manager Wise Liwaiono said

the hot topic was how far the team will go. He insisted Fiji were unlucky to lose to the Welsh when veteran Semi Radradra knocked the ball on in the dying stages with the try-line at his mercy. "Everyone knew Fiji won that game against Wales—that should have been theirs—and that was when everyone got behind them and it sort of solidified the movement for this team," said Wise. — AFP

Swiatek ends Gauff win streak to reach China Open final

BEIJING: World number two Iga Swiatek breezed into the China Open women's final with a one-sided victory over Coco Gauff in Beijing on Saturday, handing the American her first defeat in 17 matches. Swiatek beat the US Open champion 6-2, 6-3 to set up a clash with either Elena Rybakina or Liudmila Samsonova on Sunday. The Pole seized the advantage early in the first set and never gave an error-plagued, injured Gauff a sniff of getting back into the match.

Swiatek wasted no time in gaining a double break of serve and wrapped up the opening set when Gauff slammed a forehand into the net. The four-time Grand Slam winner broke again in the opening game of set two before the match was paused while Gauff received treatment for an injury to her right shoulder.



BEIJING: Poland's Iga Swiatek celebrates after beating USA's Coco Gauff during their women's singles semi-final match of the WTA China Open tennis tournament in Beijing on October 7, 2023. — AFP

Afterwards, Swiatek picked up where she left off and sealed the win when the 19-year-old hit yet another forehand into the net. "I feel like I'm playing less aggressively than past tournaments, and more solidly... I'm making less mistakes than I did before," Swiatek said at a news conference after the match.

"Playing against Coco is tough because she's really good at keeping the initiative, but she can also play great in defense," she said. "You have to really be patient and ready for her to fight for everything... when I felt like the moment was right to push and play faster, I did."

Gauff had not lost a match since falling to compatriot Jessica Pegula in Montreal in August. "I was feeling (the injury) in the first set," Gauff said after the match. "It's definitely a new experience. I'm not used to playing with pain in general," she told reporters. "When you're experiencing pain... your whole mind starts (thinking), 'Is it serious? Should I keep playing or not?'" World number five Rybakina plays Samsonova, ranked 22nd, in the other semi-final on Saturday.

Rybakina eliminated the top-ranked women's player and tournament favorite Aryna Sabalenka in straight sets on Friday. The China Open is taking place for the first time since 2019, after Beijing ended its isolationist zero-COVID policy. The men's competition concluded on Wednesday, when Italy's Jannik Sinner beat world number three Daniil Medvedev in the final. — AFP

Classifieds

Clinics & Hospitals

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	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

Change of Name

I, VINITHA ROSHNI D'SOUZA, holder of Indian Passport No. X5373929, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as VINEETHA ROSHNI D'SOUZA., (C#4242) - 06-10-2023.

421302) residing in Kuwait at present hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as SHABNAM AHMED MUSTAFA SHAIKH. (C#4240) - 05-10-2023

I, SHABNAM FIROZ SHAIKH, holder of Indian Passport No. W4671252 having permanent (H.No. 48, Flat No. 302, 3rd Floor, Abdul Qadir Madoo Manzil, Bhusor Mohalla, Bhiwandi Thane, Maharashtra, INDIA Pin Code:

I, Osman Bin Salam S/o: Salam Bin Mohammed Bin Mahfooz R/o: 23-1-915, Moghalpura, inside Dowdi Kalyan, Hyd, TS. Passport No: M9886038, do hereby announce that I have changed my name to OSMAN BIN SALAM BIN MAHFOOZ. For all future record purposes. (C#4241) - 05-10-2023

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Bader Al-Kharafi honors Asian Games medalists



Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi poses with Kuwaiti Asian Games medalists at Jaber International Stadium during their honoring ceremony.

KUWAIT: Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi honored Kuwaiti athletes who won medals at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou. The honoring took place at Jaber International Stadium prior to the start of the Zain Premier League der-

by match between Al-Qadsia and Al-Arabi on Saturday. Bader Al-Kharafi gifted a Volvo vehicle to each athlete who won a gold medal, \$10,000 to each athlete who won a silver medal and \$5,000 to each athlete who won

a bronze medal during the Games, in order to encourage Kuwait's athletes to give their best while representing their country in international competitions.

The ceremony took place in the presence of the Min-

ister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Aiban, President of Public Authority for Sport Yousef Al-Baidan and Vice President of Kuwait Olympic Committee Mohammed Jaffar.



Bader Al-Kharafi honors Abdullah Al-Turqi Al-Rashidi.



Bader Al-Kharafi honors Yaqoub Al-Youha.



Bader Al-Kharafi honors Iman Al-Shamma.



Yousef Al-Shamlan is honored.



Bader Al-Kharafi honors the Kuwait handball team.



(From left) President of Public Authority for Sport Yousef Al-Baidan, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Aiban, Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi and Vice President of the Kuwait Olympic Committee Mohammed Jaffar.

Kuwait's karatekas win gold and silver medals

HANGZHOU: Kuwait Karate Team player Fahad Al-Ajmi won the third gold medal to Kuwait on Saturday, in the 19th Asian Games, increasing Kuwait's tally to ten medals: three gold, four silver and three bronze. In a statement to KUNA, champion Fahad Al-Ajmi said that he won the gold medal after defeating his Jordanian counterpart Abdulrahman Al-Musafta, with a score of (85) in a strong competitive face-off. He expressed pride in his achievement and his participation with the strong Asian competitors, dedicating his win to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti people.

These achievements are a great motive to bring more wins in the upcoming games, added Al-Ajmi, noting the Kuwait Federation's support to the game and the efforts of the accompanying technical team, headed

by the team's technical director Jaber Hammad. Meanwhile, Kuwait's national karate team player Abdullah Sha'ban won a silver medal in the under 60-kg Kumite contest of the 19th Asian Games.

Cricket champions

In another development, India were crowned Asian Games men's cricket champions on their first attempt and without needing to bat Saturday in an anti-climatic finish, consigning Afghanistan to a third consecutive silver. India were declared winners of the final under an Asian Games-specific rule where the higher-ranked team takes the honors if the match cannot be finished, in this case due to rain. Afghanistan made 112-5 under the floodlights in Hangzhou before the wet weather arrived after 18.2 overs. With conditions not improving, the final was abandoned. Despite the damp ending it completed a golden double for India after they beat Sri Lanka by 19 runs to be crowned women's champions last week. Twenty20 cricket has been played at the Asian Games twice before, at Guangzhou 2010 and Incheon 2014, with Bangladesh and then Sri Lanka crowned men's winners.

Afghanistan were runners-up both times, but India did not take part. Because they were among the higher-ranked teams, they both entered the tournament at the quarter-final stage in Hangzhou. While India cruised through their knockout games, against Nepal and Bangladesh, the Afghans had to scrap hard to beat holders

Sri Lanka and then Pakistan. Afghanistan again had to knuckle down after India won the toss and chose to field, with a gritty unbeaten 49 from Shahidullah and captain Gulbadin Naib's 27 not out ensuring they passed 100.

They faced a fiery introduction with pacemen Shivam Dube and Arshdeep Singh removing openers Zubaid Akbari and Mohammad Shahzad inside the first three overs. The needless run-out of Noor Ali Zadran, going for a tight second run in the next over, compounded their problems after Ravi Bishnoi's accurate throw from the ropes. Back-to-back boundaries from Afsar Zazai finally got the scoreboard moving as he and Shahidullah put on 37 for the next wicket.

Bishnoi's spin broke the partnership with Zazai bowled for 15, before Shahidullah and Naib shared a 60-run stand, before rain halted play. In the bronze medal match, Bangladesh stunned Pakistan when Rakibul Hasan smashed a boundary off the final ball to book a six-wicket win. Pakistan managed only 48-1 off five overs before rain halted play, with Bangladesh set a revised target of 65 under the DLS (Duckworth-Lewis-Stern) method. They reached it with four wickets down in dramatic fashion, with Hasan's heroics sparking wild scenes from the Bangladesh team. — Agencies



Fahad Al-Ajmi



Abdullah Sha'ban