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Kuwait committed to oil

State to develop Durra field, achieve net-zero emissions, diversify income sources



By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Minister of Oil and Chairman of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation Dr Saad Al-Barrak emphasized Kuwait's commitment to the integrated infrastructure development of the Al-Durra field as a vital economic cornerstone in the 17th government work program. He also stressed on the importance of developing the oil industry, despite the existential challenges posed by climate change. "Our sector is the backbone of the national economy since the discovery and production of oil and the first shipment exported in 1946. The oil sector has contributed to the building of the modern state," he added.

Speaking at the 2040 Strategic Directions and 2050 Energy Transition Conference, Barrak announced Kuwait's roadmap to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. He stressed the need for Kuwait to diversify its

income sources and ensure the sustainability of its national economy by fostering the growth and development of the oil industry.

"Kuwait Petroleum Corporation remains committed to investing in the Kuwaiti oil sector to support its growth and ensure Kuwait's continued global role towards its customers around the world. On the other hand, our world is witnessing a significant shift to the use of renewable and clean energy sources. This shift requires a long-term strategic vision, as we recognize the importance of oil as a strategic fuel source, but also work actively towards the energy transition and investments in our national workforce and new technologies," Barrak noted.

The minister pointed out that 90 percent of Kuwait's revenue is generated from the oil industry, making it crucial to overcome obstacles and execute KPC projects outlined in the government's work program within set timelines to ensure a con-

tinuous financial flow for the state.

KPC CEO Sheikh Nawaf Al-Sabah emphasized that the implementation of the corporation's capital projects would result in additional annual revenue flows of approximately \$11 billion during the five-year plan, contributing to maintaining KPC's market share. Regarding the Al-Durra field, he stated that Kuwait is working with Saudi Arabia on preliminary studies to eventually reach a decision on implementing an integrated project.

"Renewable sources are not enough to meet the world's needs, and there must be a pivotal role for low-cost oil with less carbon emissions. Currently, a barrel of Kuwaiti oil has the lowest carbon dioxide emissions in the world. We must continue to ensure that the Kuwaiti oil barrel is the most in-demand in the world. Kuwait's annual production is one billion barrels per year. If we can raise the recovery

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Op-Ed

Thanks to Kuwait

Rami Tahboub
Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait

Once again the State of Kuwait, headed by HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, showed in deed and not only words that Palestine, its people and cause are Kuwait's cause and it is on top of its foreign policy priority list.

As soon as the occupation entity declared war against the Palestinian people, Kuwait's foreign ministry issued its statement demanding the international community to bear responsibility towards the continued aggression over decades against the Palestinian people and their legitimate rights, and the necessity to end this occupation and establish an independent Palestinian state.

The National Assembly MPs and Kuwait people declared their stand next to their brothers in Palestine through the organization of solidarity and honorable stances that characterize the great people of Kuwait's love of Palestine, Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa Mosque.

As soon as the occupation entity launched its aggression against the civilians of our people in Gaza and destroyed scores of homes and buildings dwelled by civilians, most of whom are women and children, the Kuwaiti government, represented by the social affairs ministry, announced the launch of an urgent relief campaign for the Palestinian people.

The actual unconditional and unlimited stands of Kuwait in support of Palestine, its people and leadership, are stands of pride and a medal of honor on the chest of every Palestinian in Palestine and the diaspora. I, and in the name of President Mahmoud Abbas, President of the

State of Palestine, Chairman of PLO executive committee, and in the name of the government and people of the State of Occupied Palestine, convey all types of gratitude and appreciation for every Kuwaiti on the soil of Arabism and dignity, led by HH the Amir, HH the Crown Prince, HH the Prime Minister, Speaker and members of the National Assembly, and also to every child in this dear country.

Long live Kuwait! Long live Palestine!

NLI conference aims to motivate, inspire achievers

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: With Zain as the diamond sponsor and Kuwait Times as contributing sponsor, the National Leadership Institution (NLI) organized a two-day conference titled "Breaking Barriers" at Grand Hyatt Hotel. The conference aims to inspire attendees to follow their potential and motivate them to reach their targets. A number of carefully selected speakers have been invited to inspire the audience, alongside panel discussions and a great opportunity for interacting with spirited individuals. (See Page 3)



KUWAIT: Speakers address a National Leadership Institution (NLI) conference titled 'Breaking Barriers' on Oct 9, 2023. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Zionist entity imposes total siege on Gaza

JERUSALEM: The Zionist entity imposed a total siege on the Gaza Strip Monday and cut off the water supply as it kept bombing targets in the crowded Palestinian enclave in response to the Hamas surprise assault it has likened to the 9/11 attacks. Reeling from the Islamist group's unprecedented ground, air and sea attacks, the Zionist entity has counted over 700 dead and launched a withering barrage of strikes on Gaza that have raised the death toll there to 560 people.

Kuwait's Cabinet reviewed a foreign ministry statement that expressed concern over the escalating violence in the Middle East, urging the international community to ensure the adequate protection of the Palestinians in the face of continued Zionist entity's aggression.

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GAZA: A Palestinian points to the Ahmed Yassin Mosque, which was leveled by Zionist airstrikes, in Gaza City early on Oct 9, 2023. — AFP

Zionists kill 3 Hezb members in escalation

BEIRUT: Three Hezbollah members were killed in Zionist strikes on Lebanon Monday, the Iran-backed group said, as tensions surged after Palestinian militants tried to infiltrate into the Zionist en-

tity from Lebanon. The Zionist army said its soldiers had "killed a number of armed suspects" who had crossed the frontier from Lebanon and that its helicopters were striking the area.

The escalation on the Zionist entity's northern border with Lebanon comes two days after Hamas militants launched a massive attack on the Zionist entity's southern flank from the blockaded Gaza Strip. Hezbollah issued three separate statements confirming the death of its members, all of them "martyred as a result of the Zionist aggression on south Lebanon Monday afternoon", the group said.

A Hezbollah source had earlier told AFP a member was killed "in a (Zionist) strike on a watchtower in south Lebanon" near Aita al-Shaab village, with a spokesperson for the group confirming the death. The Palestinian Islamic Jihad group's armed wing, which claims to be fighting the Zionist entity alongside Hamas, said earlier it was behind a thwarted bid to infiltrate the Zionist entity from Lebanon.

"The Al-Quds Brigades claim responsibility for the afternoon operation on the south Lebanon border," the group said in a statement.

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Local

Kuwaiti citizens stress their support for Palestinians' right to defend themselves

Operation Al-Aqsa Flood a new hope for achieving justice

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: In the past three days, the world has witnessed a significant and surprising military operation by Palestinian group Hamas against the Zionist entity occupying Palestine, one of the longest-standing occupations in recent global history. This operation, which began in Gaza and extended to the occupied Palestinian territories, has given hope to people worldwide who seek justice for both Palestinians and others who understand the significance of deprivation from liberty and freedom from oppression.

Among those showing unwavering support for the Palestinian operation is Kuwait, which has consistently opposed the actions of the occupying entity and has offered comprehensive support at all levels. Kuwaiti citizens have also stood in solidarity with the Palestinian cause, with many gathering at public assemblies to express their full support for the rights of Palestinians defending themselves against repeated brutal attacks by the occupying forces. Kuwait Times interviewed several Kuwaiti citizens who enthusiastically support the current developments in Palestinian territories. Aicha Haidar emphasized that this operation sheds light on the numerous violations committed by the occupying entity against the Palestinian people over the past decades. She stressed that this

conflict is not limited to the battlefield; it also extends to a media war that requires people to be well-informed. Haidar added that news platforms supporting the occupying entity play a significant role in sowing doubt and weakness in people's hearts. She pointed out that they often attempt to portray the operation as targeting women and children to gain sympathy and support. She emphasized the importance of countering these disinformation techniques through raising awareness.

Mohammad Al-Subaei pointed out that this operation has given the world renewed hope for achieving justice and will provide the new generation with a different perspective on real justice, one that has been obscured by misleading media campaigns. Buthayna Salem concurred that the new generation, especially those who have not experienced war, will gain valuable insights from the events unfolding in Palestine. She also emphasized the sacred nature of the land and its significance to Muslims and all those who believe in justice.

Salem added that Palestinian families have suffered the loss of their sons and daughters, rape of their women, endured the theft of their homes and lived under a protracted siege with limited access to resources, movement and aid delivery for decades. "It is now time for them to take decisive action toward achieving the victory they have long awaited, that we hope will come very soon," she said.



KUWAIT: Kuwaitis against the normalization of ties with the Zionist entity attend a gathering to express their solidarity with Palestine in Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Stand up for Palestine

By Anadel Khaled Alrashed

Have you ever found yourself in a scenario where someone took something that was yours, but no one trusted your word? Well, can you imagine that happening in a country? That's precisely what Palestine has faced since the Zionist regime's occupation of Palestinian land. Yet, the Palestinian people experienced the world turning their backs on them and neglect.



Anadel Khaled Alrashed

The Zionist entity has oppressed Palestine, prevented it from participating in external relations, and has been the center of false rumors. Even after numerous retaliations, the Zionist regime seems unchanged. Yet, just as with someone whose property was stolen from them, Palestine has begun a new wave of retaliation. On October 7, 2023, Palestinian militant groups launched a surprise attack on the Zionist entity.

After years of succumbing to Zionist authorities, Hamas announced their "Operation Al-Aqsa Flood". Over 5,000 rockets were launched from the Gaza Strip at the Zionist entity within 20 minutes at 06:30 am local time on October 7, 2023, as a response to the Zionists occupying Palestinian land for an extended period. Consequently, after years of retaliating, this one appears to have caught the Zionists by surprise.

In addition, the Palestinian ministry of foreign affairs has stated that ending the Zionist occupation is the only way for peace and is the only way to guarantee "security, stability and peace". "We have repeatedly warned of the consequences of a deadlock in the political horizon and not granting the Palestinian people their legitimate right to self-determination and their state. We have also warned of the consequences of the daily provocations and attacks, the continued terrorism of settlers and occupation forces, and the raids on Al-Aqsa Mosque and Christian and Islamic holy sites," it said.

"What guarantees security, stability and peace in our region is ending the Zionist occupation of the land of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, along the 1967 lines, and recognizing the people's right to independence and sovereignty," it added.

Palestinian individuals were not created to succumb to other authorities — Palestinians are humans. Palestinians deserve their land, their home, their State of Palestine. The Palestine crisis has been dragging on for too long, and the recent events are revolutionary and changed the perspective of many people. Regarding the continuous neglect and pain the citizens have gone through, what happened this week will have an impact in restoring Palestine as it once was. The Palestinian people needed us yesterday, need us today and will need us tomorrow. Stand up for Palestine!



Alghanim Industries conclude the sponsorship of the eleventh Charity Reading Marathon. The distinguished event, organized by Takween Bookstore, was hosted at the Design District Center in Shuwaikh.

Alghanim Industries Supports 11th Takween Reading Marathon

KUWAIT: Reaffirming its unwavering commitment to championing educational initiatives, Alghanim Industries (Kutayba Alghanim Group), one of the largest privately-owned companies in the region, proudly concluded its sponsorship of the eleventh Charity Reading Marathon. This distinguished event, organized by Takween Bookstore, was hosted at the Design District Center in Shuwaikh over the past weekend.



Abdullateef Al-Sharikh

The marathon effectively combined the joy of reading with community philanthropy, attracting families, children, and enthusiasts alike. For every 10 pages participants read, a donation of one dirar was pledged to support the educational needs of underprivileged children in Kuwait. This gesture reinforces Alghanim Industries' steadfast commitment to enhancing educational opportunities, underscoring their transformative role in fostering societal development and progress. This year's marathon witnessed the active participation of 956 readers,



cumulatively reading an impressive 68,180 pages.

Commenting on Alghanim Industries' contribution to this notable initiative, for the second year in a row, Abdullateef Al-Sharikh, Senior Director of Corporate Communications, remarked, "Our association with the Charity Reading Marathon is a reflection of Alghanim Industries' unwavering belief in the importance of education as a fundamental human right. I'd like to extend our sincere gratitude to the dedicated organizers, the passionate participants, and everyone who made this event a success. Education opens doors and widens horizons. Through our support for such endeavors, we highlight its crucial role in shaping a brighter future for our community."

Bothayna Al-Essa, Kuwaiti novelist, and co-founder of Takween, conveyed her profound appreciation for the collective efforts that made this initiative a success. She stated, "The Charity

Reading Marathon holds a special place in my heart year after year. It consistently rejuvenates my spirit. Seeing participants, young and old, deeply immersed in their reading, collectively striving to support the educational pursuits of Kuwait's less privileged children, is a testament to the powerful sense of community we share."

In addition to its strategic support of the marathon, Alghanim Industries enhanced the experience for all attendees by offering beverages from Costa Coffee, adding to the event's warm and welcoming atmosphere. Additionally, in partnership with Alghanim Industries' prominent electronics retailer Xcite, attendees were given a special opportunity to win Kindle e-readers. These efforts highlight Alghanim Industries' dedication to supporting community-driven initiatives with innovation and quality.



Senior officials and attendees at the 2040 Strategic Directions and 2050 Energy Transition Conference.

Kuwait committed ...

Continued from Page 1

rate by 1 percent, we will have compensated for a year's production," Sheikh Nawaf said. Regarding the northern fields, he mentioned ongoing discussions with Iraq to determine production methods and the possibility of importing gas from Iraq. KPC also announced its strategic directions until 2040, aligning with global market forecasts, including energy transition, carbon emissions reduction and the anticipated increase in energy demand. KPC MD Planning & Finance Bader Al-Attar said Kuwait plans to invest around \$110 billion to achieve energy transition targets, in addition to the \$300 billion allocated for the oil sector in the 2040 strategy.

"With a total of \$410 billion, 60-70 percent of it is related to oil exploration," he explained. Key initiatives include utilizing renewable energy, improving energy efficiency, reducing gas flaring, carbon capture and in-

vesting in new energy businesses. CEO of Kuwait Oil Company Ahmad Jaber Al-Eidan highlighted initiatives such as enhanced oil recovery using carbon dioxide gas in the Manaqish field and efforts to reach a production capacity of four million barrels per day. He also mentioned a joint project with the Kuwait National Petroleum Company and Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company aimed at capturing over 100 million metric tons of carbon dioxide for use over 25 years and exploring ways to store around 400 million metric tons for production processes.

CEO of Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company Waleed Al-Bader announced the operation of the first and second Al-Zour refineries, with a total capacity of 410,000 barrels per day, and the upcoming completion of the third refinery, with a total capacity of 615,000 bpd, which will contribute to achieving one of the main strategic directions of KPC's 2040 strategy, which aims to raise the refining capacity of Kuwait to reach 1.6 million bpd.



KPC CEO Sheikh Nawaf Al-Sabah addresses the conference.

Local

Kuwait Times contributing sponsor of 'Breaking Barriers' conference

Forum sees future built on technology, artificial intelligence



Participants follow the speakers' guidance during the conference. — Photos Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: With Zain as the diamond sponsor and Kuwait Times as contributing sponsor, the National Leadership Institute (NLI) organized a two-day conference titled "Breaking Barriers" at Grand Hyatt Hotel. The conference is held to inspire attendees to follow their potential and motivate them to reach their targets. A number of carefully selected speakers were invited to inspire the audience, alongside panel discussions and a great opportunity for interacting with spirited individuals.

Day one discussed the topic of Digital Transformation and Emerging Technology, led by cofounder of the billion-dollar brand Quest Nutrition Tom Bilyeu, who gave an inspirational speech on creating an unstoppable mindset, bestselling writer on artificial intelligence Calum Chace, who spoke about surviving artificial intelligence, and Dr Daniel Hulme, a leading expert in artificial intelligence, emerging technologies and the metaverse, who spoke about data science for decision making. This in addition to a panel discussion moderated by assistant professor in electronic engineering Dr Mohammad Qasem.

During the conference, Kuwait Times spoke to Tarek Al-Awn, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National International Education and Training Company (NEST), the parent company of the National Leadership Institute (NLI) that organized the conference. "This conference was held to look towards a future built on technology and artificial intelligence. It includes developing the leadership capabilities of the participants and thinking about the future, not just the present. The speakers we have invited are among the best in the world in terms of their expertise and success, so we are trying to make this experience fruitful for future generations," Awn said.

Business Development Manager at NEST Aseel Al-Ruwaished explained to Kuwait Times that NLI is one of NEST's branches, adding NLI is assisting people in Kuwait to make the technologies that Kuwait is investing in. The company has a large budget allocated for investing in tech-related companies in Europe and the United States, but to be eligible, you need to have the necessary skills. NLI serves as the training arm that is helping educate individuals on how to effectively utilize and stay updated with the latest technology trends.

"The main goal is to attract the latest advancements in technology and localize them in Kuwait and the region. This institute has focused on topics related to executive education in collaboration with major international institutions and prestigious universities such as London Business School and Harvard University School of Management, as well as professors and other groups and companies like Google Cloud, with whom we collaborate," Mohamed Al-Khalifi, General Director of the National Leaders Institute, told Kuwait Times.

"Therefore, the focus of this institute is a gateway to attract elite experiences in areas related to artificial intelligence and its application in leadership, as well as the latest technological developments and how to leverage them in decision-making and creating a suitable work environment. This conference that we are attending now is the culmination of the



Jana Alnaqeeb Public Relations and CSR Manager of Kuwait Times and Kuwait News takes a photo with Tom Bilyeu.

work dedicated throughout the previous year, based on the success during the COVID-19 crisis, where we conducted two online conferences through livestreaming. Due to the achievements that resulted at that time, we decided to organize an in-person conference, which received great interaction from the entities that had previously engaged with us in past years, such as Zain, one of the platinum sponsors that had a significant presence," Khalifi said.

"Also, the quality of the speakers enriched the selected topics, and we witnessed positive reactions from the attendees, appreciating the selection of these carefully chosen speakers. Some expressed interest in participating in specialized training programs, and we have already started receiving inquiries for collaboration and benefiting from the existing expertise," he said.

"Furthermore, the participants were chosen based on the current local market and the prevailing trends in Kuwait and the region, as these topics have started to occupy the minds of leaders and decision-makers. Based on that, we began searching for individuals who can effectively convey their messages while having a reputable name that attracts the targeted group and segment as soon as it is mentioned. Therefore, we made sure that these personalities have a good way of inspiring and motivating others, making them suitable choices to join us in this conference," Khalifi added.



Kuwait Times' Content Creator Dhoha Alessa chats with Tom Bilyeu.



Mohammad Al-Khalifi



Calum Chace



Tarek Al-Awn



Dr Daniel Hulme



Tom Bilyeu speaking to the audience.



Aseel Al-Ruwaished



Participants are pictured during the conference.

Kuwait Water Association backs sustainability efforts

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training and the Kuwait Water Association signed a cooperation agreement to support the efforts of the state and its programs in achieving sustainability in the field of water and the possibility of developing curricula and study programs that qualify graduates for the labor market in jobs related to water and maintenance.

The president of the Water Association, Dr Saleh Al-Muzaini, said in a press statement during the signing ceremony on Monday that the cooperation agreement is considered a road map for the authority and the association in establishing, organizing and coordinating with the community in scientific, training and professional projects in the fields of water sciences.

Al-Muzaini added that the agreement includes participation in the work of scientific studies and research, benefiting from research and applied projects, and exchanging academic, scientific, research, training and cultural visits. He explained that the agreement also includes cooperation in the work of scientific conferences or forums that contribute to achieving the common goals of the two parties, in addition to benefiting from the outputs of projects to reduce water consumption bills.

He stated that under this agreement, there will be training programs for new specialties that meet the needs of ministries, concerned bodies and the private sector in a way that serves the vision of New Kuwait 2035 and in a way that does not contradict the regulations of the applied body. He pointed out that these programs will be under continuous development to raise the competence of trainers and trainees according to the needs of state ministries and local authorities.

It is noteworthy that the agreement allows for joint training courses and workshops of common interest and contributes to spreading awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals and rationalization. The agreement was signed by the applied authority, its Director General, Dr Hassan Al-Fajjam and the Water Association and its chairman, Dr Saleh Al-Muzaini. — KUNA

FM, EU Special Representative discuss strategic partnership

EU FMs hold emergency meeting on Palestine



Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs meets with EU Special Representative for the Gulf on sidelines of GCC-EU ministerial meeting. — KUNA photos



Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs meets his Cypriot counterpart on sidelines of GCC-EU ministerial meeting.

KUWAIT: Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met on Monday with the EU Special Representative (EUSR) for the Gulf, Luigi Di Maio, in Oman. The meeting took place on the sidelines of the joint ministerial meeting of the GCC countries' Foreign Ministers with the European Union at its 27th session, which is held today in the Omani Capital, Muscat. The Kuwait Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the meeting tackled the historic bilateral relations between Kuwait and the EU and the strategic partnership on all levels. It added that the meeting also discussed the latest regional and international developments.

In another development, EU High Representative Josep Borrell announced on Monday that he is convening an emergency meeting of EU Foreign Ministers to address the situation in Palestine and in the region. Borrell's spokesperson, Peter Stano, told a press conference in Brussels that the EU foreign ministers meeting will take place in Muscat as a number of EU foreign ministers are already on the ground and those not in Muscat will be joining by video conference. They will discuss all the aspects of the situation on the ground, he said. Borrell, who is in Omani capital Muscat to co-chair the 27th EU-GCC ministerial meeting, said in a message on social media that he "will have the opportunity to discuss with

our regional partners our common challenges and the need to work together to manage regional and international crises and to deepen our cooperation."

On Tuesday, Borrell will co-chair the EUGCC Joint Council alongside the current Omani GCC Presidency, represented by Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister of the Sultanate of Oman. Meanwhile, Belgian Foreign Minister Hadja Lahbib, who is also in Oman for the EU GCC ministerial meeting, said today on social media X that they will "discuss the ongoing conflict in the Zionist entity and Gaza. For Belgium, the priority now is to "stop the violence, protect civilians, and respect international law."

Also, Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs met Monday with his Cypriot counterpart Constantinos Komboson on the sidelines of the 27th ministerial meeting of the GCC Foreign Ministers with the European Union. The foreign ministry said in a statement that during the meeting, the two sides discussed current developments in the region, namely the latest developments related to the Iraqi Federal Supreme Court ruling declaring the law ratifying the agreement regulating maritime navigation in Khor Abdullah waterway between the two countries unconstitutional, in addition to international and political efforts to preserve security and sta-



KUWAIT: Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met on Monday with Lithuanian counterpart Gabrielius Landsbergis on the sidelines of the 27th ministerial meeting of the GCC Foreign Ministers with the European Union in the Omani capital. In a statement, the Kuwaiti foreign minister said that the two sides touched on bilateral ties between the two friendly countries and boosting economic cooperation.

bility in the region. The two sides shed light on the recent developments in the occupied Palestinian territories and Gaza strip. — KUNA

stc launches cancer awareness campaign

KUWAIT: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced the launch of its breast cancer awareness campaign 'Early Detection, makes the difference' under the "we care" umbrella and in line with the internationally recognized awareness month.

The campaign, comprising of different internal and external awareness activities, will be organized

by stc in collaboration with several entities in an aim to promote early detection methods and ways to possibly prevent breast cancer. stc annually participates in the global initiative of spreading awareness on breast cancer, its causes, and ways to prevent or detect the disease at an early stage. As part of its activities under the campaign this year, stc will be collaborating with Alia International Hospital and REBEL Gym, while organizing engaging and informative sessions for its employees.

stc aims to instill a lasting positive impact by educating its female employees on early detection methods orchestrated by the medical team at Alia International Hospital, while organizing fitness activities led by professional trainers from REBEL Gym. stc's annual participation in the global breast cancer awareness initiative seamlessly aligns with its robust Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) framework. With health considered as a key pillar within this framework, the Company underscores its ongoing commitment to elevating health standards and fostering a culture of wellness and preventive care both internally and across the wider community.

Through its collaboration with Alia International Hospital, stc will be posting content related to breast cancer awareness across its social media platforms. Additionally, Dr Mohammad Hassan, Head of General Surgery and the Endoscopy Department at Alia International Hospital, will be providing valuable information and insights covering the disease in the form of video segments posted on stc's social media platforms. A special event will also be held at stc's headquarters for female employees to learn more about self-examination techniques to detect breast cancer. Other than the self-exams and check-ups, female stc employees will receive free vouchers on early detection tests and free giveaways.

In terms of maintaining personal health, the Company will organize an event for female employees in coordination with REBEL Gym, the first smart kickboxing gym, with the aim of shedding light on the importance of practicing regular fitness activities to reduce the risk of health problems. This initiative mirrors the values upheld by stc, emphasizing a commitment to maintaining a healthy lifestyle, which is pivotal in preventing the onset of diseases.

Danah Al-Jasem, General Manager of Corporate Communications at stc, said, "We are proud to launch our breast cancer awareness campaign once again in an effort to collectively curb the concerns associated with the disease. We believe that it is

Breast cancer awareness month



essential for corporates to play a constructive role in educating the public regarding matters such as health awareness, in order to empower society and leave a lasting impact. In this regard, we look forward to witnessing the exciting events organized in collaboration with our partners for this initiative, Alia International Hospital and REBEL Gym."

She added, "Considering its role as a digital pioneer and telecom leader, stc is keen to continuously support the communities it serves, as well as its employees. Through our robust CSR framework, we have launched numerous initiatives that focus on educating the community regarding health-related topics, while collaborating with health institutions and other related entities. Additionally, we have sponsored, organized, and participated in a number of events that promote an active lifestyle, a concept that stc highly praises within its work environment."

Having said that, we are excited to witness the reception for our upcoming activities and we will continue to introduce community-focused initiatives that diversely contribute towards various causes, including the key areas of health, education, entrepreneurship, youth empowerment, and the environment." To find out more about stc's events, promotions, and sponsorships, follow stc's official social media platforms, visit one of stc's branches, download my stc mobile application, visit www.stc.com.kw or contact the customer service center by dialing 102 for around the clock assistance.

KRCS launches 'Aid Palestine' campaign

KUWAIT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) launched Monday a donation campaign, "Aid Palestine," aimed at supporting Palestinian people and providing them with the necessary relief and medical provisions. Society Chief of Board of Directors, Dr Hilal Al-Sayer, stated to KUNA that the campaign, setting out to provide hospitals with the necessities to treat the wounded, is driven by KRCS's national and humanitarian sense of duty to the Palestinian cause.

The society, as indicated by Al-Sayer, is working urgently and in coordination with its Palestinian counterpart to deliver the necessary aid as soon as possible, as it will also be undertaking many initiatives in cooperation with national societies and humanitarian organizations. Moreover, Dr Al-Sayer called on citizens and residents to donate through

the society's website, saying that the people of Kuwait are no strangers to humanitarian work. Al-Sayer stated that the international community and humanitarian organizations alike are responsible for supporting Palestinian people, especially considering the current tragic conditions caused by the Zionist occupation's aggression. — KUNA



KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti waves the Palestinian flag during a gathering to express solidarity with Palestine in Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat



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Frantic digging for families still trapped after Afghan quakes

US-China relations impact 'destiny of mankind': Xi

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JABALIA: Palestinians search for survivors after the Zionist airstrike on buildings in the refugee camp of Jabalia in the Gaza Strip on Oct 9, 2023. -AFP photos

Palestinians likely capable of keeping up attack: Experts

Ground invasion of Gaza poses 'a challenge' with 'heavy losses' for Zionists

PARIS: The unprecedented attack by Hamas against the Zionist occupation was a meticulously planned offensive that the Palestinian resistance group is capable of keeping up, with a risk of even greater escalation, analysts say.

Hamas can count on a deep arsenal of rockets to use against the occupation but key questions include how much support it has received from Iran, which has expressed its backing for the offensive, and whether the Hezbollah will enter the fray.

More than 700 Zionists have been killed in the country's worst losses since the 1973 war — when it was also caught flat-footed by a combined Egyptian and Syrian attack — and over 400 Palestinians slain as the Zionist occupation presses a relentless bombardment of Hamas' Gaza stronghold. "It was a huge failure on the (Zionist) side and a huge achievement for Hamas," said Kobi Michael, senior researcher at the Tel-Aviv-based Institute for National Security Studies (INSS).

"In order to launch such an operation, you have to do a lot of preparation, planning, coordination and you have to have a very meaningful, significant, essential strategic prospect or objective that you are seeking to achieve," he added, emphasizing that Hamas "knows the price of such an operation will be very high."

'Substantial arsenal'

In May 2021, Hamas had already surprised the Zionist occupation by sending thousands of rockets — sometimes a hundred within a few minutes — aimed at saturating its Iron Dome anti-missile defense system. Then, Hamas used 4,360 rockets in the space of 15 days while this time around 3,000 fell on Zionist-controlled lands in two days, according to Elliot Chapman, analyst for the British security intelligence group Janes. "It is unclear if the militants will be able to sustain this volume of fire over the next few days. If so this would be the largest rocket attack on (the Zionists) so far," he told AFP.

Fabian Hinz, a research fellow at the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies, said that Hamas should still have a "substantial arsenal of rockets" kept in reserve and it "seems likely they will be able to keep up the rocket fire for quite a while." Hamas has an arsenal that is difficult to quantify numerically but certainly ample.

Its arms come from an array of different sources, including Iran but also Syria, Libya after the fall of Muammar Gaddafi and other Middle Eastern countries — not to mention weapons captured from the occupation itself, said a Western expert on armaments who posts anonymously on X (formerly Twitter) under the handle Calibre Obscura. "It's an arsenal of stocks that had been built up for decades," said Calibre Obscura, with small arms and rifles stemming from sources in China, Russia and eastern Europe.

For Chapman the "vast majority" of Hamas' rocket arsenal is however "domestically manufactured." "They require a basic workshop and materials and can be mass produced by Hamas and similar types," he said, describing them as "un-guided missile systems" that "require no advanced technology to be launched."

'Long time to prepare'

What happens next will depend both on the occupation's own decisions — notably if it launches a ground invasion of Gaza after its 2005 pullout from the territory — and what kind of backing Hamas itself received for the offensive. "We might see a few entirely new capabilities (from Hamas) emerge in case of a full ground invasion of the Gaza Strip," said Hinz.

He warned that close combat in the densely-populated Gaza Strip would be "grueling" and a scenario the Zionist defense forces had tried hard to avoid over the last years. "Hamas had a long time to prepare for this kind of scenario, so even for a military as well-trained and equipped as the IDF it would be quite a challenge and probably come with heavy losses."

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has said Tehran



ASHKELON: Residents inspect the damage to their building in Ashkelon on Oct 9, 2023, after it was hit during the night by a rocket from the Gaza Strip.

supports what he described as the "legitimate defense" of the Palestinians but a White House official said it is "too early to say" whether Iran was "directly involved" even if there is "no doubt Hamas is funded, equipped and armed by Iran and others."

Kobi Michael argued that "Hamas would not have dared to launch such an operation without having a very reliable and serious policy insurance and they got it from Hezbollah and Iran." The Wall Street Journal reported Tuesday, citing members of Hamas and Hezbollah, that Iran had helped to plan the assault with a final green light given at a

meeting in Beirut last week. A nightmare scenario for the Zionists would be a multi-front war also involving Hezbollah activity on its northern border. The Lebanese group said Sunday it fired "large numbers of artillery shells and guided missiles" at Zionist positions in a contested border area "in solidarity" with the Palestinian attack. The occupation responded with its own fire. Chapman of Janes said that the risk of Hezbollah involvement "is elevated" while in addition "Palestinian militant groups are very active in the West Bank and have called on the public to join the fray." — AFP

EU suspends development aid to Palestinians

BRUSSELS: The EU has halted development aid payments to the Palestinians and is placing 691 million euros (\$728 million) of support "under review" after the Palestinian attack on the Zionist occupation, Brussels said Monday. "The scale of terror and brutality against (the occupation) and its people is a turning point. There can be no business as usual," European Union Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Oliver Varhelyi posted on social media.

"As the biggest donor of the Palestinians, the European Commission is putting its full development portfolio under review, worth a total of 691

million euros (\$728 million)," he added, in a message confirmed by a commission spokesman. Varhelyi said the move meant "all payments immediately suspended. All projects put under review. All new budget proposals, including for 2023 postponed until further notice. Comprehensive assessment of the whole portfolio".

EU foreign ministers are to hold emergency talks Tuesday on the situation in Palestine after the unprecedented attack by Hamas. "Incitement to hatred, violence and glorification of terror have poisoned the minds of too many," Varhelyi said. "We need action and we need it now."

While the European Commission press service confirmed Varhelyi's statement, it raised eyebrows in Brussels. One European diplomat told AFP that his member state was "surprised" by the announcement. And Luxembourg's acting foreign minister Jean Asselborn insisted that his government did not support the suspension of aid. "We are

the largest donor to Gaza. This help is important for young people. This is not money for Hamas. It is for the people of Gaza," he told AFP. But the EU suspension is likely to be supported by other EU states, including the richest, Germany, which announced that it was suspending its own direct aid to the Palestinians. "It is being examined, that is, temporarily suspended," said a spokeswoman from the German ministry for economic cooperation and development.

The EU announced in February that it was contributing 296 million euros for the 2022 budget year to help the Palestinian Authority pay civil servant salaries, pensions, medical services and fund infrastructure projects. The bloc says it would provide "up to 1.177 billion euros in financial support from 2021 to 2024". A European Commission spokeswoman insisted earlier on Monday EU aid "does not fund Hamas or any other terrorist organization activities, either directly or indirectly". — AFP



RAFAH: A Palestinian boy looks for salvageable items amid the rubble of a levelled building following overnight Zionist airstrikes on the southern Gaza Strip. — AFP

International

US-China relations impact 'destiny of mankind': Xi

US senators meet Chinese president in latest effort to ease tensions with Beijing

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping said on Monday that China-US ties would impact the "destiny of mankind", as he met with a group of American senators in Beijing. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer is the latest high-level American official to go to China as Washington seeks to ease tensions with Beijing, leading a six-person delegation.

"How China and the United States get along with each other in the face of a world of change and turmoil will determine the future and destiny of mankind," Xi said as he met with Schumer at Beijing's Great Hall of the People. "I have said many times, including to several presidents, that we have 1,000 reasons to improve China-US relations, but not one reason to ruin them," Xi said, adding China-US ties are "the most important bilateral relationship in the world". Schumer, in turn, told Xi that "our countries, together, will shape this century". "That is why we must manage our relationship responsibly and respectfully," he said.

Earlier China's top diplomat Wang Yi said he hoped Washington and Beijing could manage their differences "more rationally". Meeting with Schumer at Beijing's Diaoyutai State Guesthouse, Foreign Minister Wang told the senate delegation he hoped their visit would help the two sides "manage existing dif-

ferences more rationally, helping the relationship between the two countries return to the track of healthy development".

Wang also said he hoped they would "more accurately understand China" after the trip, which he said comes as the world is in a "turbulent period of change". "The crisis in Ukraine has not yet subsided, and warfare has reemerged in the Middle East," he said. "All these various challenges need to be addressed by the international community, and China and the United States should play their due roles," Wang said.

Schumer, in turn, thanked the Chinese delegation for their hospitality, noting there were several issues of "great concern" he was seeking to raise during his visit. He said: "A level playing field for American business and workers" was his delegation's "number one goal". "Holding accountable China-based companies supplying deadly chemicals fueling the fentanyl crisis in America" was another objective, he told Wang, as was "ensuring China does not support Russia's immoral war against Ukraine". "Advancing human rights" was an additional priority, Schumer said.

'Troubled times'

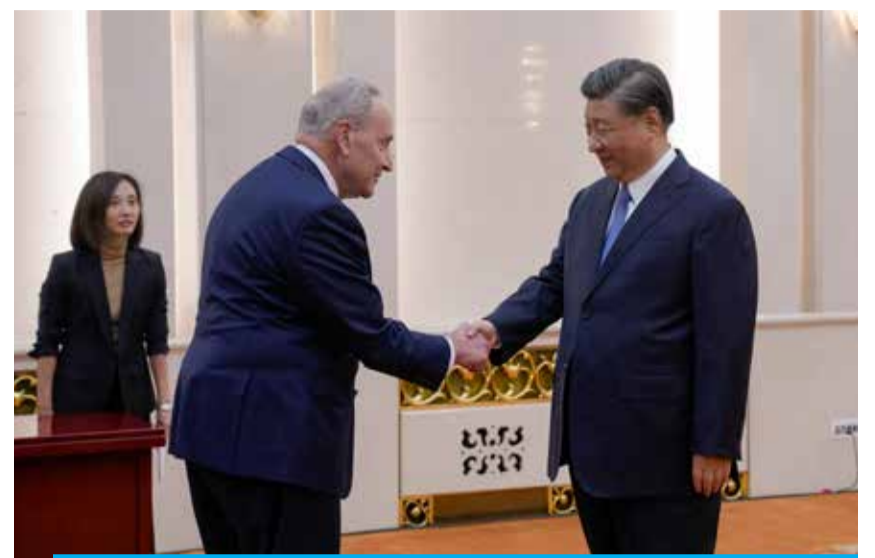
But Schumer also said he was "very disappointed" by a Sunday statement from Beijing's foreign ministry on the escalating violence between Zionists and the Palestinians.

Beijing called Sunday for all sides to show "calm" and "cease fire immediately". It did not explicitly condemn a Palestinian attack that has left hundreds in the Zionist entity dead, instead urging the establishment of a two-state solution to end the violence. "The ongoing events in (the Zionist entity) over the past few days are horrific," Schumer told Wang. "I urge you and the Chinese people to stand with the (Zionists) and condemn these cowardly and vicious attacks."

"The foreign ministry's statement ... showed no sympathy or support for (the Zionists) during these tough, troubled times," he added. In response to a question on Schumer's comments at a regular press briefing, ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said China was "highly concerned about the escalation of conflict". "We are very saddened by civilian casualties caused by the conflict," she said. "We also oppose and condemn actions that harm civilians. Schumer reiterated his call for Beijing to support the occupation in his meeting with Xi, urging the Chinese leader to "stand with (Zionist) people".

Senior meetings

On Monday, Schumer also met with Zhao Leji, the head of the standing committee of China's rubber-stamp National People's Congress. "As the two great powers it is natural we find ourselves in competition



BEIJING: US Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (left) is greeted by Chinese President Xi Jinping before their bilateral meeting on Oct 9, 2023. — AFP

in areas like trade, technology, diplomacy, and more," Schumer told Zhao. "We welcome this competition," Schumer stressed. "We do not seek conflict."

Schumer is the latest high-level US official to visit China as Washington seeks to ease tensions with Beijing, which have flared in recent years over everything from trade to human rights. Secretary of State Antony Blinken,

Treasury and Commerce Secretaries Janet Yellen and Gina Raimondo, as well as climate envoy John Kerry, have all visited China this year. And President Joe Biden on Friday said he may meet Xi in San Francisco in November but added that nothing has been scheduled yet. Wang is expected to visit Washington ahead of the APEC summit. — AFP

What we know about PhilHealth cyberattack

MANILA: Hackers have stolen the personal data of potentially millions of people from the Philippines's national health insurer, which has urged members to change their passwords after the "staggering" cyberattack. The hackers have started releasing files including confidential memos from the stolen data to pressure the government into paying a \$300,000 ransom. Here is what we know so far about the attack, which was discovered by the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) on September 22:

What did the hackers steal?

PhilHealth and the government have yet to say exactly how many people have been impacted, but the insurer warned members in a notice that data such as addresses, phone numbers and insurance IDs was compromised. As of June 30, according to its website, PhilHealth

had more than 59 million direct and indirect contributors — more than half the population of the Philippines.

PhilHealth asked members to monitor credit card transactions and change passwords, especially for financial services. Separately, employee information was also stolen from the targeted computers. The hackers released some of the data on the dark web, showing health memos and other information that a top government official described as confidential. An investigation into the scale of the attack is ongoing, but the National Privacy Commission has described the amount of data stolen as "staggering".

Who are the hackers, and what do they want?

The Philippine government has referred to the attackers as the Medusa group, who have demanded \$300,000 to restore access to PhilHealth computers and delete the stolen data. MedusaLocker, first detected in late 2019, has been used to mainly target healthcare organizations and its creators took particular advantage of the emergency situation during the Covid-19 pandemic, according to a US government report.

The ransomware has been sold to criminal actors, and a US government cybersecu-

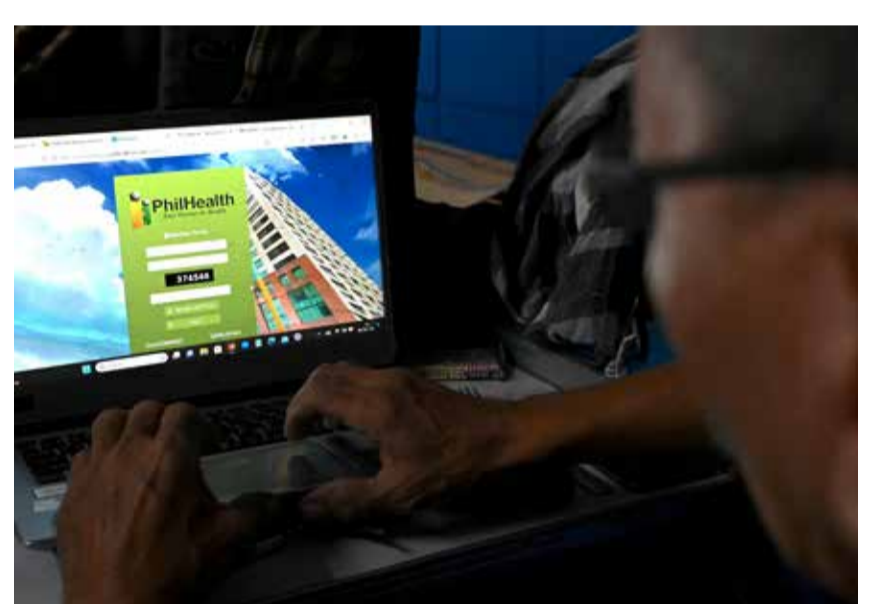
rity advisory said its creator receives a cut of any ransom. It was not clear if the Medusa group identified by the Philippines government is the creator of or an entity that purchased MedusaLocker.

How did they get the data?

On September 22, PhilHealth staff were unable to access a number of computers, which displayed a message saying hackers had locked the machines and encrypted the data. The insurer shut down the affected systems to try and stop the attack from spreading, slowing or entirely shutting down some online services for days. The government has so far not said exactly how hackers got access to the computers. But in interviews with local media last week, senior PhilHealth official Israel Pargas said the insurer did not have an antivirus software at the time of the attack.

How has the government responded?

With a blunt 'No'. The Philippines does not pay ransom in any criminal cases, including cyberattacks, officials have said. However, with hackers releasing more data from the stolen files, calls have grown for the government to conduct an audit of its cyber defenses.



MANILA: A man tries to access the login page of Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) on Oct 9, 2023. — AFP

The National Privacy Commission said Saturday it has started an investigation into any potential lapses and data law violations by PhilHealth. The NPC said its anal-

ysis of 734 GB of stolen data revealed "sensitive personal data", and warned the public that anyone who downloads this information could face criminal charges. — AFP

Zionist entity imposes total...

Continued from Page 1

The Cabinet underlined Kuwait's solidarity with the Palestinian people and the country's unwavering support for their aspirations of statehood based on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as the capital of an independent Palestinian state.

Kuwait's ministry of awqaf and Islamic affairs instructed imams of local mosques to pray for the Palestinian people during daily prayers. "The recent developments and current events in Gaza and the occupied territories require that we pray to Allah Almighty for the protection of the Palestinian people and for their victory against the Zionist occupation and its practices," the ministry said in a circular on Monday.

Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) launched Monday a donations campaign "Aid Palestine" aimed at supporting the Palestinian people and providing them with the necessary relief and medical provisions. KRCS Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer said the campaign to provide hospitals with necessities to treat the wounded, is driven by KRCS' national and humanitarian sense of duty to the Palestinian cause.

Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu threatened that "what Hamas will experience will be difficult and terrible ... We are going to change the Middle East". The skies over Gaza were blackened by plumes of smoke from deafening explosions as Hamas kept launching rockets as far as Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, where missile defense systems fired and air raid sirens blared.

Hamas — whose militants surged into Zionist towns on Saturday, spraying gunfire and dragging off about 100 prisoners of war — claimed on Monday that Zionist air strikes had killed four of the captives. Hamas threatened Monday to kill hostages if the Zionist army carried out air strikes without prior warning targeting residents of the Gaza Strip. "Every targeting of our people without warning will be met with the execution of one of the civilian hostages," the Ezzedine al-Qassem Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, said in a statement.

The Zionist entity said it had called up 300,000 army reservists for its "Swords of Iron" campaign, and truck convoys were moving tanks to the south, where its forces had dislodged the last holdout Hamas fighters from embattled towns. Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said the Zionist entity would impose a "complete siege" on the long blockaded enclave and stressed what this meant for its 2.3 million people: "No electricity, no food, no water, no gas — it's all closed." Palestinians in the impoverished coastal territory braced for what many feared will be a massive Zionist ground attack aiming to defeat Hamas and liberate the hostages. Netanyahu has warned Gaza civilians to get away from all Hamas sites, which he vowed to turn "to rubble".

Middle East tensions have spiked as the Zionist entity's arch enemy Iran and their Lebanese ally Hezbollah have praised the Hamas attack, although Tehran rejected

any role in the military operation. Hamas has called on "resistance fighters" in the occupied West Bank and in Arab and Islamic nations to join its "Operation Al-Aqsa Flood", launched half a century after the 1973 Arab-Zionist war. "The military operation is still continuing," Hossam Badran, a Hamas official, told AFP from Doha, adding that "there is currently no chance for negotiation on the issue of prisoners or anything else".

The United States has pledged "rock solid" support for the Zionist entity and said it would send munitions and military hardware to its key ally and divert an aircraft carrier group to the eastern Mediterranean. The Zionist entity, which has long prided itself on a high-tech military and intelligence edge in its many conflicts, has been shaken to the core by Hamas' unprecedented attack.

The Zionist entity has expressed alarm and revulsion at the Hamas attack across the Gaza border fence — long deemed impregnable and guarded by surveillance cameras, drones, patrols and watchtowers — and the bloody violence they unleashed. Up to 250 bodies were strewn across the site of a music festival in a Negev desert kibbutz, mostly young people, and charred car wrecks were piled up in a sign of the panicked rush to escape, while other revelers were feared to be among the hostages.

Zionists have voiced anger at the intelligence failure that blindsided the nation on a Jewish holiday. "Never before have so many (Zionists) been killed by one single thing, let alone enemy activity in one day," said army spokesman Jonathan Conricus.

The situation was also dire inside Gaza, which has been blockaded by the Zionist entity since Hamas assumed control there 15 years ago, a period that has seen four wars with the Zionist entity before the latest escalation. Air strikes have wrought widespread destruction in Gaza's refugee camp of Jabalia, where charred bodies were pulled from the rubble and relatives wailed in grief. Earlier strikes have levelled residential tower blocks, a large mosque and the territory's major bank building.

More than 120,000 people in Gaza have been displaced amid the carnage, said the United Nations. "The situation is unbearable," said Amal Al-Sarsawi, 37, as she took shelter in a school classroom with her terrified children. Minors in war zone have felt their sense of safety "ripped away" said Jason Lee of charity group Save the Children. "Our teams and their families are terrified, they feel like sitting targets. Children across the region are in constant fear."

Palestinians in the occupied West Bank have rallied in support and clashed with Zionist security forces, leaving 15 Palestinians dead since Saturday. Anti-Zionist activists have demonstrated in many countries while security was stepped up around Jewish temples and school worldwide. The spiraling conflict has sent shock waves around the world amid fears of a wider escalation, sparking a surge in oil prices on fears of tightening supplies.

Western capitals have condemned the attack by Hamas, which the United States and European Union consider a terrorist group. — Agencies

Zionists kill 3 Hezb members...

Continued from Page 1

The mayor of the Lebanese border village of Dhayra said the Zionist entity was shelling the area. "Fields on the outskirts of the village were subjected to intense (Zionist) artillery shelling, preceded by intermittent gunfire," the mayor, Abdullah Al-Gharib, told AFP.

Hezbollah, whose arch-foe is the Zionist entity, had earlier denied any involvement in the border clashes. An AFP photographer at the scene said he saw dozens of Lebanese and Syrian families fleeing as the outskirts of Aita al-Shaab village came under heavy bombardment. The Lebanese army in a statement said the periphery of "Dhayra, Aita al-Shaab and other border areas were subjected to air and artillery bombardment by the (Zionist) enemy". It urged citizens "to take the utmost caution" and avoid border areas.

Andrea Tenenti, the spokesperson for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which acts as a buffer between Lebanon and the Zionist entity, said UNIFIL commander Aroldo Lazaro was "in contact with the involved parties". He said Lazaro had urged them to exercise "maximum restraint" to prevent "further escalation and loss of life".

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said the Zionist entity had expanded bombardment on the same border area with "enemy warplanes intensifying their flights and launching incendiary bombs". The clash comes a day after Hezbollah said it had fired artillery shells and guided missiles at the Zionist entity, "in solidarity" with attacks launched from Gaza by its ally Hamas.

The Zionist entity's army said it hit back on Sunday with artillery into southern Lebanon. In 2006 Hezbollah and the Zionist entity fought a 34-day war that left more than 1,200 dead in Lebanon, mostly civilians, and 160 in the Zionist entity, mostly soldiers. The two countries remain technically at war. The Zionist entity has warned Hezbollah against involvement in the war with Gaza. — AFP



Zionist forces launch artillery fire towards southern Lebanon from the border zone on Oct 9, 2023. — AFP

International



HERAT: Afghan residents clear debris as they look for victims' bodies in the rubble of damaged houses after the earthquakes in Herat province. — AFP photos



An Afghan man stands near a damaged house after the earthquakes in Sarbuland village.

Frantic digging for families still trapped after Afghan quakes

Volunteers use shovels, bare hands as limited aid trickles in

KASHKAK: Rescue workers were digging Monday for families still trapped in the rubble of their ruined homes, two days after a series of earthquakes that killed more than 2,000 people in rural western Afghanistan. "People are trying to search and get their family out of debris," disaster management ministry spokesman Mullah Janan Sayeq told a news conference in the capital, saying reports from the field described "a very bad situation".

Volunteers in trucks packed with food, tents and blankets flocked to hard-to-reach areas 30 kilometers (19 miles) northwest of Herat city, capital of the same-named province, hit by a magnitude 6.3 quake Saturday and eight powerful aftershocks. They also brought shovels to help dig through the rubble of flattened villages as hope dwindled that anyone may still be buried alive.

"Many people have come from far-flung districts to get people out from the rubble," said Khalid, 32, at Kashkak in Zenda Jan district. "Everyone is busy searching for bodies everywhere, we don't know if there are others as well under the debris." Local and national officials gave conflicting counts of the number of dead and injured, but the disaster ministry said Sunday that 2,053 people had died. "We can't give exact numbers for dead and wounded as it is in flux," Sayeq said Monday.

Dust and despair

Amir Hussain, a 33-year-old volunteer rescue worker who dug through the night in the hope of finding survivors, said they took out several dead bodies. "Three of them were little children. They had just come from their school, one of them was killed in the street and two others in their home," he said.

Around him, men in dust-stained clothes hacked at the camel-colored earth — some still looking for bod-

ies, others gouging out graves to bury the dead. One man, dazed with emotion, was led through a maze of burial pits that now pockmark the earth. The grave-diggers paused to watch him pass, then got back to their work, mounding piles of earth over the dead. "We were told that the death toll has reached up to 170," said village rescue worker Maula Dad.

The World Health Organization said more than 11,000 people had been affected from 1,655 families, whilst the UN said "100 percent" of homes in 11 villages were totally destroyed. As winter draws in, providing shelter for residents will be a major challenge for Afghanistan's Taliban government, which seized power in August 2021.

'Crisis on top of crisis'

Taliban authorities have banned women from working for UN and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the country, making assessments of family needs in deeply conservative parts of the country difficult. Save the Children called the quake "a crisis on top of a crisis". "The scale of the damage is horrific. The numbers affected by this tragedy are truly disturbing," said the group's country director Arshad Malik. In Sarboland village, an AFP reporter saw gutted homes, with personal belongings flapping in the wind as women and children camped out in the open. Most rural homes in Afghanistan are made of mud, built around wooden support poles, with little in the way of modern steel reinforcement. Multi-generational extended families generally live under the same roof, meaning disasters such as Saturday's quake can devastate local communities.

'There is nothing'

The Herat region is still grappling with a huge displaced population caused by two decades of war as



Afghans dig graves for the victims' bodies from the earthquakes in Sarbuland village, Zende Jan district of Herat province on Oct 8, 2023.

well as a lingering years-long drought. And Afghanistan in general is suffering from a massive reduction in foreign aid since the Taliban's return to power in 2021.

Nonetheless supplies gradually began to arrive on the scene of the hard-to-reach village including food, water, tents — and some coffins for the dead. In one aid tent, stacks of flat Afghan bread were being handed out while Red Crescent trucks unloaded supplies nearby. Children meandered over blocks of mud-formed

masonry, which were once simple homes, now turned inside-out with belongings such as backpacks, cookware, and toothbrushes out in the open. Along what was once the village's main thoroughfare, a man carried a child-sized bundle cradled in his arms, shrouded in a red fleece blanket. Nearby, a mother lamented her situation. "Everyone from our family is in the hospital. I haven't heard from them," said 40-year-old Fatima. "We are all finished; there is nothing." — AFP



IDLIB: Syrian men stand on the damaged balconies of a building that took a direct hit during bombardment by Syrian pro-regime forces, in the rebel-held northwestern city of Idlib on Oct 7, 2023. — AFP photos



RUMAYLAN: A picture taken on Oct 9, 2023, shows the damage at the Aliyan oil facility in the outskirts of Rumaylan in Syria's Kurdish-controlled northeastern Hasakeh province due to Turkish strikes.

Turkish, regime strikes on Syria's northeast kill 70

QAMISHLI/IDLIB: Turkish attacks in Kurdish-held northeast Syria killed 29 Kurdish security personnel and wounded 28 at an academy for the forces, authorities in the semi-autonomous area said Monday. Turkey has been bombing sites in the area since Thursday, hitting civilian and military targets and infrastructure and causing casualties, according to Kurdish authorities. Separately, Syrian shelling in the country's northeastern rebel strongholds have killed 41 people as of Sunday, a war monitor said. The shelling is in retaliation for a drone attack on a military academy graduation ceremony in Homs on Thursday that killed dozens of military personnel and civilians.

Turkish strikes

In Kurdish held areas, an academy for the Kurds' anti-drug forces was among several targets hit by Turkish attacks overnight, the Kurdish authorities said in a statement, adding that "29 members of the anti-drug forces were killed and 28 others were wounded", some of them critically. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a UK-based monitor, reported that 30 members of the Kurdish internal security forces, known as the Asayish, were killed and 37 others wounded after a Turkish war plane targeted a training center on the outskirts of Al-Malikiyah at midnight. AFP correspondents said that authorities in the area have called for blood donations, while witnesses said that hospitals were full of casualties.

Amid the chaos of Syria's long-running civil conflict, Syria's Kurds have carved out a semi-autonomous area in the country's northeast. Turkey's defense ministry said on Friday it launched a new wave of air strikes in retaliation for an attack in Ankara earlier this month that wounded two security personnel. A branch of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) — listed as a terror group by Ankara and its Western allies — claimed responsibility for the first bombing to hit the Turkish capital since 2016. Turkey launched strikes on PKK positions in northern Iraq hours after the October 1 attack, with Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan saying days later that the assailants "came from Syria and were trained there".

Kurdish denial

The US-backed, Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces spearheaded the battle to dislodge Islamic State group fighters from their last scraps of territory in Syria in 2019. Turkey views the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) that dominate the SDF as an offshoot of the PKK. The SDF, the Kurds' de facto army in the northeast, denied that those behind the Ankara attack had passed through the area.

Turkish bombings had largely subsided over the weekend after strikes hit energy infrastructure, including power stations and oil facilities on Thursday and Friday, killing at least 15 security personnel and civilians, according to the Kurdish authorities. Since 2016, Turkey has carried out successive ground operations to expel Kurdish forces from border areas of northern Syria, and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has threatened a new incursion. Turkey supported early rebel efforts to topple Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and maintains a military presence in northern stretches of the war-torn country which angers Damascus.

Academy retaliation attacks

On Sunday, six people were killed by Syrian regime shelling, taking the number of civilian victims in four days of reprisal attacks on rebel areas to 41, a war monitor said. Twenty children are among the dead in the shelling which came in apparent retaliation for a drone attack on a military academy graduation ceremony in Homs on Thursday that killed dozens of military personnel and civilians. The Syrian army had vowed to "respond with full force" to the attack in Homs, and since Thursday has been bombarding the last rebel stronghold in the northwest of the country.

Three children were among Sunday's civilian victims of artillery fire, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. The other three killed were two women and a man who had been trying to help the wounded, the monitor said. The Observatory, which relies on a network of sources inside Syria for its information, said two fighters from Hayat Tahrir al-Sham group (HTS), led by Al-Qaeda's former Syria branch, have also been killed in the shelling since Thursday.

The attack on the military academy in Homs was one of the bloodiest to hit government forces since the outbreak of the civil war in Syria in 2011. State media said it killed 89 people, including 31 women and five children, and wounded 277. The Observatory reported a higher toll of 123 dead including 54 civilians, of whom 39 were children, and 150 wounded.

No group has claimed responsibility for the Homs attack, but the Syrian army accused "armed terrorist organizations" using drones. HTS is considered a terrorist group by Damascus, as well as by the United States and United Nations. The Observatory also reported Sunday that Russian warplanes launched air strikes northeast of the Latakia area. It said one child was killed in a Russian raid in the Idlib area on Friday. — AFP

Kenya court puts Haiti deployment on temporary hold

NAIROBI: A Kenyan court on Monday temporarily suspended a government plan to send police to Haiti on a UN-backed mission aiming to restore calm to the gang-infested Caribbean nation. The UN Security Council last week approved a Kenyan-led multinational security force for the troubled country, with Nairobi promising 1,000 police officers.

But a Nairobi court granted an interim injunction on Monday in a case brought by opposition politician Ekuru Aukot, who argued the deployment was unconstitutional as it was not backed by any law or treaty. Aukot, a lawyer who helped draft Kenya's revised 2010 constitution, charged that Kenya was deploying its police abroad at a time it had failed to quell insecurity within its own borders. "I am satisfied that the application and petition raise substantial issues of national importance and public interest that require urgent consideration," High Court judge Enoch Mwita ruled. "A conservatory order is hereby issued restraining the respondents from deploying police officers to Haiti or any other country until 24th October 2023," the ruling seen by AFP said.

Haiti, the Western Hemisphere's poorest nation, has been in turmoil for years, with armed gangs taking over parts of the country and unleashing brutal violence, and the economy and public health system also in tatters. Details of Kenya's deployment are still not finalized, with parliament yet to approve the move as required by law.

'Operational support'

The UN-backed mission — initially approved for one year — envisions Kenyan police on the offensive with their Haitian counterparts, who are outnumbered and outgunned by gang members. The force aims to provide "operational support to the Haitian National Police, including building its capacity through the planning and conduct of joint security support operations," according to the UN resolution passed last week. The mission will also aim to create conditions to hold elections, which have not taken place in Haiti since 2016. Kenya's involvement has been criticized at home, with many questioning the wisdom of such a risky mission. Rights watchdogs also say Kenyan police have a history of using sometimes lethal force against civilians, and that they pose an unacceptable risk in Haiti where foreign troops have committed abuses in past interventions. — AFP

Business

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2023

Zain partners with Kuwait Hackathon in collaboration with CODED, NCSC

Contest under the patronage of Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Sabah

KUWAIT: In continuation of the company's efforts to raise cybersecurity awareness in the community and encourage aspiring Kuwaiti coders, Zain on Monday announced its partnership with the Kuwait Hackathon, the nation's biggest cybersecurity competition. The company supports this nationwide initiative in collaboration with its strategic partners at CODED Academy and the National Cybersecurity Center (NCSC). The contest comes under the patronage of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Sabah.

CODED launched this competition in response to the parliamentary initiative proposed by several members of the National Assembly, which was adopted by Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled. The competition is the biggest of its kind in Kuwait and aims to increase awareness of cybersecurity and the protection of data, test the efficiency of sensitive government systems, and upskill national talents in cybersecurity. The competition offers large cash rewards for the winners to encourage aspiring Kuwaiti coders and programs to participate.

Zain is proud to be one of the top strategic partners of CODED Academy throughout the years, a partnership that has contributed to empowering thousands of aspiring programmers and developers into the local market. The company partnered with

CODED yet again for this initiative to solidify the cybersecurity ecosystem of government systems and offer world-class training for national talents.

Many of Zain's corporate sustainability initiatives center around youth and education development, and as digital skills are gaining accelerating importance in the future of education and the economy, the company has put the development of programming and digital competencies of the youth at the forefront of its priorities. Zain is keen on contributing to preparing the next generation of local talents with the skills required by modern markets, most important of which are cybersecurity skills.

The Kuwait Hackathon competition aims at increasing awareness of protecting data and digital systems, as well as encouraging local programmers to develop their skills in order to competently face the highly increasing cybersecurity threats. The competition offers optional workshops for those who wish to refine their skills before entering and competing. The competition offers large cash prizes for winners to encourage every Kuwaiti programmer and coder to participate in defending the nation's cybersecurity ecosystem. The first-place winner will receive KD 20,000, while the second-place winner will receive KD 10,000, and the third-place winner will receive KD 5,000.



Bursa Kuwait partners with HSBC to host 'Asset Managers Day'

KUWAIT: Bursa Kuwait collaborated with HSBC, the multinational British investment bank and one of the largest investment banks in Europe, to host an "Asset Managers Day" for representatives from licensed Kuwaiti investment companies at the bank's headquarters in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates.

The Bursa Kuwait initiative will bring together representatives from eight prominent Kuwaiti investment companies with the Markets and Securities Services (MSS) desk at HSBC on Wednesday, October 11, 2023. The eight Kuwaiti companies were carefully selected by HSBC using rigorous criteria, ensuring that participants had ample time to interact with the representatives from the myriad MSS desks. This personalized approach facilitated fruitful conversations and meaningful connections.

The Asset Managers Day will begin with a presentation from HSBC's esteemed UAE Head of Markets, who will provide valuable insights into current trends and outline the future of the region's capital markets. HSBC MSS management will also hold briefings and presentation to showcase the bank's strategic vision and objectives, outlining key opportunities where the Kuwaiti asset managers could be better aligned. Additionally, one-on-one meetings with the markets division of HSBC will provide a platform for in-depth discussions on areas of interest, business opportunities, and potential collaborations.

Bursa Kuwait's initiative aims to empower prominent and licensed Kuwaiti investment com-



panies to utilize new products and services from world-renowned investment banks in an effort to develop their business practices and strategies. The initiative also helps companies gain expertise and knowledge as well as explore opportunities to collaborate and contribute to the enhancement of the Kuwaiti capital market. Organizing these initiatives forms part of Bursa Kuwait's efforts to positively impact the capital market apparatus as

part of its corporate sustainability strategy. The exchange launched several initiatives with investment institutions from around the world to develop the Kuwaiti capital market and highlight the myriad opportunities it offers to the international investment community. The bourse is steadfast in its dedication to develop a more sustainable, brighter future for the Kuwaiti capital market and its participants.

World oil soars as attack on Zionist entity sparks war

LONDON: World oil prices spiked Monday after Hamas launched a shock deadly attack on Zionist entity, which has declared war on Gaza, sparking fear of an escalating conflict in the crude-rich Middle East. Benchmark oil contracts Brent and WTI soared more than five percent in earlier Asian deals before easing back somewhat.

The worsening crisis sent shockwaves through global equity markets, although energy companies were boosted by higher oil prices which lift their profits and revenues.

The dollar, yen and Swiss franc, as well as gold, won strong support as they benefited from their status as a haven investment in times of heightened geopolitical turmoil. The crisis has fanned concerns about crucial supplies at a time when supply worries are already high owing to Saudi Arabia and Russia's output cuts. It has also renewed fears about the impact on inflation, with energy costs a key driver of spiking prices, giving a fresh headache to central banks as they try to ease up on interest rate hikes to avoid recessions.

The surprise attack and Zionist entity's declaration of war in response to it have left more than 1,100 dead and raised concerns that a potential broadening of the conflict could draw in the United States and Iran. However, the shekel has since tumbled to a seven-year low against the dollar.

"The shocking attacks in the Zionist entity have sent the price of oil soaring, as investors assess the potential for the conflict to disrupt supply in the Middle East, if other countries are drawn in," said Susannah Streeter, head of money and markets at Hargreaves Lansdown. A decidedly risk-off mood also saw investors push into the safety of the dollar, which was up against the pound and euro, as well as the Australian and New Zealand dollars. The yen, considered one of the safest currencies, strengthened against the greenback, though it still remains locked around 11-month lows. Gold meanwhile gained around one percent in value.

Asian stock markets were mixed, with Shanghai dropping on its first day back after a week-long holiday as investors continue to fret over the stuttering Chinese economy. In Europe, London equities climbed with strong gains for oil giants BP and Shell, while Paris and Frankfurt slid. — Agencies

Claudia Goldin wins Nobel prize in Economics

STOCKHOLM: The Nobel prize in economics was on Monday awarded to American economist Claudia Goldin for her research that has helped understand the role of women in the labor market. The 77-year-old Harvard professor, who is the third woman to be awarded the prestigious economics prize, was given the nod "for having advanced our understanding of women's labor market outcomes," the jury said.

"Her research reveals the causes of change, as well as the main sources of the remaining gender gap," it added in a statement. Globally, about 50 percent of women participate in the labor market compared to 80 percent of men, but women earn less and are less likely to reach the top of the career ladder, the prize committee noted. The Nobel prize in economics has the fewest number of women laureates, with just two others since it was first awarded in 1969 -- Elinor Ostrom in 2009 and Esther Duflo in 2019. Goldin has "trawled the archives and collected over 200 years of data from the US," the jury said.

"She studied something that many people, many historians, for instance, simply decided not to study before because they didn't think these data ex-



STOCKHOLM: The winner of the 2023 Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel American economist Claudia Goldin is seen on a display. — AFP

isted," Nobel committee member Randi Hjalmarsson said, calling Goldin "a detective". The jury highlighted that Goldin's work "provided the first comprehensive account of women's earnings and labor market participation through the centuries."

It noted that despite modernization—coupled with economic growth and a rising proportion of women in the labor market—the earnings gap between men and women hardly closed for a long time. "According to Goldin, part of the explanation is that educational decisions, which impact a lifetime of career opportunities, are made at a relatively young age," the jury noted.

While much of the earnings gap

historically could be explained by differences in education and occupational choices, Goldin "has shown that the bulk of this earnings difference is now between men and women in the same occupation, and that it largely arises with the birth of the first child." Goldin's work also demonstrated that "access to the contraceptive pill" played an important role in accelerating the increase in education levels during the 20th century, by "offering new opportunities for career planning," according to the Nobel committee.

"Thanks to Claudia Goldin's groundbreaking research we now know much more about the underlying factors and which barriers may need to be ad-

ressed in the future," Jakob Svensson, Chair of the Committee for the Prize in Economic Sciences, said in a statement. The economics prize is the only prize not among the original five set out by the will of Alfred Nobel, who died in 1896. It was instead created through a donation from the Swedish central bank in 1968, and detractors have thus dubbed it "a false Nobel". However, just like the other science prizes the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences selects the laureate and the nomination process follows the same procedures.

Along with a prize sum of 11 million Swedish kronor (about \$1 million), the Nobel comes with a gold medal and a diploma which laureates receive from King Carl XVI Gustaf at a lavish prize ceremony in Stockholm. The prestigious Peace Prize on Friday went to imprisoned Iranian women's rights campaigner Narges Mohammadi.

Earlier in the week, Norwegian playwright Jon Fosse was rewarded in literature. The chemistry prize was awarded to Moungi Bawendi, Louis Brus and Alexei Ekimov for their work on nanoparticles called quantum dots. In physics, Anne L'Huillier, Pierre Agostini and Ferenc Krausz were honored for using ultra-quick light flashes that enable the study of electrons inside atoms and molecules. The medicine prize, the first to be announced, went to a duo—Katalin Kariko and Drew Weissman—for their groundbreaking technology that paved the way for mRNA COVID-19 vaccines. — 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. — AFP

Business

Gulf Bank's capital increase subscription begins Oct 29

Bank to increase issued and paid-up capital by KD 26.1m through public offering

KUWAIT: Following all regulatory approvals, Gulf Bank announced that the subscriptions period for the capital increase will start from Sunday (Oct 29, 2023) until Sunday (Nov 12, 2023). Gulf Bank has obtained the approval of the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Capital Market Authority to increase its issued and paid-up capital by KD 26.1 million through a public offering, with rights issue of 260,869,565 new ordinary shares at a nominal value of 100 fils, in addition to a share premium of 130 fils per share, for a total offering price of 230 fils per share. The total proceeds will result in an increase in the Bank's capital base by KD 60 million.

It is noteworthy that Gulf Bank has appointed Kamco Invest as the Joint



Jassim Mustafa Boodai

Lead Issuance Manager and Subscription Agent and Gulf Bank itself is also acting as the Joint Lead Issuance Manager and Subscription Agent. On this occasion, Gulf Bank's Chairman, Jassim Mustafa Boodai, said: "With this additional capital, we are well-equipped to strengthen our regulatory capital, invest in our future strategic growth and continue providing exceptional products and

service to our customers" Boodai further pointed that as of 30 June 2023, Gulf Bank Capital Adequacy Ratio was 16.1 percent and the Tier 1 Ratio was 13.9 percent, both above their regulatory requirement. Thus, total proceeds from the Capital Increase will further enhance the Bank's regulatory capital ratios. Boodai also highlighted that Gulf Bank remains an 'A' rated bank from three major credit rating agencies.

Concluding his statement, Jassim Mustafa Boodai expressed his appreciation to all the regulatory authorities for their cooperation in completing the necessary approvals, namely: The Central Bank of Kuwait, the Capital Markets Authority, Boursa Kuwait, as well as the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.



IMF, World Bank hold first meetings in Africa in 50 years

MARRAKESH, Morocco: The IMF and World Bank began talks in Morocco Monday in their first annual meetings on African soil in 50 years, under pressure to reform to better aid poor nations blighted by debt and climate change.

The International Monetary Fund and World Bank traditionally hold their annual gathering of finance ministers and central bank governors outside their Washington headquarters every three years.

The southern Moroccan city of Marrakesh was supposed to host it in 2021, but the gathering was postponed twice because of the COVID pandemic. A

powerful earthquake that killed nearly 3,000 people in the region south of Marrakesh last month threatened to derail the event again, but the government decided it could go ahead.

"The country has gone through a very tough time just a month ago," IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said as she opened a panel discussion titled "Africa Inspired". "But it came out of it more united, more resilient," said Georgieva, who earlier visited schoolchildren in the Atlas region whose schools were destroyed but were now back in class or in temporary facilities.

The IMF and World Bank last held their meetings in Africa in 1973, when Kenya hosted the event and some nations were still under colonial rule. Half a century later, the continent faces an array of challenges ranging from conflict to a series of military coups to unrelenting poverty to natural disasters. "We're here, Africa," Georgieva said at the panel discussion featuring three women entrepreneurs from the continent.

"It was of course right that we would look for inspiration coming from the incredible young women on this continent," she said. Tougher discussions await officials at the meetings this week. In a symbolic move, the IMF and World Bank are poised to give Africa a third seat on their executive boards, which Georgieva has said would give the continent a "stronger voice". But the thorniest issues revolve around money.

The main contributors are not in favor of a capital increase as it would force them to put up more funds and would give greater influence to emerging powers such as China and India.

The World Bank, however, is expected to confirm plans to boost lending by \$50 billion over the next decade through balance sheet changes. World Bank President Ajay Banga wants to go even further and raise capacity by \$100 billion or as much as \$125 billion through contributions from advanced economies. But the issue is unlikely to be finalized in Marrakesh.

The global lenders may use the meetings to reform their quota systems. The quotas, which are based on a country's economic performance, determine how much funding they should provide to the IMF, their voting power and the maximum amount of loans they can obtain.

A dozen activists protested outside the venue, holding a banner that read "World Bank end fossil finance" and signs including one that said "dignity not debt". NGOs say the austerity-driven solutions offered by the IMF and World Bank are only widening the gap between the rich and the poor in the developing world. Campaigners say global lenders should focus instead on cancelling the debts of the poorest nations and imposing taxes on the rich.

Oxfam said 57 percent of the world's poorest countries have to cut public spending by a total of \$229 billion over the next five years. "The World Bank and IMF are returning to Africa for the first time in decades with the same old failed message," said Oxfam International executive director Amitabh Behar. IMF is forcing poorer countries into a starvation diet of spending cuts, driving up inequality and suffering," he added. —AFP

Saudi announces domestic greenhouse gas credit scheme

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia on Monday unveiled a scheme to allow companies to purchase credits offsetting greenhouse gas emissions, part of the Gulf kingdom's stated goal of hitting net-zero emissions by 2060. The Greenhouse Gas Crediting and Offsetting Mechanism (GCOM), set to launch in early 2024, "aims to increase cooperation among national entities seeking to fulfill their climate ambitions by helping to mobilize finance in all sectors for a variety of projects and activities", according to its website.



RIYADH: Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman addresses the opening session of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Climate Week, a UN-organized conference hosted in the Saudi capital Riyadh, on October 8, 2023. — AFP

The initiative was announced at the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Climate Week, a UN-organized conference hosted in the Saudi capital Riyadh. It was designed to align with Article 6 of the 2015 Paris Agreement, which allows countries to cooperate on hitting emissions reduction targets, including by transferring carbon credits. Saudi officials on Monday described GCOM as a domestic mechanism, though Maria Al-Jishi, international policy adviser at the Saudi energy ministry, said it "caters to the possibility or the potential for future international transfers if Saudi Arabia chooses to engage".

Carbon credits have become popular tools globally for companies seeking to offset their carbon emissions and proclaim their commitment to the environment. But the carbon credit industry has faced numerous scandals, revealing a landscape rife with opportunities for greenwashing—or making deceptive claims of good environmental practice. Walt Disney, JP Morgan Bank and other major corporations have been accused of purchasing carbon credits from forest protection projects in areas that were not actually at risk of deforestation. Al-Jishi told a panel on Monday that Saudi officials were keen to implement safeguards against "double counting and double issuance". Saudi Arabia announced in 2021 that it was targeting net zero emissions by 2060. The world's biggest oil exporter says it will reach that goal "in a manner that preserves the Kingdom's leading role in enhancing the security and stability of global energy markets". —AFP



MARRAKESH: Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Kristalina Georgieva (left), Morocco's Minister of Economy and Finance Nadia Fettah and the Governor of Morocco's Central Bank Abdellatif Jouahri (right) attend the first day of the annual meetings of the IMF and the WBG in Marrakesh on October 9, 2023. — AFP

Saudi and India to cooperate on e-grid interconnection

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia and India have signed an initial agreement to cooperate in the areas of electrical grid interconnection, green/clean hydrogen, and supply chains, Saudi state news agency SPA reported.

The agreement was signed by Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman, Saudi Arabia's Minister of Energy, and Raj Kumar Singh, India's Minister of Power and New and Renewable Energy, during the UN Mena Climate Week 2023 in Riyadh on Sunday. The agreement aims to establish a general framework for cooperation between the parties in electrical interconnection and electricity exchange during peak times and emergencies, according to the SPA report.

Saudi Arabia and India signed a preliminary agreement on energy cooperation when Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman visited New Delhi for the G20 Summit and state visit from September 9 to 11.

The countries will also cooperate in the production of green/clean hydrogen and renewable energy, and to establish secure and reliable supply chains of materials used in the hydrogen and renewable energy sectors, the report said. "This would be in accordance with the countries' respective capabilities, applicable laws, and regulations."

Last month, Saudi Arabia and India signed more than 50 agreements covering sectors including information and communication technology, entrepreneur-

ship, chemicals, energy and advanced manufacturing to strengthen their economic ties. The agreements were signed during the India-Saudi Investment Forum in New Delhi on the sidelines of an official state visit by Prince Mohammed for the G20. The Ministry of Investment of Saudi Arabia is also in the process of opening a country office in India to streamline the process for Indian companies to invest in the kingdom.

The two sides also agreed to set up a task force to help identify and channel investments worth \$100 billion in the West Coast refinery project in India's western state of Maharashtra. New Delhi planned to set up the \$50 billion mega refinery project with a capacity of 60 million tons a year, with co-operation between Saudi Aramco, ADNOC and companies in India.

The project was delayed by the COVID pandemic and concerns over the environmental effects of land acquisition for the initiative. The preliminary agreement signed at the UN Mena Climate Week included co-operation in conducting studies for electrical grid interconnection; co-development of green/clean hydrogen and renewable energy projects; and collaborating with entities and companies specialized in electrical interconnection and green/clean hydrogen, SPA added. At the G20 meeting, the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor was announced. It involves collaboration between the US, India, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, France, Germany, Italy, and the EU. The agreement is hoped to boost regional investment. India and Saudi Arabia are seeking to strengthen economic ties.

India is Saudi Arabia's second-largest trading partner, amounting to 196.7 billion Saudi riyals (\$52.45 billion) and recording an annual growth rate of 51 per cent. — Agencies

US OKs equipment exports to S Korean chip plants in China

SEOUL: The United States will allow the export of equipment to South Korean semiconductor factories in China, Seoul's presidential office said Monday, removing a major source of uncertainty for the country's massive chip sector. Tech giant Samsung and smaller rival SK Hynix were nearing the end of one-year waivers from US export restrictions aimed at China's burgeoning semiconductor sector. Washington and its allies have curtailed China's access to major markets and advanced tech—including chip-making—over fears its products could give Beijing the ability to spy on their networks.

The United States announced export restrictions last October on chips used in supercomputing, as well as stricter requirements on the sale of equipment used to produce semiconductors. The restrictions triggered concerns that the production of advanced chips at Chinese plants operated by Samsung Electronics and SK Hynix could be disrupted. But with their waivers set to end, the US government has designated the companies' factories "verified end users". Choi Sang-mok, senior presidential secretary for economic affairs, told reporters Monday.

The decision, which eliminates the need for a separate export approval process, means the "most significant trade issue of our semiconductor companies has been resolved," Choi said. It had "significantly alleviated companies' uncertainties over their assembly lines in China", he added. Semiconductors have become a flashpoint issue between the United States and China, which are locked in a fierce battle over access to chip-making technology and supplies. Last week, Taiwan said it had launched a probe to determine if four local firms had violated US sanctions in helping Chinese tech giant Huawei build semiconductor factories.

Bloomberg reported the companies involved were helping Huawei develop an "under-the-radar network" of Chinese chip plants. The news emerged as US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, testifying before Congress, described reports that Huawei was manufacturing advanced chips as "incredibly disturbing". In June, a former Samsung executive was charged with stealing company secrets worth hundreds of millions of dollars to set up a copycat chip factory in China. Samsung Electronics is one of the world's largest producers of chips and smartphones, and its parent group's turnover is equivalent to about one-fifth of South Korea's GDP. Like many of the world's biggest chipmakers, a large portion of its production is based in China. —AFP



Solar electric lines at a park in Rajasthan. Saudi Arabia and India signed more than 50 agreements in September covering sectors including energy. — AFP

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Business

Boubyan Bank safest Islamic financial institution in Kuwait: Global Finance

Bank second safest in GCC and on the list of 'Safest 10 Banks in Mideast'

KUWAIT: Boubyan Bank made a new achievement by being on Global Finance's list as the 'Safest Islamic Financial Institution in Kuwait', and the second GCC-wide. Moreover, the bank managed for the first time to be on the list for the 'Safest 10 Banks in the Middle East', which includes both Islamic and conventional banks, thus positioning itself among top players in the region in 2023.

In its assessment and ranking of the safest banks, Global Finance's assessment was based on long-term credit ratings of banks by international credit rating agencies such as Moody's, Fitch, and Standard & Poor's, in addition to other criteria pertinent to the total assets of the list of the Top 500 Banks worldwide.

On this occasion, Abdul-Salam Al-Saleh, Chief Executive Officer – Corporate Banking, Finance, Treasury & Legal, stated that he took pride in that achievement and the noticeable progress in international rankings, which served as an international recognition confirming the bank's abilities and success in taking all internationally recognized precautions and financial measures necessary to maintain the robustness and consistency of the bank's assets.

He added: "With Boubyan Bank's leadership and assuming the second place, compared with the 4th place in the same list of last year, we could say that the bank managed to reinforce its position and leadership in the local markets, especially that 2023 has been, and will continue to be, a year of many challenges for the banking sector; however, we are confident of stability and continuing to make further achievements with high efficiency."

"Placing Boubyan Bank on the list for the Safest 10 Banks in the region, both Islamic and conventional banks, and assuming the 9th place is a huge achievement, which is no less significant than any other ranking received by the bank recently; rather, this complements the success of our strategy for sustainable growth and maintaining the highest levels of excellence and innovation across all sectors,



Abdul-Salam Al-Saleh

while reinforcing our vision of global leadership in the Islamic financing and banking industry," he added. Al-Saleh went on to stress: "These rankings are not a coincidence; rather, they are the fruit of efforts exerted over the past years towards a solid strategy based on achieving the highest levels of innovation, excellence, and gaining customers' trust, in addition to setting digital transformation

strategies in a manner that reinforces the change of the traditional concept of banking."

"This ranking is particularly important owing to the significance and strength of the awarding entity, which is renowned for its fairness, strength, and reliance on numbers and confirmed reports as a reference, especially that this ranking reflects the gradual growth of Boubyan Bank and its climbing to the third place in the local market," he pointed out.

The best in safety and stability

Global Finance stressed in its report that stability and safety continue to top the current priorities in the world of finance and business, and for investors around the world. This shows the importance of this list which names the safest banks in the world. Global Finance stated that many investors and customers around the world look for the creditworthiness and the long-term ratings of banks as a main criterion to gauge the safety level of the banks they deal with.

The main list for the best Islamic banks in the GCC included three Kuwaiti banks led by Boubyan Bank, in addition to three Qatari banks, two banks from the UAE, and another two banks from the KSA.

Safest Islamic Banks in the GCC - 2nd

Top 100 companies

Recently, the bank has joined the list of Forbes Top 100 Listed Companies in the Middle East, which crowns many years full of achievements and successes that took the bank to the top of the pyramid of the Kuwaiti banking industry. This list, prepared annually by Forbes, is made against a set of financial criteria, the most significant of which are market valuation, sales, total assets, and profits of the year 2022.

Key financial indicators' growth

Al-Saleh went on to add: "Boubyan Bank managed to stand out as a special case among Kuwaiti banks and other banks in the region owing to the great growth and improvements witnessed by the bank over the past years, placing it among the top players of Kuwaiti and regional banks, being a fully-fledged bank which occupies the third place among Kuwaiti banks in terms of many financial indicators.

Over the past 13 years, the bank's assets grew from \$3 billion (KD 1 billion) to \$26 billion (KD 8 billion). Furthermore, over the past five years, the

Safest Banks Middle East - 9th

bank's operating profits grew from \$277 million (KD 85 million) to \$328 million (KD 101 million), while the bank's share of Islamic financing grew from 8.55 percent to 11.26 percent, and its share of deposits grew from 8.13 percent to 10.71 percent.

During the period from 2015 to date, the bank has managed to improve its position among Kuwaiti banks, with its market share of total assets improving from 8th to 3rd place, and it further improved in terms of financing from 8th to 3rd place. Boubyan's plans focus on international expansion, and the bank managed to increase its shareholding in the Bank of London and the Middle East "BLME" from 28 percent to 72 percent now. The results of the focus on service paid off as the bank consistently received the highest rating of customer satisfaction across banks in the country, leading it to be named the Best Islamic Bank in Customer Service for 13 consecutive years.

OPEC sees no peak in global oil demand on horizon

PARIS: Despite mounting efforts to limit climate change, the OPEC oil cartel said Monday it expects demand for crude to continue to grow for the next two decades.

In its 2023 annual report, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries forecasts demand for crude to reach 116 million barrels per day (mbd) by 2045 under its main scenario, a 16.5 percent increase from the 99.4 mbd in 2022.

That is an increase of 6 mbd from its estimate last year. Oil demand has "the potential to be even higher", said OPEC chief Haitham Al-Ghais. "What is clear is that the world will continue to need more energy in the decades to come," he emphasized in the forward to the report—which comes just eight weeks before the next UN climate conference, COP28, in Dubai.

At the conference dozens of countries will try to impose the adoption of the objective of an end to the use of fossil fuels like oil, natural gas and coal. According to OPEC, whose 13 member states include Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states and Venezuela, oil demand will be driven by emerging and developing nations, with India in pole position. Meanwhile, it sees oil demand in the OECD club of advanced economies declining from 2025. In order to meet this demand OPEC says additional investment in fossil fuel production will be needed, putting the figure at \$14



OPEC Secretary-General Haitham Al-Ghais

trillion by 2045, or roughly \$610 billion per year.

"It is vital that these are made; it is beneficial for both producers and consumers," said Al-Ghais, a Kuwaiti oil executive. "Calls to stop investments in new oil projects are misguided and could lead to energy and economic chaos," he warned, in criticism aimed at the International Energy Agency (IEA). In 2021, the IEA surprised the world and shocked oil exporting nations by calling for a halt in new investment in fossil fuel production to attain carbon neutrality by 2050.

Investments 'lagging'

The IEA, which is part of the OECD, recently confirmed that it sees no new fossil fuel projects as necessary in the long-term. Last month, it forecast for the first time that world demand for oil, gas and coal will peak this decade, and dropping by 24 mbd by 2050 due to spectacular growth of cleaner energy technologies and electric cars. Meanwhile,

OPEC says it takes a "realistic approach" in its main forecast scenario. "What is clear is that a sustainable energy and economic future for all requires all energy sources, all relevant technologies, unprecedented investment and collaboration, and with energy security, economic development and reducing emissions going hand-in-hand," it said.

"There is no single solution to meet growing global energy needs," it added. OPEC's view dovetails with that of the president of the upcoming COP28 climate talks, Sultan Al-Jaber of OPEC-member country United Arab Emirates. "We cannot unplug the energy system of today before we build the new system of tomorrow," he said on Sunday.

Al-Jaber believes that the world needs to start with a tripling of renewable energy production before beginning the transition away from fossil fuels. OPEC meanwhile noted that while advanced nations have set targets for expanding renewable and nuclear power to meet their energy security and sustainability goals, "these ambitious targets increasingly stand at odds with realities on the ground".

It said the required investments to achieve these targets "are significantly lagging".

OPEC elaborated two additional forecast scenarios. One assumes fast expansion of renewables which sees global oil demand roughly stabilizing at its current level for the next decade before beginning a slow decline. The other sees countries putting a priority on economic growth, results in an increase in global oil demand of 6.3 mbd on top of the reference scenario. OPEC also backed developing technological solutions to reduce emissions, such as carbon capture and storage. While the possibility of removing carbon from emissions appeals to industry, the technology is far from maturity. — AFP

German industrial output dips again in August

FRANKFURT: German industrial production declined for a fourth straight month in August, official data showed Monday, adding to signs that Europe's largest economy will end the year in a recession. Output fell by 0.2 percent on the month before, according to adjusted figures from statistics agency Destatis, following a drop of 0.6 percent in July. Analysts surveyed by FactSet had predicted a smaller dip of 0.1 percent.

The August disappointment was driven by a 6.6-percent fall in energy production and a 2.4-percent fall in the construction sector. There was better news for the automotive sector, where output increased by 7.6 percent. Germany's crucial industrial sector has been facing a series of headwinds in recent months, as inflation and high energy prices combined with a weakening Chinese economy take their toll on the export powerhouse.

The German economy tipped into a recession at the start of the year and stagnated in the second quarter. A string of weak economic data since then has added to fears of a prolonged downturn. Germany's manufacturing output remains "very subdued", said Capital Economics economist Franziska Palmas. "And we expect further drops in the coming months." The International Monetary Fund has forecast that Germany will be the only major advanced economy to shrink in 2023. The country's leading economic institutes expect gross domestic product to contract by 0.6 percent this year. The German economy ministry will unveil its own forecasts on Wednesday. — AFP

Claudia Goldin: Sleuth of the gender pay gap

PARIS: Claudia Goldin has long thought of herself as a kind of detective within economics, employing tools across academic disciplines in a quest to examine how women fit into the workforce. On Monday, Goldin, the first woman to be tenured at Harvard University's economics department, attained the "dismal science" most exalted honor: the Nobel Prize for Economics.

Reached by telephone, Goldin told AFP the Nobel is a "very important prize, not just for me, but for the many people who work in this field and who are trying to understand why there is so much change, but there are still large differences" in pay. In her sleuthing, Goldin, 77, has sought to reveal the reasons for the long-standing gender pay gap, including the challenges women have encountered in balancing family and professional responsibilities since the early twentieth century.

Goldin has focused on five periods: the 1900-1920 period when the few women who garnered college degrees had to choose between work and family, followed by the 1920-1940 phase when women left the workforce and started families during the Great Depression. In the years after World War II through to about 1960, women were discouraged from entering the workforce instead of raising families. But their daughters, raised in the 1970s and 1980s, benefited from the birth control pill, with more women choosing careers and more than a quarter not having children.

The most recent generation of women is still navigating these dynamics, benefiting from evolving technology that has permitted greater flexibility on when to have children, but still confronting a grinding pay gap. In her 2021 book, "Career and family: women's century-long journey towards equity," Gold-



Claudia Goldin

in explored the effect of what she termed "greedy work"—jobs with inflexible or unpredictable schedules that pay better.

Through her research, Goldin determined that women were more likely to abandon such jobs, while men are more likely to be enticed by the higher pay. "Under these conditions, women will shift to a firm with less demanding hours or leave the workforce," Goldin said in a 2021 interview with Harvard Business Review. Goldin described her unorthodox approach in an autobiographical essay for a 1998 book on economists at work. "There has often been no agenda or program, no particular theory that must be followed," she wrote. "Yet the subconscious produces nagging questions."

In the years after graduate school, Goldin focused initially on the economic history of the South after the Civil War. But around 1980, Goldin began to "realize that something was missing" from the study of economics: the wife and mother. "I neglected her because the sources had. "Women were in the data when young and single and often when widowed," she wrote. "But their stories were faintly heard after they married, for they were often not producing goods and services in sectors that were, or would be, part of (gross national product)." — AFP

Evergrande's EV unit resumes trading after suspension

HONG KONG: Shares in the electric vehicle arm of Chinese property giant Evergrande resumed trading on Monday after more than a week's suspension and a halt on its new share deal triggered by a criminal probe against its boss last month.

Trading in Hong Kong was only open in the afternoon on Monday as the city's bourse was closed for the morning session due to a typhoon. Evergrande Vehicle's shares dipped slightly before climbing more than seven percent by 2.10 pm. It dropped by nearly nine percent at the close of trading.

Trading of all three Evergrande companies listed in Hong Kong was halted on September 28, when the behemoth confirmed its founder and chairman Xu Jiayin was suspected of "illegal crimes", follow-

ing reports of him being held by police. Evergrande Vehicle was the last to resume trade, one week later than Evergrande Group and Evergrande Property Services, as its deal to issue 6.18 billion new shares for a total consideration of HK\$3.89 billion (\$496.72 million) was suspended.

With an estimated debt of \$328 billion at the end of June, Evergrande has become a symbol of China's ballooning property crisis, which has seen several high-profile firms engulfed in a sea of debt, fuelling fears about the country's wider economy and a possible global spillover. And the company warned last month it was unable to issue new debt because its subsidiary, Hengda Real Estate Group, was being investigated. Key meetings planned for debt restructuring were shelved.

Its property arm missed a key bond payment last week, and Chinese financial website Caixin reported that former executives had been detained. A Hong Kong court is set to continue the hearing for a winding-up petition lodged by Evergrande's offshore creditors later this month. — AFP

Citigroup to sell its China retail business to HSBC

NEW YORK: US bank Citigroup is to sell its consumer banking business in China to Asia-focused banking giant HSBC, it announced on Monday.

The deal, which will be finalized in the first half of 2024, will include the transfer of around \$3.6 billion in assets under management and bank deposits to HSBC, Citi said in a statement. Citi's institutional client business in China will not be affected. "We are taking important steps forward in exiting our consumer banking business in China and continue

to make progress in our divestitures as part of our strategy to simplify Citi," Titi Cole, Citi's Head of Legacy Franchises, said in the statement.

"This is an excellent outcome for our local consumer wealth colleagues and clients in China," added Cole. Citigroup in 2021 unveiled plans to significantly downsize its global consumer banking footprint as it shifted its focus to wealth management and away from retail banking in places where it has a small presence. It said it would exit consumer banking across 14 markets including in Asia, Europe and the Middle East. It has since then shuttered its retail banking activities in eight markets, including Australia, India, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam, the statement said. Citi first launched in China in 1902 and was one of the first global banks to incorporate locally in 2007. — AFP

Lifestyle



These pictures show members of the Jing Sheng Opera performing onstage.



TAIWAN SINGERS WON'T LET CURTAIN FALL ON HAKKA OPERA

Dressed in a robe fringed with beaded tassels, traditional Taiwanese opera singer Jen Chieh-li applies the final touches to her heavily painted face as she prepares to take the stage. The 34-year-old is a member of Jing Sheng Opera, one of a handful of troupes in Taiwan still staging traditional dramas in the Hakka language—a dialect that is not widely spoken on the island because of its dwindling ethnic population. Taiwan's traditional Hakka opera, usually performed at religious festivals, dates back to the late Qing Dynasty and was brought to the island by migrants from mainland China.

Even as its popularity dwindles, Jen, who has trained at a drama school since the age of 12, said she would not give up the fading art. "I could find a regular job but it would be a waste of all the time and effort I have devoted to studying and performing Hakka opera," she told AFP. That sweltering night in northern Taoyuan county, Jen was performing "Legend of the White Snake", a famous Chinese folk tale about a romance between a man and a serpent spirit.

Around 100 people, mostly elderly, sat on plastic stools to watch the show on a makeshift stage outside a temple



This picture shows a member of the Jing Sheng Opera helping a colleague prepare for their performance while backstage during the first day of the Hakka Festival at the Yimin temple in Taoyuan.

in a reflection of Hakka opera's struggle to capture the attention of a shrinking audience. "It is a niche performance art as many people don't even understand the language," said Chiang Yu-ling, who founded the Jing Sheng Opera with her husband 19 years ago. There are only eight Hakka troupes in Taiwan that can keep regular staff, albeit with financial support from the government and private sponsors, according to

Chiang. She is counting on new blood, such as Jen, who is studying for a master's degree in performance art, to help bring in more and younger audiences. "My husband and I are in our 50s and we have limited ideas. We hope to get more young people on board... to make Hakka opera more different," Chiang told AFP.

'People are nostalgic'

Hakka shares similarities with Peking opera, the most dominant form of traditional Chinese opera that has UNESCO heritage recognition, but language is one of the main reasons for its flagging popularity. In Taiwan, where Mandarin is widely spoken, Hakka people make up less than 20 percent of its 23 million population, and even those within the community are no longer fluent in the dialect. "My father's generation speak mostly Mandarin already and I speak very little Hakka," said Louis Lo, 30, who was accompanying his elderly relatives to the show.

"The opera doesn't appeal to young people due to the language barrier," he told AFP. To attract more fans, Jing Sheng's troupe has incorporated modern elements into traditional performances. One example is their update of a Chinese folk drama



This picture shows members of the Jing Sheng Opera posing for a selfie backstage during the first day of the Hakka Festival. — AFP photos

involving a dragon princess and her human lover, which now includes street dance sequences, fire acts and acrobatics. "We are getting the audiences to know Hakka opera through more innovative performances and hopefully they would also want to watch the traditional ones," Jen said. Despite their dwindling audience numbers, fellow performer Shih Yutsen, 31, said the art form "definitely won't vanish".

"There may be fewer Hakka operas but people are nostalgic," she told AFP. "They will recall the past all of a sudden and they will want to watch it." Besides, Jen said, a show ticket costs as little as \$200 Taiwan dollars (\$6.30) with student discounts. "We often say it just takes the same amount of money to buy a Starbucks to support traditional art, to keep it alive," she said. —AFP



This picture shows a member of the Jing Sheng Opera looking on backstage before a performance during the first day of the Hakka Festival.



This picture shows band members of the Jing Sheng Opera rehearsing during the first day of the Hakka Festival.



This picture shows spectators watching a performance by the Jing Sheng Opera on the first day of the Hakka Festival.



Creative director, Chemena Kamali

Chloe names new designer Chemena Kamali

French luxury brand Chloe announced Monday it had appointed a new creative director, Chemena Kamali, in the latest reshuffle among the big houses. Born in Germany in 1981, Kamali was previously women's design director at Saint Laurent and worked for Chloe early in her career. She replaces Gabriela Hearst, who held her last show for the brand at Paris Fashion Week last month, having been in charge only three years.

"I have always had a deep connection with Chloe since the day I walked through its doors more than 20 years ago. This return is both natural and very personal," Kamali said in a statement from Chloe's Swiss parent group Richemont group. The fashion world has seen a lot of reshuffling in recent months. While Louis Vuitton went with a mega-celebrity approach by appointing musician Pharrell Williams to its top post, most brands are preferring low-profile but technically accomplished artisans. —AFP

A new 'Exorcist' takes possession of North America box office

Fifty years after the original, newly released "The Exorcist: Believer" topped the North American box office this weekend with an estimated \$27.2 million in ticket sales, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations said Sunday. Analyst David A. Gross called that "a good opening for a horror sequel," the best of any of the "Exorcist" movies, despite what he said were poor reviews and lukewarm audience scores for Blumhouse and Universal's Halloween-timed film.

Like the original, "Believer" features possessed victims convulsing, covered in sores and speaking in tongues. It also has a decidedly interfaith exorcism. Leslie Odom Jr. and Ann Dowd star, with an appearance by Ellen Burstyn from the 1973 original. "Believer" was to have opened on Friday the 13th, but the studio moved up its release to avoid conflicting with the release that day of "Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour," a concert film certain to generate big numbers, Variety reported.



Last weekend's box office leader, Paramount's family-friendly "Paw Patrol: The Mighty Movie," slipped slightly to second, at \$11.8 million for the Friday-through-Sunday period. The Paw pups, using new superpowers as they fight to protect their city, are voiced by actors Taraji P. Henson, Chris Rock, Serena Williams and McKenna Grace.

In third, also down one spot, is Lionsgate's horror flick "Saw X," at \$8.2 million. This latest in the "Saw" series, again with Tobin Bell as the infamous Jigsaw, has received strongly positive reviews. The fourth spot, down from third, went to 20th Century sci-fi thriller "The Creator," at \$6.1 million. John David Washington, Gemma Chan, Ken Watanabe and Allison Janney play humans in a world at war with artificial intelligence.

Holding steady in fifth was Fathom Events' faith-based movie "The Blind," at \$3.1 million. It portrays the real-life struggles of swamp-dwelling reality TV star Phil Robertson with addiction and romance. Rounding out the top 10 were: "A Haunting in Venice" (\$2.7 million) "The Nun II" (\$2.6 million) "Dumb Money" (\$2.2 million) "The Equalizer 3" (\$1.8 million) "Hocus Pocus: 30th Anniversary" (\$1.5 million)—AFP

Turner makes a bold fashion statement amid Jonas divorce and outings with Swift

Sophie Turner may be feeling a particular kind of way as she navigates her divorce from Joe Jonas. On October 8, the Game of Thrones alum shared a rare and cryptic Instagram Stories post one month after the couple broke their silence about their breakup on social media. Sophie posted a photo of



what appeared to be her wrist wearing a friendship bracelet spelling "Fearless" that is reminiscent of the ones fans have sported at concerts during her friend Taylor Swift's Eras tour in honor of the singer's 2008 album by the name.

The actress, 27, had herself worn a slew of other friendship bracelets while supporting Joe at the Jonas Brothers' concert at Yankee Stadium in New York City in August, as seen in an Instagram post she shared weeks before he filed for divorce September 5. Later, the pair said in a joint statement on Instagram, "After four wonderful years of marriage we have mutually decided to amicably end our marriage. — www.eonline.com

Eminem and Hailie Jade are the ultimate father-daughter team at NFL game

The "Lose Yourself" rapper and his daughter Hailie Jade showcased their hometown pride while attending the Detroit Lions vs Carolina Panthers game on October 8. "Detroit strong!!!" Eminem captioned an Instagram post featuring a photo of himself and footage of him at the game, "let's goooooo!!!!" As for Hailie, she also shared a glimpse inside her time at the game, captioning her own social media post with a nod to Taylor Swift's appearance at her first Chiefs game, "Football, family, & seemingly ranch." Though Eminem has kept details of their father-daughter bond under wraps over the years, the musician has previously opened up about Hailie making him "proud for sure." "When I think about my accomplishments, that's probably the thing I'm the most proud of is being able to raise kids," he said during a March 2020 episode of Mike Tyson's YouTube show Hotboxin'. "It's important to keep your kids grounded when they're in a situation like I have, it's very important." —www.eonline.com



Eminem and Hailie Jade

Lifestyle



IWG, Embassy celebrate Bulgarian Cultural Day

The International Women's Group-Kuwait and the Bulgarian Embassy held Bulgarian Cultural Day on Sunday, October 8, 2023, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. Antonia Dimitrova, president of IWG and spouse of the ambassador of Bulgaria, welcomed and honored guests and members. The event commenced with Laila Boulos, public relations coordinator, introducing Dimitar Dimitrov, Bulgarian Ambassador.

anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Thanking IWG for hosting the Bulgarian cultural day, he said that the event was an excellent opportunity to present some aspects of the culture and traditions of his country.

"We have a long history of relations with Kuwait, and we are proud that this has been a history of true friendship and cooperation. It covers many areas, but culture has always played a special role in our relationship with Kuwait. Our cultural exchange has included exhibitions, participation in cultural festivals, concerts, cooperation between libraries and museums, exchange of students, and other activities".

The ambassador also spoke on the role of women, saying: "Being guests today of an association that unites women from different countries, I can't help but emphasize the role of women in our Bulgarian society. Women play a very active part in all areas of life, but I should recognize that in many ways our women are the true guardians of the Bulgarian cultural and spiritual traditions".

The Bulgarian state emerged in the Balkans more than 14 centuries ago. The ambassador noted that Bulgarian traditions combine the heritage of many civilizations and peoples, including ancient Thrace, Greece, and Rome, but also the Near East. "A num-



ber of Bulgarian sites and traditions are included in UNESCO's world heritage list. Alongside the natural beauties of Bulgaria, this cultural richness attracts millions of foreign tourists to my country each year", he said. In closing, Dimitar Dimitrov took the opportunity to congratulate HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on the third anniversary of the assumption of his post and wished Kuwait, its wise leadership, and its friendly people continuous advancement and prosperity.

Polina Dlamini, Vice President of IWG and spouse of the ambassador of Eswatini, presented the Bulgari-

an Ambassador and his wife, Antonia Dimitrova, with an honorary shield and thanked them for organizing this special day. The attendees were delighted with the cultural richness and beauty of Bulgaria. During the event, a short film about Bulgaria was shown, highlighting the various natural and cultural heritage sites, historical monuments, magnificent mountains, lakes, caves, mineral springs, and adventure tourism activities in the country.

Violeta Shabanlyyska presented an impressive musical performance on the harp of works by Bulgarian composers. The event included a visual display of

handcrafts and cultural items of traditional ritual inscribed in 2017 on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, along with traditional Bulgarian folklore costumes, which are distinguished by their originality. Some famous Bulgarian dishes, prepared by the chefs of the Crowne Plaza Hotel, were also served in an atmosphere of Bulgarian traditional music. At the end of this Bulgarian cultural day, precious raffles were offered, which included prizes from the Bulgarian Embassy.



Bulgarian Ambassador Dimitar Dimitrov

The ambassador expressed his happiness at participating and contributing to the event, particularly at a time, as he said, when Bulgaria and Kuwait have been celebrating the 60th



At a US shooting range, more women pull the trigger

Clad in a pink T-shirt that reads "A girl and a gun," firearms instructor Charneta Samms shows a group of women how to get a proper grip on a pistol. Around them, shots ring out and casings pile on the floor at a shooting range near the eastern US city of Baltimore, where more and more of the visitors are women. "Unfortunately, the world's getting a little bit crazy," said Samms, 49, who runs the local branch of A Girl & A Gun, a women-only gun club. "And so I think it's important for women to be able to defend themselves," she told AFP.

Like Samms and her trainees, a growing number of women are choosing to own guns, taking an increasingly promi-

nent role in the popular American pursuit. The change is happening amid rising social and political turmoil in the United States following the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the women attending Samms' training course on a recent evening is Kenya Watkins, a high school geometry teacher from Baltimore, a city whose notoriously high crime rate inspired the legendary TV series "The Wire."

Watkins, 49, says it was the fear for her safety and the safety of her daughter, who was 24 at the time, that prompted her to start firearms training. "I didn't want her to be anybody's victim, being a young African-American woman living alone in Baltimore city," she told AFP.

Like Swiss cheese

For decades, the typical gun owner in the United States was a rural white man with conservative political views. But that is changing as more women purchase guns and learn how to use them. Over the past 10 years, the share of gun owners among American women more than doubled, from 12 to 25 percent, while the share of men who own firearms rose only



(From left) Marcia Threatt, of Anne Arundel County, Chakiar Trotman, of Tenleytown, and Adrian Williams, of Baltimore, all aim downrange use a firing range at Guntry in Owings Mills, Maryland. — AFP photos

slightly from 37 to 40 percent, according to Pew Research Center. And the surge in firearms sales in 2020 -- when the country was grappling with the uncertainty of Covid-19 and soaring crime in many US cities--was particularly notable among women: they made up almost half of new gun owners, according to a

research paper published last year in the journal the Annals of Internal Medicine.

Nurse Adrian Williams said she came to train with Samms because she is only five feet (152 centimeters) tall and wants to be able to defend herself if attacked. Now, with a handgun in her hand, she feels more confident. "It's amazing. And

it's empowering," said Williams, 45. "The pistol is the equalizer. That is what is going to give me a chance to save my life or my loved ones."

Marcia Threatt, a sign language interpreter in her late fifties, acknowledges that some of her friends were surprised by her hobby. "It's like, 'Oh, I couldn't believe that you would be that type of person'," said Threatt. "I don't look like the demographic, you know, of the typical person." Watkins, the Baltimore geometry teacher, has since moved to a safer neighborhood. But she keeps coming to train with A Girl & A Gun, firing round after round into a shooting target and riddling it with holes like Swiss cheese.

Russ Leith, a 68-year-old retiree who works as a safety officer at the range three times a week, says he is glad to see more women come here. They are "easier to work with than men, they want to learn," said Leith, wearing noise-canceling headphones. "Guys can be more macho about it." —AFP



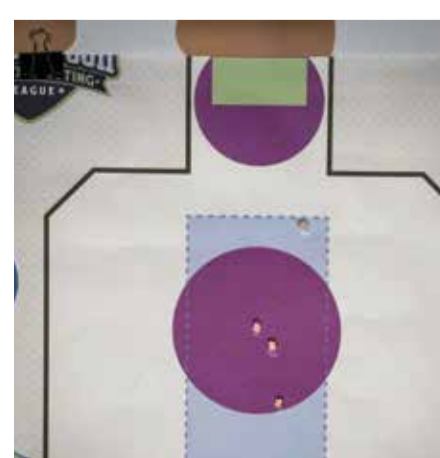
Chakiar Trotman, of Tenleytown, pointing a firearm down range, is assisted by Charneta Samms to use a firing range at Guntry in Owings Mills, Maryland.



Kenya Watkins, of Baltimore, smiles as she holds up paper plates she pinned to the paper shooting target.



A bullet shell casing is reflected in a window as Kenya Watkins, of Baltimore, fires down range.



Holes in a used paper target are seen.



A general view shows Guntry, an indoor shooting range and training facility, in Owings Mills, Maryland.

Lifestyle



Injured tortoises make slow recovery from Greece fires



A turtle named Birken walks in a field after being released.



Volunteers hold turtles as they walk to release them in a safe place in a rural area affected by the fires.



Cleopatra, a volunteer vet, uses a blue marker to draw an "X" on a healthy turtle to confirm that it is in good condition for release.



A turtle eats salad in Kalyvia Thorikou.

In an animal shelter near Athens, veterinarian Kleopatra Gkika gently smears soothing cream on the leg of a tortoise, one of hundreds singled in Greece's devastating summer wildfires. The healing process is going well, the vet noted. The burnt skin has fallen off and the tortoise can soon be released back into its natural habitat. Even though, there may not be much of that habitat left, Gkika mused.

In July and August, Greece was affected by a series of successive wildfires around the country that left at least 26 people dead. The area around the shelter in Kalyvia Thorikou, some 60 kilometers (37 miles) southeast of Athens, was among the first to be hit. A few weeks later, the pristine forest of Dadia in northeastern Greece, which contains a natural park, went up in flames.

The fires eventually engulfed nearly 94,000 hectares of the forest in the largest blaze ever recorded on European soil. Deflecting criticism, the conservative government of Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis—which won re-election in June by a landslide—has blamed the disaster on climate change. Some 400 tortoises overall were rescued from blaze sites surrounding Athens and on the nearby island of Evia.

'Nothing left'

They were brought to Anima, a non-profit first aid centre for wildlife, and to a zoo near the capital. "Some tortoises had burns on their legs or on their shell. Others had breathing difficulties because of smoke inhalation," said Vassilis Sfakianopoulos, the founder of "Save your hood", a volunteer group that normally cleans up litter. This summer, the group rescued the tortoises as well as

snakes, cats and other animals trapped in the inferno.

"The intensity of the fires was such that there was nothing left. Shrubs turned to charcoal," added Celine Sissler-Bienvenu of the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) charity, which carried out a mission to Greece. With thousands of

an injury is not immediately apparent, vets attempt to detect possible internal injury through smell, Gkika said.

Racing against time

Tortoises ready to be released into the wild have a blue chalk cross mark on their shell. Around a hundred were al-

even kill them. Tortoises are also extremely attached to their home area, where they are familiar with hiding places and water sources, and may stop eating if moved elsewhere, Sissler-Bienvenu said. A 38-year-old engineer, Sfakianopoulos said he is enraged at the sight of the suffering reptiles.



Volunteers hold turtles as they walk to release them in a safe place in a rural area affected by the fires.

people in Greece forced to flee for their safety from the fires, the wildlife was largely forgotten, she said. But tortoises are resilient animals.

"Tortoises will reduce their metabolism. They can go without eating for several weeks," Sissler-Bienvenu noted. "And at the first rain, they will come out to eat." At the Kalyvia shelter, the first thing an injured tortoise requires is immersion in a water basin for rehydration. When

ready relocated in September. The team know they are racing against the clock to release them from captivity as soon as possible, said Sissler-Bienvenu. For animals such as these, which are wild and not social at all, placing them together in an enclosure constitutes additional stress," she told AFP.

In particular, males will continuously seek to mate and need to be kept apart from the females lest they injure—

"I find it extremely unfair that no-one in Greece has been taking care of wildlife since the financial crisis," he said, referring to the decade-long crunch that brought the country to its knees. But in confronting disaster, "you find hope," he said. "It makes you grow and change and you have a real impact on the environment."—AFP



Volunteers hold turtles before releasing them in a safe place in a rural area affected by the fires.



A volunteer applies antiseptic cream on a turtle's injured leg.—AFP photos

Taylor Swift and the political needle

Another day, another Taylor Swift media circus: talk of the pop phenomenon is omnipresent, from her forthcoming concert film to her dating life to her wildly successful global tour. And as the 33-year-old's power grows all-consuming, renewed discussion of her potential political weight has followed. Swift is taking a break from playing sold-out arenas before heading back on the road for the remainder of her Eras Tour, which is poised to become the first tour to make \$1 billion.

But she's still gracing stadiums, as she cheers on her rumored beau Travis Kelce, a tight end for the Kansas City Chiefs. The presence of Swift—who got her start in country before becoming one of pop's most dominant forces—at two of his games saw television ratings spike and sales of the NFL player's jersey soar 400 percent. With hundreds of millions of social media followers and a

staunchly loyal fan base, she can move any dial with the tiniest of efforts: late last month, Swift encouraged her fans to register to vote, directing them to the nonpartisan nonprofit Vote.org. The Swifties did not disappoint.



US singer Taylor Swift arrives for the MTV Video Music Awards at the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey.—AFP

That single message posted on National Voter Registration Day saw the institution record more than 35,000 new registrations, 23 percent more than last year and the most since 2020. Shortly thereafter, California's Democratic governor Gavin Newsom told the entertainment outlet TMZ that Swift was "using her celebrity for good." "What

she was able to accomplish in getting young people activated to consider that they have a voice and they should have a voice in the next election, I think it's profoundly powerful."

Political toe-dips

Swift's toe-dips into politics have been heavily scrutinized, garnering both criticism and praise; her years-long reticence to voice political opinions received the same treatment. Both the right and the left have long wanted to count her as their own—but she stayed conspicuously quiet for years, including in 2016 when Donald Trump won the presidency.

Her silence led many critics to speculate Swift was a closet Republican, until 2018, when she broke both her silence and the internet by endorsing the Democratic opponent of far-right politician Marsha Blackburn in Tennessee. Following her post, even Trump reacted, saying he now liked Swift's message "about 25% less."

Blackburn won anyway, but Swift's comments ushered in a new era for the pop star, who began explaining—both in her own Netflix documentary and to the press—that as a young artist cata-

pulted to fame, she struggled to control her own voice. She said handlers urged her against wading into politics, telling her it could damage her career, particularly in the country music industry, which despite its complexities is often associated with conservatism.

Swift said once she was "re-morseful" for not backing Hillary Clinton in 2016, and has since delivered full-throated criticisms of Trump. And Swift condemned the Supreme Court's reversal last year of the federal right to abortion. Political scientist David Jackson noted that though Swift took her time before making endorsements, she wasn't the apolitical pop princess many people cast her as, having made clear statements, for example, about the importance of feminism. "Misogyny is ingrained in people from the time they are born," she told the magazine Maxim in 2015, at age 25. "So to me, feminism is probably the most important movement that you could embrace, because it's just basically another word for equality."

'Holy grail'

Swift's rumored romance with Kelce has triggered a wave of right-wing vitri-

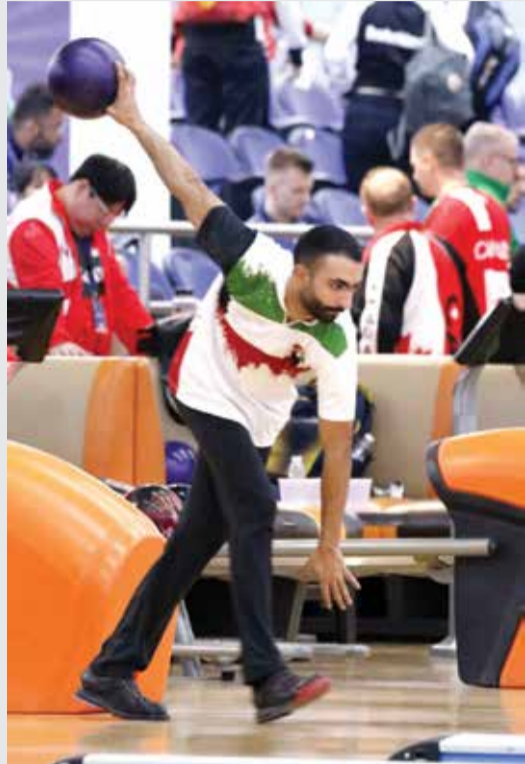
ol against her, with conservative pundit Tomi Lahren saying the artist has "lefty, liberal, brain-dead political opinions." Conservatives have similarly attacked Kelce, pointing in particular to his advocacy for COVID-19 vaccines. For Jackson, who has studied the power of celebrity endorsements, such attacks on a figure of Swift's stature is, on its face, "hilarious." "They're picking a fight with someone pretty big," the Bowling Green State University professor told AFP.

He said such smear attacks were less about diminishing Swift herself and more about "clout-chasing," or "latching on to her fame trying to get extra views and clicks and links and attention for themselves." So as the Biden campaign prepares for a likely rematch with Trump, should the president's aides be courting Swift? "Absolutely," said Jackson. "100 percent." Given the tight White House races the United States has seen over the past several cycles, "all factors are significant," he said. "Her celebrity endorsement right now could be considered the holy grail of potential celebrity endorsements."—AFP

Sports

Kim Hyo-joo strolls to victory at The Ascendant LPGA

Bianca of the Philippines and Thailand's Atthaya shared second place



Kuwaiti bowler in action

Doubles bowling competition starts today

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The World Bowling Championship for men and women continues with the start of the doubles competition at 9:00 am, during which several teams will attempt to make up for their failure in the singles, during the tournament which saw very strong competition in the presence of the best of World Champions. Meanwhile IBF first Vice President Martin Fabra lauded the major role of Sheikh Talal Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, President of IBF and Asian Bowling Federation, in developing and promoting the game around the world.

He said "Bowling sport had a notable development in the past few years, and this is due to the hard work of the Board of Directors under the leadership of the president, as many countries organized regional, continental and international bowling tournament, with the participation of a large number of players of both genders that in addition to having more than 10 countries join IBF".

Fabra lauded the opening ceremony, describing it as fabulous with its artistic shows, in addition to having started successfully, and the technical level is on the rise, and it is very difficult to predict or estimate the winner. He said the sport of bowling will have fantastic future, adding that we are seeking new sponsorship agreements for the upcoming world championships that are under the sanction of IBF, and this will contribute to the further development of the game at both the technical and administrative levels.

Hamilton takes blame for crash with team-mate Russell

DOHA: Lewis Hamilton accepted responsibility on Sunday for his opening corner collision with Mercedes team-mate George Russell that saw him crash out of the Qatar Grand Prix. The seven-time world champion lost his rear right wheel when he hit the front wing of Russell's car as he attempted to pass him on the outside.

Russell also spun but recovered and, after an immediate pit-stop for repairs, rejoined the race and finished fourth. "I feel so sorry for my team," said a crestfallen Hamilton. "The opportunity was there for us to score a lot of good points."

"It was all in the heat of the moment. I mean... I didn't really understand what happened. I just felt the tap from behind and I don't think George probably had anywhere to go. "It's just one of those really unfortunate situations. I'm happy to take responsibility for it."

"Everyone is working so incredibly hard and so it's just massively gutting to have a result like this. It's very rare that this happens for me, but I hope George is able to get back into the points today." He later posted on

LOS ANGELES: South Korea's Kim Hyo-joo strolled to a wire-to-wire victory at The Ascendant LPGA in Texas on Sunday, shooting a two-under-par 69 to win by four strokes. The 28-year-old world number seven had opened up a commanding five-shot lead after Saturday's third round at The Colony in Dallas and never looked in danger of surrendering that cushion on Sunday.

Kim reached the turn at one under for the round, 12 under overall, after two birdies and one bogey on the front nine. A bogey on the 11th dropped her back to 11 under, but two more birdies on the 14th and 17th holes ensured victory by four shots with a 13 under aggregate of 271.

Bianca Pagdanganan of the Philippines and Thailand's Atthaya Thitikul shared second place on nine under. Pagdanganan and Atthaya both shot six-under-par 65s to close. Pagdanganan's final round in-

cluded six birdies on the back nine but the 25-year-old from Quezon City was unable to close the gap on leader Kim.

Atthaya was similarly impressive down the stretch, making five birdies in her final seven holes to march up the leaderboard. Australia's Sarah Kemp finished fourth on eight under par after a closing 69 while Lexi Thompson was alone in fifth on seven under after a one-under-par 70.

Thompson's final round came as she prepares to play on the men's PGA Tour in Las Vegas next week. The American star believes she will need to make significant improvements in all areas in Nevada next week.

Asked what part of her game she needed to work on, Thompson replied: "Everything really. My ball striking, I'll definitely need my top game going into next week." — AFP



TEXAS: Hyo Joo Kim of South Korea celebrates with the trophy after winning during the final round of The Ascendant LPGA benefiting Volunteers of America at Old American Golf Club. — AFP

Outstanding Kuwait shooters honored

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Four medals out of the 11 medals Kuwait won during the 19th Asian games were won by Kuwait shooters, which is a significant achievement and shows how outstanding they are, is what President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations, Secretary General of the Asian Shooting Confederation Eng Duaij Khalaf Al-Otaibi said during the honoring ceremony of the shooters at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex. Engineer Al-Otaibi said that focus will now be directed at the Olympic Games in Paris 2024, as already Khalid Al-Mudhaf qualified for the games near-

ly two months ago, adding that he is fully confident in Kuwait shooters abilities to make more achievements.

Al-Otaibi mentioned the winners and lauded their performance as Abdullah Al-Turqi Al-Rashidi won the skeet's gold and mixed silver along with Eman Al-Shamma, Talal Al-Turqi who won the singles trap silver, as well as the team along with Abdulrahman Al-Faihan and Khalid Al-Mudhaf.

Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi appreciated the major support the political leadership gives to the Kuwaiti athletes which enabled them to make this outstanding continental achievement. Meanwhile Secretary General of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Obaid Al-Osaimi told Journalists the achievements came as a result of strategic plans by the administrative, and technical departments, and very hard work by the players.

He said Kuwait shooters will participate in important international and Asian Championships that will qualify for the Paris 2024 Olympics, and Kuwait Shooting Fed-

eration will work on preparing them at their best.

Speaking exclusively to Kuwait Times, Gold Medalist Abdullah Al-Rashidi said that "following the Asian games and the outstanding results not only winning gold, but also matching the world record of 60 out of 60 hits, motivated us to look forward for the upcoming championship which qualifies for the Olympics". He added that the score made in China will make other shooter pay more attention and exert more efforts as they believe it will be hard to beat us".

He said "all I need is available, be it from Youth Minister, Public Authority for Sport, Olympic Committee and Shooting Federation, all are in support of our athletes in order to qualify for the Olympics".

It is very important for us to reach the Olympics because Kuwait shooting is the closest to winning an Olympic medal. It is worth mentioning that the upcoming Championship will be in Korea with two qualifying seats, and the next one will be in January in Kuwait.



KUWAIT: Kuwait Shooting Federation officials honor medalists at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex.

X (formerly Twitter), confirming it was his fault. "I've watched the replay and it was 100 percent my fault and I take full responsibility. Apologies to my team and to George," he said. Russell said he was disappointed because he felt that a podium finish was a realistic target for both Mercedes drivers before the race.

Hamilton was the only leading driver to start the race on soft tyres, giving him a grip advantage in the early stages of the race, as he sought to pass both Russell and pole-sitter Max Verstappen. Verstappen, who clinched his third consecutive world title on Saturday, cruised to victory in the race. Russell said: "I know it was nothing intentional. When you are racing in these cars, you can't see because they have such big blind spots and it is very difficult. I am sure we'll speak about it and it will be all ok."

Hamilton was fined 50,000 euros (\$52,758), half of which is suspended, and given a reprimand by the race stewards for walking across the track after the crash. "During the hearing the driver of car 44 was very apologetic and realized that the situation could have been very dangerous for him as well as the drivers approaching," the stewards said in a statement. Hamilton has experienced only six opening-lap retirements in his 327 races. With five races remaining, he lies third in the drivers' title race on 194 points behind Verstappen on 433 and Red Bull's second driver Sergio Perez, who finished 10th, on 225. — AFP

England have 'fingers crossed' over Dharamsala injury fears

DHARAMSALA: England captain Jos Buttler has his "fingers crossed" that players avoid serious injury in their World Cup clash against Bangladesh on a Dharamsala surface he described as "poor". The notoriously sandy and bare outfield at the picturesque Himalayan ground has already come under fire at the tournament.

Afghanistan coach Jonathan Trott claimed Mujeeb Ur Rehman could have suffered a serious injury when his knee jarred in the ground as he dived while fielding in Saturday's loss to Bangladesh. "It's poor in my opinion," said Buttler on Monday.

"I think any time you're sort of talking about being careful diving when you're fielding, it goes against everything you want to be as a team. "We won't use it as an excuse, we'll adapt to it. But if you feel like you're having to hold yourself back, it's not a place you want to be as a team or player, or in a World Cup match." The International Cricket Council (ICC) inspected the surface at the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium in the aftermath of Saturday's game. They deemed it "average" but playable. "Fingers crossed that no one on either side picks up an unfortunate injury," added Buttler ahead of Tuesday's game.

In February this year, the third Test match between India and Australia was moved away from Dharamsala because of concerns over the venue. Buttler added that star player Ben Stokes will still not be available for Tuesday as he recovers from a hip injury. Stokes missed the defending champions' opening nine-wicket thumping at the hands of New Zealand in Ahmedabad on Thursday. However, Buttler insisted that the condition of the playing surface at the Dharamsala ground played no part in the decision to keep Stokes on the sidelines.

"It's good to see him back in the nets and building back towards full fitness but probably he's unlikely for tomorrow," he said. Bangladesh spin bowling coach Rangana Herath said his team will be encour-

aged not to think about the potential pitfalls of the surface. "We are not going to restrict anything because if you ask someone to restrict something, in that case they don't give their 100%," the former Sri Lanka player said. "They did well in the previous game, so we are asking give their best even in the outfield as well."

Bangladesh defeated Afghanistan by six wickets in their tournament opener, easily chasing down a target of 157 with 15 overs to spare. Spinners Shakib Al Hasan and man of the match Mehidy Hasan Miraz took six of the wickets to fall.

With both sides still having eight group games to play in the marathon tournament, Buttler insists there is plenty of opportunity to bounce back. "Both teams have only played one match, so we're very confident as a team," said Buttler. "We know we can play better than we did in the last game and we look forward to putting in a good performance tomorrow." — AFP



DHARAMSALA: England's captain Jos Buttler takes part in a practice session at the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium in Dharamsala, ahead of the 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup one-day international (ODI) match between England and Bangladesh. — AFP



LUSAIL, Qatar: Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton stands next to his damaged car after crashing out of the Qatari Formula One Grand Prix at Lusail International Circuit. — AFP

Sports

Turkey set to realize long-term goal with bid to host Euro 2032

Erdogan has long dreamt of hosting one of world's most prestigious sporting events

ISTANBUL: After four failed bids in the recent past, Turkey is finally set to be awarded the hosting rights for a major international football tournament this week when UEFA decides where Euro 2032 will be staged. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has long dreamt of hosting one of the world's most prestigious sporting events.

Now he is set to finally get the chance, despite the country being mired in an economic crisis with the annual inflation rate hovering near 60 percent. On Tuesday, UEFA's executive committee meets to announce the hosts for the 2028 and 2032 European Championships.

Turkey withdrew its bid to host in 2028 in order to focus all its effort on a united proposal with Italy to stage the tournament four years later. That bid has no rivals. Erdogan is not feigning an interest in what is Turkey's most popular sport—in his younger years he played at semi-professional level and he is an avowed supporter of Fenerbahce, the Istanbul giants who are one of the country's biggest clubs.

Winning the right to host the biggest sporting event in Europe would be one of the crowning moments of his time in power. It would also be highly symbolic in political terms. "In modern times, sport has always been perceived as a means for Turkey to forge its own legitimacy and compete equally with the rest of the western world," says Daghan Irak, a lecturer in media communication at the University of Huddersfield in England.

"Erdogan has not diverted from that historic strategy," Erdogan became prime minister at the end of 2002, at the same time Turkey's joint bid with Greece—during a period of improving relations between the two countries—to host Euro 2008 failed. UEFA awarded that tournament to Austria and Switzerland. Turkey then went out on

its own in a bid to host Euro 2012, only to miss out to a joint Ukraine-Poland candidacy, while in 2016 it lost out to France.

Human rights concerns

They then missed out to Germany for Euro 2024, with UEFA's evaluation of the bid highlighting concerns about the country's "lack of an action plan in the area of human rights". After four failed attempts, and having joined forces with Italy, the lack of any rival contenders means Turkey is now sure to get its chance.

That is despite human rights concerns still lingering following Erdogan's re-election as President in May—he has not shown any clemency towards, or announced an amnesty for, tens of thousands of political opponents who have been imprisoned.

Turkey's Court of Cassation recently upheld a sentence of life imprisonment for Osman Kavala, a benefactor and philanthropist accused of financing anti-government protests in 2013. Kavala will serve his sentence in isolation and has no possibility of early release.

"Unfortunately these actions continue to undermine Turkey's prospects of joining the EU," said Nacho Sanchez Amor, the European Parliament's rapporteur on Turkey. Previous Turkish bids have also fallen down due to questions about stadiums in the country.

However, that is no longer a problem according to Bagis Erten, a contributor to Socrates magazine who teaches sports communication at Kadir Has University in Istanbul. "If the AKP (the ruling party since 2002) know how to do one thing, it is build," he says. "They love that! We really have a lot of good stadiums now." Erten cites examples in medium-sized cities like Trabzon, on the Black Sea, Konya and Es-



ISTANBUL: UEFA President Aleksander Ceferin, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and Manchester City's Emirati owner Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al-Nahyan (R) attend the UEFA Champions League final between Inter Milan and Manchester City at the Ataturk Olympic Stadium on June 10, 2023. — AFP

kisehir in Central Anatolia, and Izmir, the country's third-largest city, situated on the Aegean Sea coast.

"Our stadiums are now better prepared than in a lot of other countries," he adds. He believes Turkey could not bid to host a global event like the Olympics, "but it is absolutely in a position to host the Euro, in economic and security terms as well as for its footballing culture and the crowds that go to matches".

In June it hosted the UEFA Champions League final, when Manchester City beat Inter Milan at the Ataturk Olympic Stadium in Istanbul. "Turkey is ready now," Erten insists. And in terms of integration into Europe, Irak adds, "it is much easier for Erdogan's Turkey to organize an international football tournament than to respect the verdicts of the European Court of Human Rights". — AFP

PSG win, Ligue 1 game abandoned, firecracker thrown at goalkeeper

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain bounced back from their heavy Champions League loss at Newcastle United to beat Rennes 3-1 in Ligue 1 on Sunday, while the earlier game between Montpellier and Clermont was abandoned after a firecracker was thrown at visiting goalkeeper Mory Diaw.

PSG were thrashed 4-1 in Newcastle on Wednesday, a result and a performance which raised serious doubts about their prospects in Europe this season. But they returned to form against Rennes at a ground where they have regularly struggled in recent years, recording a win which lifts them up to third in the table, two points behind leaders Monaco.

"We are always happy when we win, but I was also happy after the defeat at Newcastle," claimed coach Luis Enrique. He abandoned his experiment with playing four forwards, and the returning midfielder Vitinha opened the scoring with a brilliant arcing strike into the top corner from an Ousmane Dembele pass just after the half-hour mark.

It was 2-0 four minutes later when Warren Zaire-Emery crossed for Achraf Hakimi, arriving unmarked in the box, to head in. Amine Gouiri headed home from close range to get Rennes back into the match in the 56th minute, but PSG scored again two minutes later as Hakimi's low delivery was converted at the near post by Randal Kolo Muani, who had been dropped from the starting line-up.

Kolo Muani had another goal disallowed for offside, while Kylian Mbappe somehow shot



RENNES, ILLE-ET-VILAINE: Rennes' French defender #22 Lorenz Assignon (R) tries to tackle Paris Saint-Germain's French forward #07 Kylian Mbappe (L) during the French L1 football match between Rennes and Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) at the Roazhon Park in Rennes, western France. — AFP

over late on after a brilliant burst forward that had taken him around the goalkeeper. "He might not have scored today, but he has been performing at a really high level since the start of the season," Luis Enrique said of Mbappe. "It is a bit bizarre when Kylian doesn't score but it is just a side note."

In Montpellier, television pictures showed a

firecracker landing next to the feet of Clermont goalkeeper Diaw and exploding with a loud bang, just as the match was entering stoppage time. A clearly stunned Diaw went down and needed treatment before being stretchered off, and the game was halted before being abandoned following a crisis meeting. — AFP

goalkeeper Pietro Terracciano.

Osimhen stepped up and rammed home the penalty and just before the hour mark—after Jonathan Ikone hit the post for Fiorentina—the Nigeria forward had to be stopped by Terracciano after Michael Kayode unwittingly played him clean through on goal. But Bonaventura was in the right place at the right time when Alfred Duncan's heavy first touch on the edge of the area bounced off Mathias Olivera, and with Napoli pushing forward substitute Nicolas Gonzalez sealed a big win on the break deep in stoppage time.

Romelu Lukaku continued his fast start to life in a Roma shirt with a brace in a 4-1 win at Serie A's bottom side Cagliari which took his all-competitions goal tally to seven. Belgium forward Lukaku chested Roma two ahead in the 20th minute, seconds after Houssem Aouar had swept the away side into the lead against a Cagliari team yet to register a win since being promoted. — AFP

Bonaventura celebrates return in Fiorentina's win at Napoli

MILAN: Giacomo Bonaventura celebrated his first Italy call-up in three years by helping Fiorentina to a stunning 3-1 win at Napoli on Sunday as they moved into Serie A's Champions League places. Veteran midfielder Bonaventura showed why Luciano Spalletti brought him back into the Azzurri fold when he expertly slotted home Fiorentina's key second goal in the 63rd minute of a fascinating, often frantic clash in Naples. "I've started well this year, I'm happy. But it's the whole team that's doing well and as a result things are going well for individuals too," said Bonaventura. "I'm really happy. Happy for the team and how I'm doing right now personally."

The 34-year-old's fourth goal in eight league matches allowed Fiorentina to move into fourth above champions Napoli whose title defence has got off to a difficult start under Rudi Garcia. Scudetto-winner Spalletti's replacement, Vincenzo Italiano's Fiorentina are just four points behind leaders AC Milan and level with fierce rivals Juventus, while Napoli are seven off the pace and were booed off after their second league defeat.

"Disappointment, frustration. It's a bad result," said Garcia, who bemoaned a lack of aggression from his team. "When you lose at home like this, giving away just four fouls all match, there's something not normal going on."

Fiorentina opened the scoring when Josip Brekalo fired through Alex Meret's legs from a tight angle in the seventh minute. The away side looked to be going in ahead at half-time but a dreadful back-pass from Fabiano Parisi allowed a lurking Victor Osimhen to pounce on the ball and be taken out by Fiorentina

News in Brief

Gusto, Disasi called up

PARIS: Chelsea defenders Malo Gusto and Axel Disasi were called up by France coach Didier Deschamps on Monday after injuries to Jules Kounde and Dayot Upamecano. France plays the Netherlands in Euro 2024 qualifying on Friday before taking on Scotland in a friendly the following Tuesday. Kounde suffered a knee injury in Barcelona's 2-2 draw on Sunday at Granada in La Liga, while Bayern Munich's Upamecano has a hamstring problem. The 20-year-old Gusto, who joined Chelsea in January from Lyon, is yet to make his senior international debut. — AFP

Kounde to miss Clasico

BARCELONA: Barcelona centre-back Jules Kounde is set to miss the Clasico according to Spanish media reports, after the club confirmed Monday he sprained a knee ligament. Kounde was substituted in Barcelona's 2-2 draw at Granada in La Liga on Sunday after he fell following a collision with team-mate Gavi. Reports said Kounde was likely to be out for around a month with the sprain, adding to injuries for Robert Lewandowski, Frenkie de Jong, Pedri and Raphinha. Barcelona host Real Madrid on October 28 in La Liga, which Kounde is now poised to miss, along with the visit of Athletic Bilbao on October 22 and a Champions League match against Shakhtar Donetsk on October 25. — AFP

Gill to miss second WCup match

NEW DELHI: Indian batsman Shubman Gill has not recovered from dengue fever and will miss his team's second World Cup match against Afghanistan, officials said Monday. Gill sat out the hosts' six-wicket victory against Australia in Chennai on Sunday and will stay back in the southern Indian city "under the supervision of the medical team". "Team India batter Shubman Gill will not be travelling with the team to Delhi on 9th October 2023," the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said in a statement. Rohit Sharma, India, one of the favourites to win the World Cup, will face Afghanistan at New Delhi's Arun Jaitley Stadium on Wednesday. — AFP

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Barca lose Liga ground despite Granada comeback, Atletico beat Sociedad

Lamine Yamal becomes La Liga's youngest ever goalscorer



GRANADA: Granada's Argentinian forward #7 Lucas Boye (L) fights for the ball with Barcelona's Spanish midfielder #32 Fermin Lopez during the Spanish league football match between Granada FC and FC Barcelona at the Nuevo Estadio de Los Carmenes in Granada on October 8, 2023. — AFP

BARCELONA: Barcelona came back from two goals down to share a thrilling 2-2 draw with Granada but lost ground in the La Liga title race on Sunday. Bryan Zaragoza sent the hosts two goals ahead but Lamine Yamal and Sergi Roberto's goals preserved the champions' record as the only unbeaten team in La Liga.

However the Catalans are now third and sit three points behind leaders Real Madrid, and one behind neighbours Girona, who both won on Saturday. Antoine Griezmann converted a late penalty to snatch fourth-place Atletico Madrid a controversial late 2-1 win over Real Sociedad before Barcelona's draw.

Zaragoza struck twice in the first half, breaking the deadlock after only 17 seconds—the fastest goal Barcelona have conceded in the 21st century. Yamal pulled Barcelona back into the game just before half-time, becoming La Liga's youngest ever goalscorer in the process at 16 years and 87 days.

Xavi Hernandez's side levelled with three minutes remaining when substitute Sergi Roberto turned home, but they could not find a late winner

in a high-octane finale. It was the third comeback they have made in recent weeks, beating Celta Vigo from two goals down and twice falling behind at Mallorca in another 2-2 draw. "I think we totally dominated, we created chances, we deserved more, but (we drew) because of our own mistakes, we can't start off in that way," Xavi told DAZN. "We take away a point, which for us, is not enough."

Barcelona's night was also marred by a knee injury to Jules Kounde, with the Catalans already tending to Robert Lewandowski, Frenkie de Jong, Pedri and Raphinha in the treatment room.

After Gavi lost the ball turning into trouble Lucas Boye fed Zaragoza, who fired across Marc-Andre ter Stegen to open the scoring inside the first minute.

Zaragoza then doubled the hosts' lead at the Nuevo Los Carmenes stadium with a brilliant individual goal, leaving Kounde wobbling before finishing sublimely with the outside of his boot into the top corner. "Bryan is like a bullet ... not easy to stop when he's sprinting," admitted Xavi.

Barcelona found a route back into the match in first-half stoppage time when Felix prodded the ball into Yamal's path just a couple of yards out and he rolled home to break yet another record.

"In that moment I was thinking more about the comeback than the goal and the record, but I'm very happy," said Yamal. The visitors sought the equaliser and eventually it came through Sergi Roberto, who turned home Alejandro Balde's low cross in the final stages.

Zaragoza almost claimed his hat-trick but crashed a shot off the post as the game flew end-to-end.

Felix headed in what he thought was the winner and Xavi leapt for joy on the touchline, but Ferran Torres, who did not touch the ball yet was ruled to be interfering with play, was offside.

"Just as easily as they ruled it out they could have given it... Ferran is not interfering with anyone," said Xavi. Granada coach Paco Lopez said he was proud of his team and that he hoped 22-year-old winger Zaragoza would keep his feet on the ground.

"I congratulate my team and my players, I can't ask for more from them," Lopez told DAZN. The

draw keeps Granada 19th, two points from safety.

Handball controversies

Atletico beat Real Sociedad in a match which was decided by two penalty appeals, after Samuel Lino sent Diego Simeone's team ahead and Mikel Oyarzabal levelled for the Basque visitors. The Basque side were furious after they had a penalty appeal for handball turned and then the referee awarded Atletico a spot-kick in the final stages after Carlos Fernandez inadvertently handled a Griezmann shot, and the Frenchman scored it.

Despite the decisions working in his team's favour, Griezmann said the handball rule should be modified. "They have to make a rule that if it hits the hand it's a penalty, and if not there's not, not (only) the interpretation of the referee," Griezmann told DAZN.

"Today he interpreted it in our favour and we won, on other occasions it will be different." Villarreal lost 2-1 at home against Las Palmas, while Real Betis drew 1-1 against Alaves, and controversial striker Mason Greenwood scored his first goal for Getafe in a 2-2 draw at Celta Vigo. — AFP

Fiji, Argentina book final places in World Cup last eight

PARIS: Fiji claimed the last place in the World Cup quarter-finals in the most dramatic of fashions on Sunday, suffering a shock 24-23 defeat at the hands of Portugal but picking up a bonus point which was enough to knock Australia out of the tournament.

Fiji, who only needed one point from the game, finished runners-up in Pool C behind Wales and will play England in Marseille next Sunday, a day after Argentina, who also qualified with victory over Japan, take on Wales at the same Stade Velodrome.

The result of the 40th and final pool game of the tournament, settled by a 78th-minute converted try by Rodrigo Marta, also consigned the Wallabies to third spot in Pool C, the two-time champions missing out on the knock-out phase for the first time ever.

The Fijians looked out of sorts in a nervy display marred by a number of handling errors under intense pressure from Portugal, whose victory—thanks to a converted try two minutes from time—was their first at a World Cup. "It is incredible and unbelievable," said Portugal coach Patrice Lagisquet. "The players always find resources that I never expected."

"That last try, it was amazing. They still surprise me after four years and it is an incredible group." All square at 3-3 at half-time, the game burst into life in the second half when Raffaele Storti touched down for the Portuguese.

Fiji hit back three minutes later through Levani Botia but with the flanker yellow-carded for a high tackle, the Portuguese struck again through prop Francisco Fernandes. The Fijians came back once more in the last quarter and appeared to have won it when Mesake Doge scored a try, with Frank Lo-



TOULOUSE: Portugal's full-back Manuel Cardoso Pinto (L) is tackled by Fiji's wing Selestino Ravutau-mada during the France 2023 Rugby World Cup Pool C match between Fiji and Portugal at the Stade de Toulouse in Toulouse, southwestern France. — AFP

mani adding the conversion and two penalties.

Portugal, however, struck in dramatic fashion through Marta with Samuel Marques' conversion clinching the win. "We're disappointed to not get that win," said Fiji coach Simon Raiwalui. "We were a bit tired in terms of context of the game but Portugal can enjoy tonight." Turning to England, Raiwalui added: "We have got to reassess tomorrow and recover, they are a very good tournament team England."

Carreras hat-trick

Wing Mateo Carreras scored a hat-trick of tries as Argentina beat Japan 39-27 in a thriller in Nantes to finish as Pool D runners-up behind England, booking a quarter-final against Wales. Defeat meant Japan failed to advance to the knock-out phase.

"We are where we want to be," said Argentina coach Michael Cheika. "But we want to go further, we want to reach the semi-final and the final, that's clear." In a roller-coaster game at the Stade de la Beaujoire

in glorious, sunny conditions, both sides threw caution to the wind, Argentina eventually outscoring the Brave Blossoms by five tries to three. The Pumas made a sensational start, Marcos Kremer pounding Japan captain Kazuki Himeno from the kick-off and then producing a driving maul before the ball was recycled right into the hands of Santiago Chocobares.

The Toulouse centre broke a tackle in midfield and sidestepped full-back Lomano Lemeki for a brilliant try with barely two minutes gone. Japan lock Amato Fakata-va then produced a superb individual effort but with the Brave Blossoms down to 14 with flanker Pieter Labuschagne off the field, Carreras went over for his first try.

Just before half-time Naoto Saito touched down for Japan and with Rikiya Matsuda converting, they only trailed 15-14 at the turnaround. Argentina drew first blood in the second period as Carreras grabbed his second try after good work by Chocobares but a Matsuda penalty and a long-range drop from Lemeki kept it tight. — AFP

Dimitrov, Paul through to Shanghai Masters last 16

SHANGHAI: Fan favourite Grigor Dimitrov claimed a place in the last 16 of the Shanghai Masters Monday, overcoming a torrential downpour and a well-matched opponent in Russian Karen Khachanov to win 7-6 (8/6), 6-4.

The match had to be suspended at 6-6 in the first set after the heavens opened and doused centre court. Once the Qizhong Tennis Centre roof had been closed and a host of volunteers had towelled and blowdried the court, world number 19 Dimitrov inched a tight tiebreaker and followed that by taking the second set.

"I knew it was going to be a very competitive match... (Khachanov's) hungry and he's so competitive—but so am I," said the 32-year-old Bulgarian after his win. "The rain was not pleasant but in the end you need to adapt and that's what I was able to do."

There was heartbreak for French 19-year-old Arthur Fils, who came from a set down against world number 12 Tommy Paul to win a tiebreaker in the second set. The emerging star—who won his maiden ATP Tour title in Lyon this year—started strong in the third set, breaking Paul's serve to win the first game.

The players were level at the eighth game, but the American snatched the last two to win 6-4, 6-7 (7/9), 6-4. Top seed Carlos Alcaraz is looking to book his own place in the fourth round later against Britain's Daniel Evans, ranked 33rd in the world.

Already through is Jannik Sinner, who knocked Alcaraz out of the China Open semi-finals in Beijing last week. But defending champion Daniil Medvedev is out of the tournament after a shock defeat at the hands of 26th-ranked American Sebastian Korda on Sunday. — AFP