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Gaza burns; Death toll mounts

Zionist entity forms war cabinet, imposes a total siege • Over 1,500 bodies found

Crown Prince receives invitations addressed to Amir for summits



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Wednesday received invitations addressed to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah from Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz to partake in the ASEAN Summit. — KUNA

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Wednesday invitations addressed to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah from Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz to partake in the ASEAN Summit due in Riyadh on October 20, 2023, and the Arab-African Summit scheduled to be held on November 11, 2023, in the same city.

The invitations were handed over to His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal by the Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait, Prince Sultan bin Saad bin

Khaled Al-Saud, during a reception at Bayan Palace. The reception was attended by the Head of the Crown Prince Diwan Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Director of the Crown Prince Office (Ret. Lieutenant General) Jamal Mohammad Al-Dhiab, Undersecretary of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Khaled Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, and Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs at the Bureau of the Crown Prince, Mazzen Issa Al-Issa. — KUNA

JERUSALEM: Zionist entity on Wednesday kept up its bombardment of Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip, as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and a political rival announced an emergency government for the duration of the conflict that has already killed thousands. The veteran right-wing leader was joined by the centrist Benny Gantz, a former defense minister, in the government and war cabinet as both put aside bitter political divisions that have roiled the country and sparked mass protests.

Their joint announcement came after Zionist soldiers sweeping battle-torn southern towns said they had found a total of 1,200 bodies, mostly civilians

slain in the Islamist militants' onslaught, the worst attack in the 75-year history. Gaza officials reported more than 1,000 people killed in Zionist entity's withering campaign of air and artillery strikes on the crowded Palestinian enclave, where black smoke billowed into the sky and entire city blocks lay in ruins.

Zionist entity has massed forces, tanks and other heavy armor around Gaza in its retaliatory operation against what Netanyahu labeled "an attack whose savagery... we have not seen since the Holocaust". US President Joe Biden has pledged to send more munitions and military hardware to its close ally and

Continued on Page 6

KRCS calls for end to Zionists' aggression

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) said Wednesday that the tragic conditions of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip require rapid action to provide aid to victims of Zionist army attacks and to ensure respect for the principles of international humanitarian law and related agreements. This came in KRCS Secretary General Maha Al-Barjas' statement to KUNA on the sidelines of the emergency meeting of the Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Organization (ARCO) video conference.

This meeting was held at the request of the KRCS in light of the ongoing aggression, which left large numbers of martyrs and wounded and led to the displacement of thousands of Palestinians from their homes, Al-Barjas said. Al-Barjas stressed the importance of highlighting the violations taking place in the Palestinian territories and the need to call on the international community to assume its responsibility in this regard.

The meeting discussed the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, in addition to coordination in providing aid to those affected and doubling efforts due to the tragic conditions of Palestinians, she added. It also condemned Zionist attacks and called on the international community and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to intervene urgently to stop these attacks, Al-Barjas said. The meeting stressed the need to exert humanitarian efforts to provide support to the Palestinian Red Crescent and called on national societies and Arab bodies to stand with the Palestinian people.

It also urged the international community, with its governmental and non-governmental organizations, to take rapid action to stop military operations and oblige Zionists to respect the basic principles of international humanitarian law and binding agreements to ensure the protection of civilians in all occupied Palestinian territories and open crossings to deliver aid, she added. KRCS worked on launching a series of activities to provide urgent assistance to the displaced in Gaza by distributing food supplies, daily meals, and medical supplies to confront this attack in cooperation with Arab Red Crescent societies and humanitarian organizations. — KUNA

Republicans nominate Scalise for US speaker

WASHINGTON: Republicans nominated Steve Scalise as their candidate for speaker of the US House of Representatives Wednesday as they sought to heal bitter internal divisions paralyzing their domestic agenda and preventing action on the Israel crisis. The party has been in a tailspin since a handful of hardliners forced out Kevin McCarthy eight days ago, leaving the Republican-controlled lower chamber of Congress unable to respond to mounting international and domestic challenges.

Scalise, the majority leader in the House and McCarthy's longtime deputy, pipped firebrand Judiciary Committee chairman Jim Jordan to the nomination by 113 votes to 99 in a secret ballot, multiple US media outlets reported. The pair had looked evenly-matched, setting the stage for what could have been a grueling, drawn-out contest with several acrimonious rounds of voting.

But the path was cleared for Scalise, 58, after the defeat of a proposal to change the nominating threshold from a simple majority of the party's 221 House members to 217 - the number needed to succeed in the full 433-member full House. Some Republicans had argued for raising the nominating standard to ensure they do their fighting in private and are able present a united front when their nominee comes to the floor.

McCarthy's truncated term began in chaos and public bickering in January, as Republicans almost came to blows over 15 bitter rounds of voting that played out on national television. — AFP

Arabs stress on need to protect Palestinians

CAIRO: The Arab League stressed on Wednesday the necessity of bringing the war in the Gaza Strip to a halt as soon as possible so that it does not escalate further or get out of control. In a statement, the League said that this came during two separate meetings the League's Secretary General Ahmad Abul-Gheit had with Italy's Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani and Lithuania's Foreign Affairs Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis during their visit to Cairo.

During the meetings, Abul-Gheit explained that taking revenge from the residents of Gaza and following the collective punishment method is against international law and won't achieve peace. He expressed a strong rejection of killing civilians, stressing the need to provide protection for Palestinians and address the root causes that led to this unfortunate and dangerous situation.

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GAZA: Explosions illuminate the sky during Zionist strikes on Gaza City. — AFP

NASA asteroid sample contains life-critical water and carbon

HOUSTON: A sample collected from the 4.5-billion-year-old asteroid Bennu contains abundant water and carbon, NASA revealed on Wednesday, offering more evidence for the theory that life on Earth was seeded from outer space. The discovery follows a seven-year-round-trip to the distant rock as part of the OSIRIS-REx mission, which dropped off its precious payload in the Utah desert last month for painstaking scientific analysis.

"This is the biggest carbon-rich asteroid sample ever returned to Earth," NASA administrator Bill Nelson said

at a press event at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, where the first images of black dust and pebbles were revealed. Carbon accounted for almost five percent of the sample's total weight, and was present in both organic and mineral form, while the water was locked inside the crystal structure of clay minerals, he said. Scientists believe the reason Earth has oceans, lakes and rivers is because it was hit with water-carrying asteroids 4 to 4.5 billion years ago, making it a habitable planet.

Continued on Page 6



HOUSTON: Still image shows the OSIRIS-REx sample collector with sample material from asteroid Bennu. — AFP



Kuwait among 15 nations elected to serve in Human Rights Council

FM congrats Amir and Crown Prince

In my view

Battling cardiovascular and chronic diseases



Dr Khalid Al-Saleh

Local@kuwaittimes.com

The WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean convened a meeting at its Cairo premises from October 9 to 12. On Monday, a meeting was held to discuss how to assist the region's countries in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. One of the most pressing concerns for our Gulf countries is the prevalence of chronic diseases, which are on the rise in the region.

Chronic diseases, also known as non-infectious diseases, encompass four conditions that develop over extended periods and can be fatal — cardiovascular diseases, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes. These diseases now account for more than 60 percent of total deaths worldwide, with approximately 36 million people succumbing to them, a quarter of whom are under the age of 60. Recognizing the severity of this issue, world leaders convened in New York in September 2011 and issued a political declaration to address these diseases. Subsequently, the WHO developed a strategy spanning the years 2013-2020 to implement this declaration.

Every country under the United Nations' umbrella committed to this political declaration, with monitoring and reporting on the extent of their compliance. Countries have varied in their response to this commitment, reflecting differences in their resources and priorities. Some nations have made substantial investments in implementing all four commitments, while others have made partial progress. Regrettably, some have primarily demonstrated commitment on paper, and a few have shown little interest in the matter.

These responses illustrate the diversity of approaches among nations in addressing chronic diseases. The Kuwait Declaration on confronting chronic diseases, agreed upon by GCC ministries, presents a significant opportunity for our countries to enhance their global standing through improved healthcare. In the GCC countries, we have established a Higher Committee for Chronic Diseases and an active department dedicated to this issue. Additionally, the "eman" network plays a crucial role in monitoring and evaluation, aligning with the third commitment of the international plan.

However, the question remains whether our government will take Kuwait's commitment seriously. While progress has been made in some areas, there is still room for improvement, especially in allocating sufficient resources and manpower to the chronic diseases department. In the government sector, we need greater emphasis on addressing the root causes of chronic diseases beyond the health domain. Despite these challenges, we have made strides in the second commitment, focusing on prevention, such as reducing salt consumption, and we've conducted awareness campaigns against cancer and for breastfeeding.

We have also made significant progress in the fourth commitment, particularly with the establishment of the palliative care center. Collaboration between various departments, campaigns, and NGOs has played a crucial role in advancing the goals of sustainable development. Organizations like the Patients Helping Fund, Kuwait Volunteer Society and Sidra Society have made valuable contributions through volunteer activities, warranting government support and recognition.

While we have achieved some positive indicators, we must address shortcomings promptly. Plans cannot succeed with mere words; they require budgets, dedicated teams and a robust system for tracking progress and adhering to timelines. To make serious headway, we need a comprehensive strategy with alternative plans that foster a positive working environment and ensure the committed implementation of indicators within specified timeframes.

If the administrative apparatus in Kuwait rises to the challenge, Kuwait and its Gulf counterparts can aspire to become healthy, advanced nations by 2030. However, failure to take this matter seriously would not make us the worst countries globally, as there are nations facing even greater challenges. Leaders who seek only to compare themselves to those worse off may tread water, but true leaders who love their countries always aim for excellence, and we should all aspire to join them in that pursuit.

KUWAIT: Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, as well as the government and Kuwaitis, on their great success, due to their tireless efforts, in becoming members of the UN Human Rights Council for the period 2024-2026. In a statement to KUNA, Sheikh Salem said that such results "are nothing but a testament to Kuwait's respect for human rights and its active role in this field, which is something that all 183 member countries that cast their votes in favor believe in."

Sheikh Salem extended his sincere thanks and gratitude to the countries participating in the vote "for the trust they have shown, assuring them and all members of the international community that Kuwait will remain as promised in fulfilling its obligations, carrying out its responsibilities with all dedication and sincerity, and continuing its active role from all platforms at all times." The minister stressed that Kuwait was, is, and will remain a strong supporter of the work of the Human Rights Council and its mandate as the primary intergovernmental body of the United Nations concerned with promoting and protecting human rights around the world.

Sheikh Salem added, "Based on this firm conviction and complete belief in the importance and vitality of this council, we reaffirm to our brothers, friends, allies, and all members of the international community that Kuwait, through its membership in the Human Rights Council, will assume the responsibility for everyone to enjoy human rights and protect them everywhere, as they are inherent rights for everyone, equally and without discrimination." The minister praised the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs employees and "all those responsible for this great campaign".

15 elected countries

The UN General Assembly on Tuesday elected 15 new countries to serve on the Human Rights Council,



Human Rights Council members meet.

among them Kuwait, with Peru and Russia failing to secure seats. After the ballots were cast and counted, Assembly President Dennis Francis announced that Albania, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, China, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, France, Ghana, Indonesia, Japan, Kuwait, Malawi, and the Netherlands were elected to serve for three years, beginning January 1, 2024.

China, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, France, and Malawi were re-elected for their second terms. The Hu-

man Rights Council, the UN's premier rights body, is tasked with the responsibility to uphold and advance fundamental freedoms globally. It was created in 2006 and consists of 47 member states, elected via secret ballot by the majority of General Assembly members. In order to ensure equitable geographical distribution, its seats are distributed among regional groups of states as follows: Africa (13) Asia-Pacific (13) Eastern Europe (6) Latin America and Caribbean (8) and Western Europe and others (7). — KUNA



DOHA: Qatar Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani receives Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and other top officials. — KUNA photos

Qatar Amir, Kuwait minister discuss ties

DOHA: The Amir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, discussed on Wednesday with Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, issues of mutual interest. A statement by

the Qatari Amiri Diwan said that Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad conveyed greetings from His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and their wishes of continued happiness and good health to the Qatari Amir and continued progress and prosperity for the Qatari people.

The Amir of Qatar entrusted Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad to convey his greetings and wishes of

happiness and health for His Highness the Amir of Kuwait and His Highness the Crown Prince and for the Kuwaiti people further progress and development. Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad met yesterday with Qatar's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defense Affairs, Dr Khalid bin Mohammed Al Attiyah, discussing cooperation and ties between the two countries and avenues to reinforce them in a variety of fields. — KUNA

Municipality approves 20 sites for camping

KUWAIT: On Wednesday, Kuwait's municipality approved 20 spring camping sites for the season (2023-2024) distributed over the governorates of Jahra and Ahmadi to include the northern and southern areas of the country that allow camping. The committee for the study and modernization of sites temporarily allocated for spring camping said in a press release to the municipality that this year's spring season will begin on November 15 until March 15, 2024.

The committee stated that the Public Relations Department of the municipality will launch its awareness campaign under the slogan "With our hands, the land is clean" on the occasion of the beginning of the spring camping season, with the aim of preserving the land and using environmentally friendly means in the permitted camping sites of the municipality to maintain cleanliness during the camping season.

The committee added that the insurance amount



for the camp is subject to recovery with the approval of the Environment General Authority and the issuance of a cleanliness certificate for the site from the municipality to deposit it in the accounts of licensed camp owners at the end of the camping season.

This year's spring camp sites will be provided with service centers, security points, and branches of cooperative societies, in addition to providing containers and cleaning mechanisms to serve the camp owners. Those wishing to set up camps in permit-



ted locations are urged to follow the booking steps, obtain a license to set up a temporary spring camp, and fill out a camp license application via the official website of the municipality.

Filling out a camp license application is done through 4 steps, including entering the location event of the camp, then personal data, paying fees of KD 50 and insurance KD 100 through KNET, printing the camp license, and placing it in a prominent place in the camp. — KUNA

Kuwait seeking to achieve sustainable development goals

NEW YORK: Kuwait renewed its keenness to achieve the goals and objectives of sustainable development, as they represent a road map of joint action to create a more equitable, just, and sustainable world. This came in a speech by Kuwait's Permanent Delegation to the United Nations, delivered by diplomatic attaché Ali Al-Khuraibet, on Tuesday night, before the Second Committee of the General Assembly under the item "Sustainable Development".

Al-Khuraibet said Kuwait put forward a development plan under the slogan "New Kuwait" to mobilize all efforts and achieve the goals of its national development and sustainable plans through seven basic pillars to transform the country into a leading financial, cultural, and institutional regional center. "In 2015,



Kuwaiti diplomatic attaché Ali Al-Khuraibet

Kuwait adopted the 2030 agenda: we made a global call for action to reduce poverty, preserve our planet, and ensure prosperity for all", he added.

The Kuwait diplomat noted that "Kuwait presented, last June, the second national voluntary review, which highlights my country's progress in each of the goals and is a reliable record of many achievements." "We renew the call of the Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to develop a global rescue plan and provide

solid support to stimulate the goals of sustainable development", he said, expressing his hope for greater accomplishment in this regard in the coming years.

Kuwait had faced several challenges, including those that resulted from climate change, that made the recovery process very difficult for everyone, especially weak and vulnerable people, he added. Al-Khuraibet stressed that achieving all the goals of the sustainable development plan requires taking immediate measures and a firm commitment to the political declaration issued by the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, building resilience, expanding social protection, and protecting the vulnerable.

He renewed Kuwait's commitments to international agreements and resolutions and took urgent actions to address any repercussions on international security and stability. The diplomat concluded the speech by saying that "today, there is a need for global cooperation more than any other time: we must redouble our efforts in implementing the sustainable development goals, including Goal 17, which enables us to enhance our capabilities and stimulate international efforts to achieve these goals to the fullest extent." — KUNA

Local

Business owners can operate under single headquarters

Decision eliminates the need to rent multiple offices



KUWAIT: Photo shows an aerial view of Kuwait City overlooking the Gulf waters. Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Aiban issued a decision that permits business owners to operate from a single headquarters using a single commercial serial number. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Majid Othman

KUWAIT: Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Aiban issued a decision that permits business owners engaged in multiple commercial activities to operate from a single headquarters using a single commercial serial number. This decision applies as long as the business owner does not exceed having four companies operating from one headquarters. This decision eliminates the need for business practitioners or merchants with multiple activities and commercial licenses to rent multiple offices. Instead, a central office is now sufficient for licensing all their diverse businesses under one roof.

As per resolution no. 146/2023, outlined in article 1, companies and their subsidiaries can share a single headquarters and operate under one commercial serial number. However, there are specific requirements that must be met. The company's ownership in its subsidiary must exceed 50 percent, and the company should issue

consolidated financial statements that incorporate the financial information of its owned companies.

Importantly, the total number of companies operating from a single headquarters should not exceed four. Furthermore, article 2 of the decision stipulates that, in addition to the conditions mentioned in the previous article, business owners must submit an application to the ministry of commerce and industry expressing their intent to centralize their company and subsidiary operations within one headquarters.

This application should be submitted through the official channels affiliated with the ministry and must include one or more lease contracts specifying the names of the added subsidiaries or one rental receipt listing the name of the company and its subsidiaries. The decision also specifies that competent authorities, within their respective jurisdictions, are responsible for implementing this ruling. It is effective from the date of its issuance and will be published in the official gazette.

Kuwait Acting PM on official visit to Saudi



KUWAIT: Kuwait Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation on Wednesday traveled to Saudi Arabia on an official visit. Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah was seen off at the airport by Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad bin Khaled Al-Saud, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Lieutenant General Anwar Al-Barjas and other senior security officials. — KUNA

Health Minister sets up communication center

KUWAIT: Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi announced Wednesday the establishment of the Health Communication Center to connect the Ministry with all beneficiaries of health services and various media outlets. Minister Al-Awadhi assigned the official spokesman, Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad, to manage the center. In a press conference broadcast by the ministry, the Minister of Health stressed the importance of communicating with the public and receiving proposals that would contribute to developing the working system and adopting a "two-way" communication policy.

For his part, Dr Al-Sanad stressed the importance of communication in health institutions, noting that the formation of the center's database is the most prominent challenge and difficulty facing the health sector. He pointed out that the center, which consists of six departments, is affiliated with the minister's office and will begin carrying out the tasks assigned to it next November to achieve optimal and effective communication with the health media or social communication. — KUNA



Dr Bander Al-Mutairi delivers a lecture on the difference between anxiety and fear.



Dr Husain Al-Shatti talks about art and its connection with psychological health.

ArtnDine marks Mental Health Day

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: ArtnDine celebrated World Mental Health Day at the Volvo Hall at the Khaleeja Tower on Tuesday evening. The event featured lectures on mindfulness, breathing, meditation and mental health. Psychiatry specialist and head of the medical department at the Addiction Treatment Center, Dr Husain Al-Shatti, spoke about art and its connection with psychological health. He said that a person can express himself or herself through art, adding that there are treatments with the use of art.

The art treatments involve analyzing the drawings through communication between the doctor and the patient. He added that the relationship between art and psychiatric health is very old. "Every year, we attempt to promote awareness about psychiatric diseases, the existence of treatment for such diseases, and the fact that they are available in society. It is normal for a person to suffer from a psychological disease," he said, adding that 20 percent of people in any society have some type of psychological case. He said that most health centers in Kuwait have psychological clinics that are run either by a psychologist or a family doctor.

Dr Bander Al-Mutairi spoke about the difference between anxiety and fear. He said that anxiety makes up to 30 percent of psychological diseases. He said that symptoms of anxiety include feeling nervous, anxious, or on the edge; not being able to stop or control worrying; worrying too



KUWAIT: ArtnDine marks World Mental Health Day. The event featured lectures on mindfulness, breathing, meditation and mental health.

much about different things; having trouble relaxing; being so restless; becoming easily annoyed; and feeling afraid.

He said that 90 percent of people who suffer from panic attacks suffer from other psychological conditions, like some type of phobia, adding that women are twice as likely to suffer from panic attacks. Dr Al-Mutairi said the reasons for panic attacks are linked to neurotransmitters due to the environment, pressures, or genes. Breathing exercises were demonstrated by Yosi Yaz. Dr Reham Al-Raghaib practiced act of art therapy and mindful exercises.



Verdict in Kuwait fashionista case likely on Oct 25

KUWAIT: The Misdemeanor Court decided to postpone the case of a Kuwaiti fashionista who was accused of jumping the traffic light on Al-Sour Street and causing a traffic accident leading to the death of two people, until October 25. The judge also rejected the request for her release. The events of the case date back to Thursday morning (24/8/2023) at 3:17 am, when the accident occurred at the intersection of Al-Sour Street with King Fahd bin Abdulaziz Road which resulted in the death of two people and injuries to two others. They were transferred to hospital.

The incident was recorded at Abdullah Al-Salem station, and the investigation authority immediately began to deal with the accident in accordance with the legal procedures. It was found that it was a bilateral collision leading to deaths and injuries. The driver was suspected to be under abnormal condition possibly under the influence of intoxicating substances. The driver also crossed the red signal and drove the vehicle at a speed above the permissible limits in addition, She also drove a vehicle with expired insurance.

The driver of the vehicle who caused the accident and her companion were referred to the General Department of Criminal Evidence to take samples, conduct necessary investigations and hand them over to the investigation authority after showing their results. The vehicles were seized for inspection by the Traffic Engineering Department and the technical experts, and the defendants in the traffic accident incident were detained pending investigation in accordance with the law. After receiving the report of the General Department of Criminal Evidence and the report of the Traffic Engineering Department, it was decided to detain the defendants for ten days in pretrial detention pending the case, and to refer the culprits to the central prison before referring them to the competent court.

Although, they decided to release the defendant's companion, they are likely to file 10 charges (manslaughter, injury by mistake, driving a vehicle under the influence of intoxicating or narcotic drinks, exceeding the speed limit, crossing the red signal, driving a vehicle recklessly, driving a vehicle with invalid insurance, driving a vehicle without holding a license to operate the vehicle, causing damage to the property of others and causing damage to public property) against her, it is learned.

Kuwait-Bosnia friendship holds new round of talks

KUWAIT: The Kuwait, Bosnia, and Herzegovina friendship group held a fresh round of talks on Wednesday. The group discussed issues ranging from tourism to real estate investment opportunities. The talks in the Bosnian capital also covered bilateral security agreements, in addition to a potential visa-exemption deal. Both sides also discussed measures to facilitate the work of Kuwait-based charities operating in Bosnia. — KUNA



KGOC records achievements

KUWAIT: Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (KGOC) said Tuesday that the company made great achievements this year, namely the first drilling of well in Al-Wafra Joint Operations, which will increase the production of natural gas, which in turn will be reaching 12 million cubic feet. The KGOC acting CEO Khaled Al-Otaibi, in a speech during a ceremony held celebrating the CEO Award for Health, Safety, Security and the Environment 2023, said the company's achievements came through combined efforts of workers at the company's various sites, expressing his thanks



Khaled Al-Otaibi

to all participants in the competition.

The award aims to enhance the vision and objectives of KGOC in the areas of health, safety, security and environment, to which the executive management gives great attention, especially in the areas of operations and production, to preserve its human capital, assets and operations. — KUNA

Education Minister sympathizes with Palestinian teachers

KUWAIT: Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Adel Al-Mane expressed solidarity with Palestinian teachers whose families are victims of the "Zionist occupation" in the occupied territories on Wednesday. The minister expressed his sentiments during a phone call with one of the teachers working in Kuwait, named Areej Qanan, whose family was killed in the bombardment of the Gaza Strip. Minister Al-Mane assured the bereaved teachers that he supports all male and female teachers from the Gaza Strip and the occupied territories who are working in Kuwait. He hailed the Palestinian martyrs "who sacrificed their souls for the defense of their homeland and cause," alluding to scores of Palestinians who died in the ongoing Zionist attacks on the strip. — KUNA

Photo of the day



KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti Naval ship departs to take part in the Gulf exercise (Union 23) in Oman. — KUNA

Kuwait's women societies hail Palestinians 'iron will'

We are united in our position on Palestine: GCC

KUWAIT: The Union of Kuwaiti Women Associations on Wednesday announced solidarity with the Palestinian people in facing "the Zionist enemy with an iron will" and embracing martyrdom for liberating the homeland. The chairperson, Sheikha Fadia Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, said in a statement that the "Al-Aqsa Flood" operation is a battle for history and dignity... a battle of the brave who do not dread martyrdom." She hailed the Palestinian combatants who "breached the fortified fence around the Gaza Strip, stunning the world and creating political and security paralysis in the Zionist institutions." "We are on your side; we affirm

our principled and unwavering stand of supporting you until you attain your rights and an independent state," she said, addressing the Palestinians.

United in our position

Meanwhile, the Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Jassem Al-Budaiwi, stressed Tuesday that the six-member GCC is united in issues that are related to the Palestinian cause. Speaking at a press conference after the EU-GCC joint Council and Ministerial meeting in Muscat, Oman, he said, "We are unified with the Palestinian cause and on the two-state solution."

Al-Budaiwi stressed that the GCC rejects all attacks against civilians and hoped that a swift solution would be reached for the Palestinian cause in order for the Palestinian population to live in peace according to the two-state solution and in alignment with international and UN resolutions. Referring to the outcome of the meeting, he said they discussed, in addition to regional and international issues, EU-GCC relations and cooperation in a number of areas.

They spoke about intensifying economic cooperation, increasing trade and investment levels, and coordination on humanitarian assistance as well as counter-terrorism and cyber security issues. They also discussed climate change, energy security, health, education, research and preliminary agreements to launch a regional forum on security matters for the exchanging of ideas on security on the regional and international level, he said.

On his part, Sayyid Bader Bin Hamad Al-Busaidi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman, the host of the meeting, told the joint press conference that the EU and the GCC agreed on the importance of self-restraint, de-escalation and protection of children in addition to releasing civilian prisoners from both the Palestinian and



Sheikha Fadia Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah

Zionist sides. The best way to achieve peace is to find a solution on the basis of a two-state solution, he stressed.

On his part, EU High Representative Josep Borrell told the same press conference, "It was a very important and fruitful meeting that enhanced our partnership." "We agreed that the meeting was a success," he said. The Joint Council is an opportunity to reaffirm the EU's strong commitment to a strategic partnership with the Gulf and for partners to exchange views on a wide range of issues, notably energy, climate, security, humanitarian aid and regional files, he noted.

They discussed the Russian invasion of Ukraine as well as developments in Sudan and Yemen, he said, noting that Oman is playing an important mediation role in Yemen. On Palestine, Borrell said the two sides condemned all attacks against civilians. The GCC includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. — KUNA

Festival to promote national products

KUWAIT: Chairman of the Federation of Cooperative Societies Abdulwahab Al-Fares confirmed that the first Kuwait Festival for Tourism and Entertainment, entitled "Kuwait: One Hundred and One Nights," slated for next January, will constitute a great opportunity to support national products through collaboration with the Kuwait Festival Association. Al-Fares said in a statement to reporters Wednesday, following a meeting with the Head of Kuwait Festival Association, Tariq Al-Obaid, that the aim is to coordinate and prepare for the federation's effective participation in the festival's activities.

He underlined the importance of combining all governmental and civil efforts through the effective participation of the private sector and its national companies in this crucial tourism project, which represents a supportive gateway to the recovery of the local economy. In a similar statement, Al-Obaid commended the vital role played by the federation in promoting, supporting, and encouraging national products by holding festivals for them aligned with Kuwait Vision 2035 and contributing to building the state's food stock system.

It is worth mentioning that "Kuwait: One Hun-



Chairman of the Federation of Cooperative Societies Abdulwahab Al-Fares and Head of Kuwait Festival Association Tariq Al-Obaid.

dred and One Nights" is considered a national project whose goal is to manage the tourism, cultural, and entertainment scene in Kuwait with one aim in an effort to advance, market, and promote Kuwait and make it one of the most vital and distinctive tourist destinations in the region. — KUNA



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Western allies pledge more money for Ukraine military

Niger military rulers order UN official out

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GAZA: An aerial view of buildings destroyed by Zionist air strikes in the Jabalia camp for Palestinian refugees on Oct 11, 2023. — AFP photos

‘Death is near’: Gaza disfigured by Zionist raids

Occupation-imposed full siege leaves Gazans struggling for basic necessities

GAZA: Sheltering from Zionist night raids on Gaza, Mazen Mohammad and his family slept on the ground floor of their apartment block, huddling together with frightened neighbors as explosions rang all around them. The neighborhood they woke up to the next day was ravaged beyond recognition: buildings had crumbled to the ground and debris carpeted the streets.

“As soon as we saw the neighborhood, my wife and I simultaneously asked ourselves: Is this real?” said Mohammad, a 38-year-old father of four. “We felt like we were in a ghost town, as if we were the only survivors,” he told AFP.

The Zionist occupation declared war on Hamas on Sunday following a land, air and sea assault by the Gaza-based resistance group. The multi-pronged attack and the Zionist retaliation has left thousands dead on both sides.

Hamas militants killed more than 900 people in the occupied lands after infiltrating southern communities, shooting dead hundreds including at a desert festival and dragging 150 hostages back to Gaza. In retaliation, the Zionist occupation has bombarded Gaza where officials have reported 900 people killed so far.

The Zionist army said the bodies of roughly 1,500 militants had been found. Mohammad’s family lives in the Al-Rimal neighborhood in western Gaza which was pounded by a heavy barrage of Zionist strikes on Monday night. “We could not ... stay in the apartment because it was on the tenth floor,” said Mohammad.

‘No longer a human’

At day break on Tuesday, hundreds of families flooded Gaza’s streets, many of them barefoot as they walked over debris and shards of glass. “I was shocked when I saw entire neighborhoods destroyed,” said Mohammad as he drove off with his family to Al Nasr neighborhood in central Gaza to stay with friends. He said he had to take several detours because the streets were clogged with rubble.

Outside Al-Shifa Hospital, Gaza’s largest medical complex, men burst into tears after receiving



Palestinian women with their children flee from their homes following Zionist air strikes rush along a street in Gaza on Oct 11, 2023.

news that their loved ones, injured in the Zionist air strikes, had died. The Zionist raids left widespread destruction around the hospital and flattened a neighboring six-story residential building. “I feel death is near,” said May Youssef, a 34-year-old mother of two, told AFP. “If not my death, then that of the people I care about.”

Youssef also complained of a severe shortage of life-saving medicines and essential goods in Gaza, where the occupation has imposed a total siege since Monday, cutting off the water supply, food, electricity and other essential supplies. “I feel like I am no longer a human being, I am helpless,” she said. “My little daughter had a fever ... and we found it very difficult ... to buy medicine,” she said. Most businesses in Gaza, including grocery stores, have closed their doors. Only a few have remained open to cater for urgent needs.

No way out

Gaza’s economy ministry has said that stocks of most basic commodities could last eight months. There is enough flour to last until the end of the year, it said in a statement. On Tuesday long queues formed outside bakeries as Gazans sought to buy bread, but at one of them a man was rebuffed by an employee when he ordered five loaves. He was only allowed two.

The sound of ambulance and police sirens, meanwhile, rings out from every corner of the pummel city, muted only by the overpowering roar of air strikes. With no signs of the violence abating, many residents are trying to escape via Gaza’s sole border crossing with Egypt, the only entry point not controlled by the Zionist entity.

The Rafah crossing was hit by a Zionist air strike Tuesday for the third time in 24 hours. Sinai for Human Rights NGO said Tuesday’s strikes had

prompted the closure of Gaza’s only crossing that’s not controlled by the Zionists, but there was no immediate confirmation from either side. The bombings came after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned Palestinians to leave the Gaza Strip or face death at the hands of the occupation.

Travel through the crossing is restricted to humanitarian cases and often requires time-consuming authorizations. One Gaza company is trying to make a brisk business by arranging travel through Rafah, with those seeking to leave paying hundreds of dollars to register their names. “Demand is high and reservations are complete for at least a whole week,” one company employee told AFP on the condition of anonymity. Abu Ahmad al-Shanti, 47, said the worst is yet to come for those who stay put. “(The Zionist occupation) intends to destroy and annihilate everything in Gaza.” — AFP



Palestinian men carry bread through a heavily bombed street on Oct 10, 2023.

Zionist occupation’s new Arab allies face tough balancing act

DUBAI: Confronted with the war raging between the Zionist occupation and Hamas, Arab countries which have normalized relations with the Zionists in recent years have been forced to balance diplomacy with fiercely pro-Palestinian Arab public opinion. But as analysts predict a long and violent response from the occupation in Gaza, the position faced by those nations is expected to become increasingly troublesome.

In the wake of the Palestinian fighters’ unprecedented attack into Zionist-occupied lands, the United Arab Emirates condemned the kidnapping of Zionist hostages in a break with other regional players. The oil-rich state was the first Gulf country to es-

establish diplomatic ties with the occupation in 2020 under the Abraham Accords. “We are very grateful to the United Arab Emirates for its stance supporting (the Zionist entity),” said Liron Zaslansky, the occupation’s Consul General in Dubai.

On Tuesday, as the Zionists bombed the besieged Gaza Strip, the UAE was also swift to announce \$20 million in humanitarian aid for the Palestinians. Joseph Bahout, director of the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs in Beirut, explained the UAE and other signatories to the Abraham Accords — Bahrain and Morocco — would have to walk a “fairly narrow line” as they weighed commitments to the Zionists with public sympathy for Palestinians.

For the time being, they are navigating this “very uncomfortable” situation by “focusing on the idea of protecting civilians,” said Cinzia Bianco, Gulf specialist at the European Council on Foreign Relations. However, Bahout explained the tactic would “not hold for long in the face of Zionist reprisals, which will probably be very violent”. In Bahrain and

Morocco, which have so far not moved beyond denouncing civilian casualties, demonstrations in support of the Palestinians were organized in the first days of the offensive.

‘Utopian’ idea

But these kinds of expressions of public support will only gain momentum if the recent violence persists, said King’s College London analyst Andreas Krieg. “Even countries like the UAE, where there is no civil society, have to make sure that public rallying around the Palestinian cause is consistent with government policy and communication,” he added.

The escalation of the conflict resulting from the Zionist occupation of Palestine has undermined one of the arguments made at the time of the signing of the Abraham Accords, negotiated under the administration of former US president Donald Trump. Kuwaiti analyst Bader Al-Saif explained the move had “national interests in mind; but it has also been partly marketed as an outside-in approach to peace that could flip the stalemated conflict”. “Now is the time

for normalizing states to use whatever capital they have with (the Zionists) to positively influence policy ... as much as other states are expected to do the same with Hamas,” he added.

Karim Bitar, an associate researcher at the Institute for International and Strategic Affairs (IRIS), in Paris said the normalization process did not address problems at the root of the conflict between the Zionists and the Palestinians — occupation, colonization, the status of Jerusalem, water resources, and the fate of refugees. “The idea of an economic peace, of a de facto solidarity that would be created and lead to a political peace, turned out to be utopian”, Bitar said.

Saudi Arabia, the pre-eminent power in the Gulf, has faced pressure to conclude its own normalization with the Zionists at the urging of the United States. Randa Slim, a researcher at the Middle East Institute think-tank in Washington, explained the Abraham Accords were “here to stay”, but “any future normalization between Arab countries and (the Zionists) is on hold for the foreseeable future”. — AFP

International

Niger military rulers order UN official out

French troops head towards Chad after leaving western-Niger base

NIAMEY: Niger's post-coup military regime has ordered the United Nations coordinator in the country to leave within 72 hours, blaming "obstacles" by the world body to its international recognition. It comes a day after the United States cut off more than \$500 million in assistance to Niger and as France begins withdrawing troops after they were also ordered out.

The Nigerien foreign ministry said in a statement, seen by AFP on Wednesday but dated Tuesday, that the government was expelling Louise Aubin, the UN's resident and humanitarian coordinator, "to take all necessary measures to leave Niamey within 72 hours". Aubin, a Canadian, was appointed to the job in January 2021.

The regime pointed to "obstacles" which it said were presented by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres "with a view to thwarting the full and complete participation of Niger" at last month's UN General Assembly in New York. The military regime has already criticized "the perfidious actions" of the UN chief, saying they were "likely to undermine any effort to end the crisis in our country". Bakary Yaou Sangare, who before the coup was Niger's ambassador to the UN and is now its foreign minister, was the new leaders' chosen representative for the assembly. But, according to a diplomatic source, there was also an application by the overthrown government to represent Niamey. Because of the competing credentials, the matter was deferred and no representative from Niger was added to the speakers' list. Sangare did not address the General Assembly.

In December, neighboring Burkina Faso — whose ruling junta also came to power in a coup — expelled the UN's coordinator in the country. It said Italian diplomat Barbara Manzi's decision to "unilaterally" withdraw non-essential UN staff from the capital Ouagadougou justified the move.

French troops withdraw

Niger's military regime said on Tuesday it escorted the first convoy of French soldiers from their base in the western town of Ouallam headed towards Chad. Chad's capital N'Djamena is 1,600 kilometers (1,000 miles) from Niamey and is the base for French



NIAMEY: A military truck belonging to Niger's security forces, part of an escort to a French Army military convoy, crosses the Lazaret district on Oct 10, 2023. — AFP

forces in the Sahel command.

Around 1,000 French troops were stationed in Niamey, with another 400 deployed at two forward bases in the northwest, near Mali and Burkina Faso, a hotbed of insurgent activity. In addition to the departure by land, "three special flights" have been registered at the airport in Niamey, two for the departure of "97 special forces elements" and one "dedicated to logistics". Niger's new rulers said in a statement on national television. The regime, which has assured the withdrawal would happen with "complete safety", said the disen-

agement would continue on "a timetable agreed to by both parties". It is the third time in 18 months that French troops have been sent packing by a former African colony, dealing a severe blow to France's influence on the continent and prestige on the international stage. France's ambassador to Niger was also given his marching orders by the leaders of the coup that toppled the French-backed president on July 26.

The United States on Tuesday declared that Niger's ousting of a democratic government — seen as a key bulwark against Russia — had been a coup. "Any

resumption of US assistance will require action ... to usher in democratic governance in a quick and credible timeframe," State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said. The United States, along with West African nations and former colonial power France, had been pressing the military to restore President Mohamed Bazoum. Washington is keeping about 1,000 military personnel in Niger, but they are no longer actively training or assisting Niger forces, another US official said. They will continue to work to monitor threats from jihadists. — AFP

Titanic submersible debris, human remains recovered

WASHINGTON: More debris and suspected human remains have been recovered from a privately owned submersible which failed catastrophically in June while on a mission to the Titanic, the US Coast Guard said. All five people on board the recreational sub, named Titan and operated by US-based company OceanGate, were killed when the vessel imploded, which is believed to have occurred during its June 18 descent.

The sub's failure was confirmed on June 22, ending a days-long rescue mission which captivated the world. The Coast Guard has launched its highest level of probe, called a Marine Board of Investigation, into the accident. "Marine safety engineers with the Coast Guard's Marine Board of Investigation (MBI) recovered and transferred remaining Titan submersible debris and evidence from the North Atlantic Ocean seafloor" on October 4, the US Coast Guard said in a statement Tuesday.

"Additional presumed human remains were carefully recovered from within Titan's debris and transported for analysis by US medical professionals," it added. Some wreckage and presumed human remains were also recovered in late June. The Coast Guard said it was coordinating with the US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) "and other international investigative agencies to schedule a joint evidence review of recovered Titan debris."



In this US Department of Defense photo, US Coast Guard engineers working on the Titan submersible case, conduct a survey of debris from the Titan in the North Atlantic Ocean on Oct 1, 2023. — AFP

The five men aboard the Titan were British explorer Hamish Harding, French submarine expert Paul-Henri Nargeolet, Pakistani-British tycoon Shahzada Dawood and his son Suleman, and Stockton Rush, CEO of the sub's operator OceanGate Expeditions. A debris field was found 1,600 feet (500 meters) from the bow of the Titanic, which sits 400 miles off the coast of Newfoundland.

The victims were presumed to have died instantly when the Titan, about the size of an SUV car, imploded under the crushing pressure of the North

Atlantic at a depth of more than two miles (nearly four kilometers). The US Coast Guard and Canadian authorities have launched probes into the cause of the tragedy, which occurred after the Titan lost contact about an hour and 45 minutes after plunging into the ocean. The Titanic hit an iceberg and sank in 1912 during its maiden voyage from England to New York with 2,224 passengers and crew on board. More than 1,500 people died. It was found in 1985 and has become a lure for nautical experts and underwater tourists. — AFP

Arabs stress on need to protect...

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary-General Jassem Al-Budaiwi on Wednesday underlined the importance of continuing to provide humanitarian aid to Palestinians suffering in the recent escalation of Gaza. This came during a meeting between Al-Budaiwi and the Europe-

an Union Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez Lenarcic, on the sidelines of the 27th session of the GCC-EU Joint Ministerial Council in Muscat, the General Secretariat said in a statement.

Al-Budaiwi said that both sides stressed that the current situation in the occupied Palestinian territories would lead to more tragic humanitarian conditions, so it must come to an end immediately. He also added that they discussed ways to enhance cooperation between the GCC and Europe in various fields of common interest through the joint action plan approved by both sides. — KUNA

mondial artifact preserved in the vacuum of space," according to NASA, making it an attractive target for study. Its orbit, which intersects that of our planet, also made the journey easier than going to the Asteroid Belt, which lies between Mars and Jupiter.

In addition to scientific insights, better understanding of Benu's composition could prove useful if humanity ever needs to steer it away. While there is no risk of it hitting Earth through the mid 2100s, the chances rise to around 1 in 1,750 between then and the year 2300, NASA says. Data gathered by the OSIRIS-REx spacecraft revealed the particles making up Benu's exterior were so loosely packed that if a person were to step onto the surface, they might sink in, much like a pit of plastic balls in children's play areas.

Researchers have so far focused their efforts not on the main sample itself but on "bonus particles," that lay on top of the sample collecting mechanism. An inspection of the remainder of the sample will follow later. Back in October 2020, when the OSIRIS-REx probe shot nitrogen gas at Benu to collect material, a flap meant to seal the sample got wedged open, allowing some of the material to flow out into another compartment. — AFP

NASA asteroid sample contains...

Continued from Page 1

All life on Earth meanwhile is based on carbon, which forms bonds with other elements to produce proteins and enzymes as well as the building blocks of genetic code, DNA and RNA. The findings were made through a preliminary analysis involving scanning electron microscopy, X-ray computed tomography and more. "This stuff is an astrobiologist's dream," said scientist Daniel Glavin, adding there was much more work to be done and the sample would be shared with labs around the world for further study.

OSIRIS-REx wasn't the first probe to rendezvous with an asteroid and bring back samples for study - Japan succeeded in the feat twice, returning celestial dust in 2010 and 2020. But the amount collected - an estimated 250 grams (half a pound) - dwarfs that returned by the Japanese missions, with Hayabusa2 managing only 5.4 grams. Named after an ancient Egyptian deity, Benu is a "pri-

Gaza burns; Death toll mounts...

Continued from Page 1

expressed revulsion at the "sheer evil" of the slaughter of civilians in the unprecedented assault Hamas unleashed from Saturday.

Amid the crisis that has been labeled Zionists' "9/11", Netanyahu struck the political deal with Gantz and pledged to freeze for now his government's flashpoint judicial overhaul plan that has sparked an unprecedented wave of mass protests since the start of the year. Netanyahu's extreme-right and ultra-Orthodox Jewish allies will remain in government, however.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid has not joined the temporary alliance, although the joint statement said a seat would be "reserved" for him in the war cabinet. "Zionist entity before anything else," Gantz wrote in a social media post while the far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir wrote that he "welcomes the unity, now we must win".

As the war has raged, fears have been intense in Zionist entity for the fate of at least 150 hostages—mostly Zionists but also including foreign and dual nationals—being held in Gaza by Hamas. Hamas has claimed that four of the captives died in strikes and has threatened to kill other hostages if civilian targets are bombed without advance warning. Concern has mounted over the worsening humanitarian crisis in war-torn Gaza, where Zionists had leveled over 1,000 buildings and imposed a total siege, cutting off water, food and energy supplies for 2.3 million people.

The enclave's sole power plant shut down Wednesday after running out of fuel, Gaza's electricity provider said. More than 260,000 Gaza residents have been forced from their homes, a UN aid agency said, while the European Union called for a "humanitarian corridor" to allow

Chinese scientists join Fukushima water review

TOKYO: Chinese scientists will this month take part in extensive sampling of Fukushima's coastal waters for the first time since the release of treated wastewater from its stricken nuclear plant began, Japanese officials said Wednesday. Experts from China will join those from Canada, South Korea and the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in collecting samples of water, sediment and marine creatures from October 15 to 23.

The survey will also collect seafood samples from the region's markets, the import of which has been banned by Beijing. China has repeatedly criticized the release of water once used to cool the plant's reactors. "It's important that we ensure the transparency of our monitoring process," a Japanese official told reporters Wednesday, confirming it would be the first extensive involvement by Chinese experts since the release of water started in August.

Samples collected by the teams will be sent back to labs in their home countries for independent review, and the IAEA will evaluate and publish those results, the UN body said in a press release. Tokyo Electric Power (Tepco) has said the decades-long process will involve some 1.34 million tons of treated wastewater from the plant, which suffered a meltdown following a devastating 2011 earthquake and tsunami. Japan has insisted throughout that the treated water, which is being released in batches, poses no health risks, a view backed by the IAEA. — AFP

civilians to flee the enclave's fifth war in 15 years. Zionists appeared to be readying for a possible ground invasion of Gaza, but faces the threat of a multi-front war after also coming under rocket attack from militant groups in neighboring Lebanon and Syria.

Zionist entity again struck targets Wednesday in southern Lebanon, an area controlled by Hezbollah, an ally of arch enemy Iran. Biden, who has diverted an aircraft carrier battle group to the eastern Mediterranean, issued a stern warning to foes: "To any country, any organization, anyone thinking of taking advantage of this situation, I have one word: don't." A first US aircraft has delivered "advanced armaments" to southern Nevatim Airbase, the army said, declaring that "our common enemies know that the cooperation between our militaries is stronger than ever".

'Staggering' death toll

Zionist entity has been badly shaken by the deadliest attack since its creation in 1948 and the intelligence failure that allowed more than 1,500 militants to storm through the Gaza security barrier in their coordinated land, air and sea attack on the Jewish Sabbath. Hamas gunmen swept into small towns and kibbutzim and indiscriminately killed residents who hid in their homes or died defending their communities. Biden in a solemn White House speech Tuesday expressed his disgust at atrocities including murders of entire families, rapes of women and "stomach-turning reports of babies being killed".

Troops have retaken more than a dozen southern towns near Gaza after days of grueling street battles that have left the bodies of at least 1,500 Hamas militants strewn in the streets. "We are discovering bodies of dead people in the various communities that Hamas infiltrated and where they conducted their massacres," said army spokesman Jonathan Conrincus. "The death toll is a staggering 1,200 dead Zionists ... the overwhelming majority of them" civilians, he said, with the army later also reporting 169 fallen soldiers. — AFP

International

Western allies pledge more money for Ukraine military

UK-run fund, US to provide more than \$300 million in aid

BRUSSELS/LONDON: Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said Wednesday that the United States will provide a new \$200 million military assistance package for Ukraine, as opposition from hardline Republican lawmakers puts future aid for Kyiv in doubt. "I'm proud that the United States will announce its latest security assistance package for Ukraine, valued at \$200 million," Austin said alongside President Volodymyr Zelensky at the opening of a meeting of Kyiv's international supporters in Brussels.

The package includes air defense munitions, artillery and rocket ammunition and anti-tank weapons, among other items, the US defense chief said. It is the first package announced since Congress dropped new funding for Kyiv from a recent bill to avert a US government shutdown — a move that called into doubt Washington's continued commitment to aiding Ukraine's fight against invading Russian forces.

Austin nonetheless insisted Wednesday — as he has before — that the United States "will stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes." Even in the absence of further action by Congress, the US government still has authority to withdraw more than \$5 billion in equipment for Ukraine from American military stocks.

A senior US official said there is no immediate cause for alarm when it comes to Ukraine assistance. "Even if we do have ... some difficulties we have to work out within the US Congress, there is a lot of money there to still sustain the pace of support that we're accustomed to, and then allies are stepping forward with their own announcements," the official told journalists in Brussels.

"Zelensky's visit really couldn't have come at a better moment in a way, particularly if our goal is to signal continued support for Ukraine, even though there are challenges ... within the US system." Washington is by far the biggest donor of military aid to

Kyiv, and a cut to American assistance would be a major blow to Ukraine as it presses ahead with a slow-moving counteroffensive and readies for the second winter of the war.

Austin said the United States has committed some \$43.9 billion in security assistance since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, while all other donors have promised more than \$33 billion. "I continue to firmly believe that our support for the forces of freedom in Ukraine will hold fast in any season or any storm," he said.

Help clearing minefields

European allies are also allocating more funding to Ukraine. Britain and other northern European allies announced a new £100 million (\$123 million) military support package Wednesday for Ukraine, aimed at helping its armed forces clear minefields, maintain vehicles and protect key infrastructure.

The package, to be provided using money from the UK-administered International Fund for Ukraine (IFU), will provide equipment to help its soldiers cross minefields and bridge rivers and trenches, Britain's Ministry of Defence said (MoD). It will also comprise heavy duty plant vehicles to destroy Russian non-explosive obstacles and help Ukraine build defensive positions to protect critical national infrastructure, it added.

The new support comes as Kyiv's Western backers race to step up weapons deliveries ahead of winter after its summer offensive failed to muster the hoped-for gains on the battlefield. It also coincides with the final contracts having been signed from a previously announced IFU package that will see more than £70 million of air defense capabilities dispatched to Ukraine, according to the MoD.

They include the MSI-DS Terrahawk Paladin platform, which can track and destroy drones and



GROZA: Ukrainian emergency personnel clear debris on the site of a Russian strike which hit a shop and cafe in the village of Groza on Oct 6, 2023. — AFP

protect infrastructure. Britain's recently appointed Defence Secretary Grant Shapps said the new air defense systems would help protect civilians from Russia's "barbaric bombing campaign" against Ukraine. He added the new equipment pledged would "give Ukrainian soldiers what they need to breach Russia's deadly minefields". Shapps will jointly announce the support Wednesday alongside counterparts from IFU partner nations at a wider Ukraine-focused meeting at NATO headquarters in Brussels.

The IFU — a funding mechanism that uses contributions from international partners to procure military assistance for Ukraine — was launched by Britain and Denmark in 2022 and has raised £785

million to date. The contributions have come from its founders and five other members — Norway, Netherlands, Sweden, Iceland and Lithuania — and are administered by London.

Britain's Admiral Tony Radakin, Chief of the Defence Staff, said the new package was "the latest in an unprecedented and sustained effort by 50 nations" to support Ukraine's war effort. He argued Russian President Vladimir Putin had underestimated "the strength and resilience of his opposition". "If we stick together, and stay the course, then Russia will continue to lose, Ukraine will prevail and the rules that matter to global security will endure," Radakin said. — AFP

Women, children majority of dead in Afghan quakes

HERAT: More than 90 percent of those killed in a series of earthquakes in western Afghanistan were women and children, UNICEF said Wednesday, as fresh tremors terrorized residents of villages flattened by the disaster. The magnitude 6.3 earthquake hit at dawn around 30 kilometers (19 miles) north of Herat city — the latest in a series of quakes that have left thousands homeless since the weekend.

In total more than 1,000 people have been killed and hundreds more injured, the Afghan government said Wednesday, revising down an earlier toll of over 2,000. The brunt of fatalities was borne by women and children when the first magnitude 6.3 quake hit Saturday around 11:00 am (0630 GMT), said Herat-based UNICEF field officer Siddiq Ibrahim. "Women and children are often at home, tending to the household and caring for children, so when structures collapse, they are the most at risk," he said in a statement.

Forty-year-old Mohammad Naeem told AFP he lost 12 relatives, including his mother, after Saturday's earthquakes. "We can't live here anymore. You can see, our family got martyred here. How could we live here?"

Children scared to sleep

At least one person was killed and around 130 injured in the latest quake on Wednesday, according to officials. Some of the wounded were hit by the debris of already destroyed homes, said Abdul Zahir Noorzai, ambulance manager for Herat Regional Hospital.

Thirty-two-year-old Abdul Qudos said survivors



HERAT: Afghan mourners offer mass funeral prayers for the people killed in a series of earthquakes in Zende Jan district of Herat province on Oct 9, 2023. — AFP

had been left terrified by the multiple aftershocks. "We are so scared that even when we see the trees moving (in the wind), we think it's another earthquake coming," he told AFP. Earthquakes are frequent in Afghanistan and in the west and center of the country are mostly caused by the Arabian and Eurasian tectonic plates jutting against each other.

Public health minister Qalandar Ebad attributed the confusion over fatality figures to the remoteness of the area and double reporting during the rescue effort. "When whole villages are destroyed and populations erased ... verifying the affected and martyred people, and the number of wounded, is a very difficult process," he said, adding that 2,400 had been injured.

Casualties in flux

Thousands of survivors were bracing for a winter of homelessness on Tuesday as rescuers made last-ditch efforts to find survivors. Volunteers have worked with spades and pickaxes in Herat province since Saturday's

deadly magnitude 6.3 quake — followed by powerful aftershocks — while others dug graves instead. The quakes totally destroyed at least six villages in rural Zende Jan district and affected more than 12,000 people, the United Nations said. "That area is very cold, staying there after the evening is very difficult," said minister Ebad. "We know they could live there in tents for one month, but more than that would probably be very difficult." Zareen, in the village of Nayeb Rafi, where 11 of his family members were killed in the crush of falling masonry, said aid tents would not withstand the winter storms. "If the government doesn't take us away or help us, we will be stuck here," the man in his 70s told AFP.

Providing shelter on a large scale will be a challenge for Afghanistan's Taliban authorities, who seized power in August 2021, and have fractious relations with international aid organizations. "Not a single house is left, not even a room where we could stay at night," said 40-year-old Mohammad Naeem, who told AFP he lost 12 relatives including his mother. — AFP



MELBOURNE: This handout photograph taken on Oct 11, 2023 and released by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade shows Australian journalist Cheng Lei upon her arrival at the airport in Melbourne. — AFP

Australian reporter released after three years in Chinese jail

SYDNEY: Australian journalist Cheng Lei was deported from China on Wednesday after more than three years in detention on espionage charges widely seen as politically motivated. Cheng, a former anchor for Chinese state broadcaster CGTN, had been held since August 2020. The mother of two had been a familiar face on the state broadcaster's English-language channel, conducting interviews with noted CEOs from around the world.

She was only formally arrested months after disappearing, and in an opaque case was eventually charged with "supplying state secrets overseas". "Her return brings an end to a very difficult few years," Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said, hailing her return home as news that "will be warmly welcomed, not just by her family and friends, but by all Australians".

Cheng was detained at a time of strained relations between Beijing and Canberra, with her rough treatment souring relations further. China has repeatedly detained foreign nationals at times of high political tension with their home nations, raising accusations of hostage diplomacy. She was tried behind closed doors, with Australia's ambassador to China blocked from entering the court to observe proceedings.

Australia's government had long campaigned for her release, calling for China to follow "basic standards of justice, procedural fairness and humane treatment". Albanese said Cheng had been released after the "completion of legal processes in China". He also said that her return home would facilitate his visit to China at a "mutually agreed time" this year. In a statement, China's ministry of state security said the journalist had been deported "after serving her sentence" of two years and 11 months in prison on charges of "illegally providing state secrets overseas".

'I miss the sun'

There had been growing fears for Cheng's wellbeing in recent months, with partner Nick Coyle saying she was suffering from a "range of health issues". Born in Hunan province, Cheng emigrated to Australia as a child and became a citizen of her adoptive home. She returned to China, joining the state broadcaster in 2012. China does not allow citizens to hold dual nationality.

Cheng had written about her bleak prison conditions in China in a candid note dictated to Australian officials from jail and released last August. "I miss the sun," read the message, described as a "love letter" to Australia. "In my cell, the sunlight shines through the window but I can stand in it for only 10 hours a year." Cheng's case has often been compared with that of Chinese-born Australian writer Yang Jun, who has also been detained in China since 2019 on vaguely defined espionage charges. Australia-China relations had been in deep freeze after Canberra barred Chinese tech firm Huawei from lucrative contracts and pushed back against Chinese influence campaigns in Australia. — AFP



YAOUNDE: A person who has lost a relative cries near the scene of destruction caused by a landslide in the district of Mbankolo, northwest of Yaounde, on Oct 9, 2023. — AFP photos

Cameroon landslide survivors scramble to salvage their lives

YAOUNDE: A bar is playing religious music at the entrance to the Nkol Etam area of the Cameroon capital, where torrential rains brought down a hillside killing 28 people. A dozen people are drinking, distraught and grieving as they recall the landslide that hit on Sunday evening. A three-day downpour burst a dam wall holding a man-made lake on higher ground. A sea of mud swept away some 30 homes spread across the hill. Landslides plague Yaounde in the rainy season, with a population of three million sprawled over surrounding hills and too many living in shacks built on land not fit for construction. "We are the first victims," sighs a young woman, refusing to reveal her name. "A birthday party was underway at home when the water arrived. The house was totally destroyed."

Many local people in this northwest corner of the capital ask not to be identified as many of the shacks,

while long tolerated, were not legally constructed. Restaurant owner Frederic Kuete, aged 25, is fighting to hold back the tears. "I've lost everything. The clothes I'm wearing I just bought them," he says. "I've lived in the area for 10 years. When the tragedy happened, I was outside the house, the rain stopped me from getting home earlier." From Sunday night, local residents and rescue workers pulled 27 bodies from the thick layer of mud and stone that flowed down to the foot of the hill. "We pulled out another body today," Colonel David Petato Poulfong, commander of the second fire brigade corps, told AFP at the site of the disaster on Tuesday afternoon.

Baby pulled out alive

On Monday a seven-month old baby had been found alive among the wreckage and several more people were saved on Tuesday, the colonel said. He admitted to not knowing if more people might still be under the rubble or missing. Several of his men were still at work on the ground but diggers had already started to raze what was left standing.

Paul Atanga Nji, minister of territorial administration, had on Monday railed against the building of houses "in a dangerous area". "We will work to make people aware so that all these non-buildable areas are freed up

... every year there are deaths," he said. After decades in which the shacks were allowed to sprout by the authorities, he ordered all remaining construction on Nkol Etam's hillside to be knocked down. That set survivors scrambling to salvage whatever they could — armchairs, mattresses, beds. Men, women and children are coming and going with bags and cases on their heads, struggling through the mud.

Peter Nkoh Fossi, says he has lived in the area for 23 years, and he is angry. His house was one of those knocked down on Tuesday. "This was my living room," he explains, pointing to part of a wall where his wife and children squat. "I'm 72 with six children and I don't have a penny. Where are we to go? The government could have given us a week or two to get organized," he says. Kuete, the restaurant owner, says he was phoned on Sunday night and told his house was collapsing. "I ran and we saved the mother of my girlfriend and her daughter. My little brother was hurt and is in hospital but we did not find his girlfriend," he says. Thirty-five-year-old golf coach Augustin Ondobo recalls hearing the landslide and finding "several bodies already floating on the water". An old lady and her children are praying outside their house which bears a painted red cross, meaning it is marked for demolition, still hoping it will be spared the bulldozers. — AFP



Residents look at the destruction caused by the landslide.

Business

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2023

Zain wins 'Outstanding 5G Business Development' award

Recognition during SAMENA Council's prestigious LEAD awards in Dubai

KUWAIT: Zain Kuwait has been awarded the 'Outstanding 5G Business Development' award during SAMENA Council's Leadership & Excellence (LEAD) Awards ceremony in Dubai, UAE. The distinguished event was attended by top executives and leaders from the region's biggest telecom operators, ICT providers, and regulatory bodies.

During the prestigious ceremony, SAMENA Telecommunications Council CEO Bocar A. BA presented the award trophy to Zain Kuwait CEO Eaman Al-Roudhan in recognition of the company's excellence in empowering and accelerating business development using the most advanced 5G applications. Zain continues to lead the market with this revolutionary technology to enable sustainable growth for Kuwait's public and private sectors.

Commenting on this occasion, Eaman Al-Roudhan said: "This recognition highlights Zain's leadership in the local market and our unwavering efforts to empower digital transformation within the nation's biggest industries by leveraging on our powerful 5G infrastructure and solid partnerships ecosystem with the biggest global tech providers. Looking forward, we strive to continue Zain Kuwait's leadership with the rollout of 5.5G technology, opening up entire new horizons for businesses and consumers alike."

"In 2019, Zain led the market by being the first operator to commercially launch 5G services, setting a new precedent in the local and regional telecom industries. Since then, more successes have followed in adapting 5G technologies to overhaul our customers' digital journeys," Al-Roudhan added.

The CEO continued: "We've also offered our



DUBAI: SAMENA Telecommunications Council CEO Bocar A. BA presents the award trophy to Zain Kuwait CEO Eaman Al-Roudhan.

- **Eaman Al-Roudhan:** We strive to continue Zain Kuwait's leadership with rollout of 5.5G technology

customers entire new experiences and flexible offerings in entertainment content, while continuing to upgrade our infrastructure and offer the most advanced technology solutions. Last year, Zain

became the first operator in the world to offer Voice over 5G (Vo5G) services, allowing our network to reach its full potential yet."

The Leadership & Excellence (LEAD) Awards



are one of the region's most distinguished platforms that celebrate notable achievements of the region's ICT sector. The awards are organized by SAMENA Council, the federation of telecom operators and technology providers from three major regions of the globe: South Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa.

The LEAD Awards recognize the accelerated efforts by regional technology providers, corporates, telecom operators, regulators, and digital space players, focusing on acknowledging efforts on four main fronts: Business Excellence, Leadership in Regulatory Enablement, Leadership in User Experience, and Innovation Excellence.

This year, the awards celebrated advanced mobile connectivity success in the region, with a focus on 5G business development. In addition, the event presented a unique platform for executives and decision makers from telecom operators and ICT providers to explore the best practices and workflows to further develop this vital sector.

Zain expressed its appreciation to SAMENA Council for this recognition, which celebrates the vital role played by Kuwait's private sector companies in enabling digital transformation and progressing the national economy. The company always seeks to achieve new levels of excellence in all the services it offers to its customers to meet their needs and aspirations and deliver its promise by offering the best services and latest technologies.

World Bank needs to get 'better', 'bigger': President

MARRAKESH: The World Bank's new president, Ajay Banga, said Wednesday that the global lender must become "better" and "bigger" to boost its capacity to help developing countries battle climate change, poverty and pandemics.

Banga, who was appointed in June, made his plea at the annual meetings of the IMF and World Bank in the southern Moroccan city of Marrakesh where reform of the Washington-based institutions is a major agenda item. The former CEO of Mastercard has previously vowed to "fix the plumbing" at the bank, saying it was "dysfunctional" despite a dedicated staff.

Banga said at a press conference on Wednesday that a "deep cultural change" is needed at an "institution that has a proud history and done an amazing job over the last 78 years." He noted that countries have to deal with various departments and that it can take 27 months between the time a project is discussed and is finally approved. "The idea of a better bank is a bank that works better with itself, is more efficient in its own processes," Banga said.

The Indian-born, naturalized US citizen has vowed to made climate change a top priority after he took



MARRAKESH: World Bank Group (WBG) president Ajay Banga attends a press conference in Marrakesh on October 11, 2023. — AFP

over from David Malpass, a former US Treasury official who stepped down early from his five-year term amid questions about his stance on the issue. Banga wants to redefine the vision of the bank towards "eradicating poverty on a livable planet".

He said poverty, pandemics and climate change were "almost like a perfect storm" that can no longer be treated separately. The bank also needs more financial firepower, he said, adding that measures underway could boost its lending capacity by \$150 billion over the next decade.

"It's a substantial number, but it's not going to be enough for the kinds of challenges the world has," he said. "There is no doubt that we need to be a bigger

bank," Banga said. He cited an independent expert group commissioned by the G20, which recommended the tripling of financing of multilateral development banks. "The G20 expert group has put out its own thinking on that. That has not yet been accepted by the G20," Banga said.

"I'm definitely going to go back to our shareholders to seek a bigger bank because I believe that is what the world needs for the next coming decades," he said. US President Joe Biden has asked Congress for support to unlock concessional financing for the World Bank, which Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said could amount to \$27 billion. But work in Congress is being held up as Republicans look for a new House speaker following the ouster of Kevin McCarthy by hardliners last week. Banga, however, said he was "hopeful" that Congress would approve the measure.

"There are plenty of people on both sides of the House, as well as both sides of the Senate, who understand the value of multilateral banking system as a key to way for the Western and developed world to continue to do the right thing around the world," he said. Other countries such as Germany have contributed while Nordic nations and Saudi Arabia are discussing ways to contribute through various instruments, he said. Yellen said at a separate press conference that she would ask other countries to provide immediate concessional finance for the World Bank. "We're receiving some positive responses," she said. "This is a very important priority for the president." — AFP



DOHA: Qatar has agreed to supply France's TotalEnergies with natural gas for 27 years, its state energy company announced on Wednesday.

Qatar signs 27-yr gas supply deal with France's Total

DOHA: Qatar has agreed to supply France's TotalEnergies with natural gas for 27 years, its state energy company announced on Wednesday. Qatar will supply 3.5 million tons of gas a year under the deal, QatarEnergy said, following two agreements with Total last year for a share of the Gulf state's huge North Field gas expansion project.

"These two new agreements we have signed with our partner TotalEnergies, demonstrate our continued commitment to the European markets in general, and to the French market in particular, thus contributing to France's energy security," Qatari Energy Minister Saad Al-Kaabi said. Total signed a \$1.5 billion deal with QatarEnergy in September last year giving it a 9.3 percent stake in Qatar's North Field South project, the second phase of the field's expansion. In June 2022, the French energy giant became the first partner in the first phase of the expansion, North Field East, investing more than \$2 billion for a 6.25 percent total share.

Deliveries of the gas to southern France are expected to begin in 2026. "Our commitment to ensure continued and reliable supplies of energy to Europe and the rest of the world is underpinned by our substantial and ongoing investments across the entire gas value chain," Al-Kaabi, who is also chief of QatarEnergy added.

After Moscow invaded Ukraine last year, European nations have scrambled to replace lost deliveries of natural gas following the withdrawal of Russia from the market. Under Qatar's North Field expansion of the world's biggest natural gas field, which extends under the Gulf into Iranian territory, Qatar is set to raise its output of liquefied natural gas (LNG) by 60 percent or more to 126 million tons a year by 2027. The main market for Qatari gas has traditionally been found in Asia, led by nations like China, Japan and South Korea. Qatar's deal with Total is equal in length to those agreed by the China National Petroleum Corporation in June and China's Sinopec in 2022, making it the third such deal, all of which have been the longest in the liquefied gas industry. — AFP

German economy to shrink in 2023, says govt

FRANKFURT: The German government slashed its growth forecast Wednesday, predicting Europe's top economy will shrink this year as it battles high inflation, elevated energy prices and a manufacturing slump. Output will shrink 0.4 percent, the economy ministry said in its latest projections. This is a marked downgrade from its last estimate in April, when Berlin forecast growth of 0.4 percent in 2023.

The economy has faced severe headwinds since Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year sent inflation, particularly the cost of energy, soaring. The crisis has been compounded by a slowdown in the energy-hungry manufacturing sector, weakness in key trading partner China, and aggressive eurozone rate hikes aimed at taming runaway consumer prices.

"In a difficult geopolitical environment, we are emerging from the crisis more slowly than expected," Economy Minister Robert Habeck acknowledged in a statement. The German economy fell into recession around the turn of the year and has since been struggling to get back on its feet, registering zero growth in the second quarter. The government's prediction is in line with other recent gloomy estimates.

The International Monetary Fund on Tuesday forecast Germany will be the worst performing major economy in 2023, shrinking 0.5 percent. In their



BERLIN: Customers buy fruit from a street vendor in Frankfurt am Main, western Germany, on October 11, 2023. — AFP

forecasts Wednesday, the government predicted the economy would pick up next year with growth of 1.3 percent, and expand by 1.5 percent in 2025. Inflation is expected to come in at 6.1 percent this year, before declining to 2.6 percent next year and two percent in 2025, the economy ministry said.

Habeck sought to strike an upbeat tone, noting that "for the coming year, we expect growth again." "The course for a sustainable economic recovery has been set: the decline in inflation is significant, and with it, real incomes are rising again." The last official forecast in April came as hopes were rising that Germany had weathered the energy crisis better than expected, with some indica-

tors pointing to an industrial rebound. But the picture has deteriorated again in recent months, with expectations growing the economy could tip back into recession.

While they have come down, energy prices are still far higher than prior to the Ukraine war. And while inflation slowed to 4.5 percent in September, it remains stubbornly high. The worsening economic situation has led to debate about whether Germany is once again the "sick man of Europe", a label from the late 1990s when the country grappled with the costly fallout of reunification. But some analysts have said this is going too far, pointing out the labour market remains robust despite the challenges. — AFP

Business

EU's tech 'sheriff' turns to X rival in disinfo duel with Musk

Breton joins Bluesky network to further rile Musk

BRUSSELS: The EU's top internet enforcer took to X, the rebranded Twitter, on Wednesday to trumpet a rival platform, as a duel with Elon Musk over disinformation ratcheted up.

Thierry Breton, the European Union's commissioner for industry and the digital economy, joined the Bluesky network in a move designed to further rile Musk, who is fighting to keep X relevant but out of Brussels' regulatory sights. It came a day after Breton warned Musk that X was spreading "illegal content and disinformation" in relation to the conflict between the Zionist entity and Hamas.

Breton pointed out that X was now being held to account under a new EU law, the Digital Services Act (DSA), which carries penalties of up to six percent of global turnover if a big online platform is found in breach of rules on moderating content. On Wednesday, Breton posted on X that "even though the grass is not (always) greener on the other side, the sky is sometimes... bluer".

In case anybody missed the allusion to Bluesky, Breton also posted his new Bluesky profile on his X feed, giving his Bluesky handle and a bio description of "EU Commissioner. Digital enforcer. Father."

Over on Bluesky—a rapidly-growing US platform led by former Twitter executives—Breton so far has posted just once: a copy of the letter he sent to Musk giving the X owner 24 hours to respond with details on what he is doing to curb disinformation. The move by Breton is a public challenge to Musk, who is sen-



BRUSSELS: EU commissioner for internal market Thierry Breton speaks during a press conference on the Critical Raw Materials Act, the EU's long-term competitiveness strategy, and 30 years of the Single Market at the EU headquarters in Brussels. — AFP

sitive to references on his platform to the competitors that are syphoning off X/Twitter users upset with the direction the billionaire is taking his platform.

For a time, Musk—a self-described free-speech "absolutist"—even had X block links pointing users to an open-source rival Mastodon. And he has started legal action against Threads, a new alternative launched by Facebook parent Meta that is not available in Europe because of wariness over the EU's regulatory oversight. Bluesky, yet another mi-

croblogging platform, is tiny so far compared to X because access is invitation-only from existing users, preventing bots, spammers and propaganda operators from creating thousands of fake accounts.

Yet its board members include Jack Dorsey, Twitter's co-founder, and users say their experience with Bluesky thus far is that it has little of the trolling, spam and disinformation encountered on X or other social media. In a public reply to Breton's warning over disinformation related to the Zionist entity/Hamas conflict, Musk posted on X that the platform's policy was that "everything was open source and transparent, an approach that I know the EU supports".

He asked the EU commissioner to "please list the violations you allude to on X", signing off "merci beaucoup" in a nod to Breton's French nationality. Breton responded on X that it was up to Musk to "demonstrate that you walk the talk" and said his team was standing by to "enforce rigorously" DSA compliance. Breton does not decide himself what constitutes illegal online content—that is defined by EU laws or legislation in EU member countries—but he plays an active role in putting attention on platforms.

The commissioner has hailed the EU rules he helped bring in as an effort to tame the online "Wild West". In a post on X last year, he said: "A new sheriff is in town—and it goes by the name DSA."

Since Musk bought Twitter in 2022 he has brought in changes that include firing many staff who had handled content moderation, allowing back figures

such as former US president Donald Trump, who had been banned for inflammatory posts, and of course changing the platform's name to X. X also left an EU voluntary code of practice on fighting disinformation and misinformation which served as a pointer towards the sort of scrutiny now imposed under the mandatory DSA. Another EU commissioner, Vera Jourova, last month said that an analysis in three EU countries showed X had the biggest proportion of disinformation compared to other big platforms.

Advertisers have stepped back from X, causing its revenues to plummet. Several celebrities and newsmakers, too, have left. Since Hamas militants stormed the Zionist entity's border area around the Gaza enclave on the weekend, big online platforms have been flooded with videos showing gruesome deaths, hostages and bombardments. On X, the authenticity and veracity of many of the posts are difficult to determine because the platform has replaced its blue-tick verification system with one where any user can simply buy in. In several posts, images from unrelated areas and incidents have been falsely presented as occurring during the Hamas raids or conflict with the Zionist entity.

And since last week, X has ceased giving links to news articles that are posted, replacing them with an image only that gives no context or description. News agency AFP has announced that it is taking legal action against X in France to enforce EU law relating to payments for use of online content. — AFP

IEA: Immediate cuts to methane from fossil fuel needed

BANGKOK: Methane emissions from fossil fuels must be slashed immediately to limit climate warming, and major reductions are possible with existing technologies at low cost, the International Energy Agency said Wednesday. Methane is far less abundant in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide, but is responsible for around 30 percent of the global rise in temperatures to date. It lingers in the atmosphere for only around a decade, but absorbs energy much more quickly than carbon dioxide, and cutting emissions of the greenhouse gas is seen as a quick way

to limit global warming in the short term, and rapidly improve air quality.

The energy sector accounts for nearly 40 percent of the methane produced by human activity, but it has made little progress on curbing emissions. "Immediate reductions in methane emissions are needed to limit warming to 1.5 Celcius," the IEA said.

"Without targeted action on methane, even with deep reductions in fossil fuel use, the increase in the global average surface temperature will likely exceed 1.6C by 2050," it added in a new report. The agency said 75 percent of methane emissions from oil and gas operations, and half of that produced by coal, could be abated with existing technology.

And the cost of using all existing mitigation strategies in the oil and gas sector through 2030 amounts to "less than two percent of the net income earned by this industry in 2022," the IEA added. Methane emissions are expected to fall if the world proceeds

towards its stated net-zero goals, but even achieving those—which remains highly uncertain—would not be enough to achieve the necessary methane emission reductions, the report warns. "Additional, targeted actions to tackle methane emissions from fossil fuel production and use are essential to limit the risk of crossing irreversible climate tipping points," it said. The benefits of doing so would extend beyond reigning in climate change, including preventing nearly a million premature deaths due to ozone exposure and the loss of 90 million tons of crops by 2050, the IEA added. The trend is not positive, however. The IEA's most recent global methane tracker estimated the energy sector produced 135 million tons of methane emissions in 2022, a slight rise from the year before. Most of that comes from coal, oil and natural gas operations, with smaller amounts from leaks in end-use equipment and incomplete combustion of biofuels. — AFP



'Broad consensus' on sharing tax revenue on MNCs: OECD

PARIS: The OECD on Wednesday published a draft agreement aimed at the fairer distribution of tax revenues on profits made by large multinationals.

Multinationals, especially tech firms, are currently able to shift profits easily to countries with low tax rates even though they carry out only a small part of their activities there. The OECD said in July that nearly 140 countries had taken the first step towards reaching agreement on the first draft of a multilateral

tax policy and administration said there was "very broad consensus on the vast majority of the architecture" of the text among the 140 states involved.

The goal was still for it to be signed by the end of the year, she said. If the convention does not come into force, Corwin warned that there is a risk of one-sided national taxes on digital services, which could "threaten the stability of the international system".

Under the agreement, large multinationals will have to pay some tax on profits in countries where their clients are based—regardless of the country where they are based. It will only apply to the biggest companies with a global turnover in excess of 20 billion euros (\$21 billion), and will affect about 100 companies altogether.

If the convention is adopted, the extra tax will be distributed proportionally between countries where the company has made at least one million euros in turnover. In total, some \$200 billion should be re-distributed every year, according to the OECD, with an additional tax revenue generated of between \$17 billion and \$32 billion.

In 2021, in talks led by the OECD, agreement was reached on a minimum tax rate of 15 percent on multinationals and to develop rules on how to tax multinationals so countries don't lose out by profit shifting. But the talks on arriving at a formula on taxing multinationals have moved forward slowly.

The convention must now be signed by the states and then ratified in their national parliaments.

To come into force, it must have been adopted by at least 30 countries where at least 60 percent of the multinationals are located. Nearly half those companies are based in the United States. However, President Joe Biden does not currently have a big enough majority in Congress to ratify the text, casting a major uncertainty over the future of the agreement. Based in Paris, France, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is a 38-member international organization focusing on policy. — AFP



al convention on how to tax these companies. That draft convention was published on Wednesday, although the OECD said it is not yet open for signature due to final concerns from countries including India, Brazil and Colombia.

Manal Corwin, director of the OECD centre for

Carbon pricing crucial for climate policy: IMF official

MARRAKESH: Charging companies for the carbon they produce will be a crucial part of the policy mix to deliver global climate goals while avoiding soaring public debt, the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) fiscal affairs chief has told AFP.

The IMF warned in a recent report that relying solely on scaling existing spending measures to deliver climate objectives could raise debt by as much as 50 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) by the middle of this century. Adopting a new policy mix which includes an emissions trading scheme or carbon tax would significantly ease the long-term impact of the climate transition on government debt levels, according to the IMF's Fiscal Monitor report.

"Carbon pricing is the single most efficient and effective instrument and so it's a very important component of a viable package," Vitor Gaspar told AFP ahead of the IMF and World Bank's annual meetings in Marrakesh. Such a package would rely heavily on carbon pricing, "complemented by other instruments," like targeted subsidies, and financial support for vulnerable households, he said.

"If carbon emissions are appropriately priced, the ability to mobilize the financial creativity of the private sector improves quite substantially," he added. As the world transitions to renewable energy, global leaders must find a balance to affordably tackling climate change while absorbing an expected surge in energy use among developing economies, according to Gaspar. Close to 50 countries have carbon pricing schemes in place, and more than 20 are contemplating their introduction, according to the IMF. Developing economies are not responsible for the vast majority of emissions, he continued, and are rightly focused on connecting more of their citizens to the electricity grid as they look to eradicate extreme poverty and alleviate hunger. As a result, "the climate strategy has to be compatible not only with green technologies and the green transition, but also with quite a massive increase in energy production," he said. "So it's not an issue of energy mix only, it's also about scaling up energy to an extent which is enormous," he added.



One immediate concern for policymakers around the world is the recent surge in borrowing costs. Like many central banks, the US Federal Reserve has embarked on an aggressive campaign of interest hikes in a bid to slow surging inflation—with some success. In its World Economic Outlook report published Tuesday, the IMF slightly lowered the US inflation forecast for this year to 4.1 percent from 4.4 percent in July. But the IMF's expectation for headline global inflation rose 0.1 percentage points to 6.9 percent this year, due to a jump in its forecast for inflation in emerging market and developing economies. The IMF also raised its global inflation forecast for 2024 by 0.6 percentage points to 5.8 percent, indicating that "returning inflation to target is expected to take until at least 2025 in most cases." Higher interest rates raise the cost of funding government deficits, causing financial headaches for developing economies, where interest repayments make up a larger percentage of overall government expenditure. "Clearly, interest rate increases and increasing borrowing costs and interest expenses on budget is a challenge that affects almost all countries around the world," Gaspar said. "It's a very big deal." — AFP

ExxonMobil to buy Pioneer for about \$60bn

NEW YORK: ExxonMobil sealed a megadeal to acquire Pioneer Natural Resources for about \$60 billion, bolstering its holdings in the Permian Basin, a key US petroleum region, the companies announced Wednesday. Under the all-stock transaction, ExxonMobil will buy Texas-based Pioneer for \$59.5 billion based on ExxonMobil's closing price on October 5. The overall transaction, including debt, is valued at around \$64.5 billion, the companies said. ExxonMobil said the takeover, the company's biggest since the late 1990s acquisition of Mobil by Exxon, will enable greater economies of scale, permitting it to deploy drilling and operating technologies over a bigger region.

"The combined capabilities of our two companies will provide long-term value creation well in excess of what either company is capable of doing on a stand-alone basis," said ExxonMobil Chief Executive Darren Woods. The "highly contiguous" drilling acreage of the two companies will allow "for greater opportunities to deploy our technologies, delivering operating and capital efficiency as well as significantly increasing production," Woods said. The Permian Basin is located in western Texas and eastern New Mexico. The takeover comes as oil currently trades at more than \$85 a barrel, a relatively high historical benchmark. ExxonMobil vowed that it would employ best practices on the environment, but as a long-term bet on oil and gas, the merger is unlikely to please climate activists. While ExxonMobil usually avoids big deals under a high price scenario, analysts noted that Pioneer's shares had retreated prior to speculation of the deal. Another factor favoring a deal was the impending retirement of Pioneer CEO Scott Sheffield, who has planned to step down at the end of 2023. — AFP

Bankrupt Sri Lanka gets China agreement on debt restructure

Island nation works to restore its ruined finances after economic crisis

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka on Wednesday welcomed China's tentative agreement to a debt restructure, as the island nation works to restore its ruined finances after suffering its worst-ever economic crisis. The government defaulted on its \$46 billion debt last year at a time when months of food and fuel shortages were making life a misery for Sri Lanka's 22 million people.

Beijing is the island's largest bilateral lender and its consent is needed for any proposal by Colombo to reorganize its finances. Deputy finance minister Ranjith Siyambalapatiya said approval had now been granted by the state-owned Export-Import Bank of China, its official creditor. "China has issued their primary consent to restructure our debt," he said in a statement. Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told reporters on Tuesday that the bank had "tentatively agreed" with Sri Lanka on its debt treatment in late September.

"We are also glad to see that other creditors are having discussions with Sri Lanka as well over solutions to its debt issue," he added. Neither party shared further details of the agreement. China holds

about 52 percent of the South Asian nation's bilateral credit, with Japan and India the next-biggest lenders. Beijing had in March given in-principle agreement to a restructure of its loans to Sri Lanka, the final major creditor to do so.

That decision cleared the way for a staged \$2.9 billion International Monetary Fund bailout, conditional on austerity measures such as tax hikes and cuts to generous public subsidies. But a second tranche of \$330 million was delayed last month, with the IMF saying it was still reviewing "financing assurances" from creditors on the detailed debt restructure plan Colombo proposed in June.

Sri Lanka's central bank governor Nandal Weerasinghe is this week in Morocco for a meeting with creditor nations and the IMF that does not include China. The IMF's Sri Lanka mission chief Peter Breuer said the lender had "not yet been informed about any specific agreements" with creditors, Bloomberg reported. At the peak of last year's crisis, months of civil unrest forced the ouster of then president Gotabaya Rajapaksa when protesters stormed his residence. — AFP



COLOMBO: Sri Lanka on Wednesday welcomed China's tentative agreement to a debt restructure, as the island nation works to restore its ruined finances after suffering its worst-ever economic crisis. — AFP



Ghassan Maraqa

Jon Marchant

Memac Ogilvy announces new leadership

DUBAI: Memac Ogilvy, the leading award-winning integrated creative network, announces new leadership, marking the beginning of a new era focused on creative excellence, strategic innovation, and growth acceleration in the MENA region. David Fox, a seasoned Ogilvy veteran with a rich global track record, has completed his term as CEO, steering the agency through a period of growth and success. David's illustrious career has seen him bring an extensive wealth of experience from WPP and Ogilvy to the region.

In a transition marked by continuity and renewal, Memac Ogilvy announces a joint leadership team, appointing Ghassan Maraqa as MENA CEO and Jon Marchant as MENA Group President. Jon joins the agency after a six-year journey as MD FP7McCann Dubai, Momentum and Craft MENA.

Ghassan has been at the helm of Memac Ogilvy for two decades as its regional COO and CFO. His visionary leadership, ability to turn challenges into opportunities, and especially deep commitment to long standing client partnerships and talent makes him the ideal leader to drive the agency forward.

Patou Nuytemans, EMEA CEO, who worked closely with Ghassan during her tenure leading the region, expressed her confidence in Ghassan, stating, "Having worked with Ghassan hand-in-hand for many years as my partner in leading Memac Ogilvy in the region, I've witnessed his passion for and commitment to our agency's values, talent, and clients. He has been instrumental to our success for such a long time, that I have no doubt that Memac Ogilvy will thrive in his trusted hands."

Commenting on his appointment, Ghassan Maraqa said: "I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to our exceptional team and valued clients for their steadfast commitment and partnership. It's such a privilege, together with Jon, to now lead an agency network that has always been a pillar of the industry in the region and bring our promise of borderless creativity to life for the leading brands across MENA."

Jon Marchant, as MENA Group President, will bring his incredible track record in impactful creative ideas, trusted client partnerships and agency growth, both internationally and in the region, to Memac Ogilvy, with a mission to drive excellence for clients. Commenting on Jon's addition to the agency's leadership team, Patou expanded on her thoughts, stating, "Jon's addition marks an exciting juncture in our journey of growth and innovation. His extensive experience speaks to his deep understanding of our industry. His passion for amazing ideas that drive impact and for nurturing talent is simply contagious. We welcome his fresh perspective and I'm sure together with Ghassan he will shape an exciting new future for Memac Ogilvy."

Jon Marchant expressed his sentiments saying: "I'm deeply honored to join Memac Ogilvy during this pivotal time in a rapidly growing market. The Ogilvy brand is celebrated for its creativity and commitment to excellence. Together with Ghassan, I look forward to contributing to its journey amid dynamic economic and cultural transformation in the region."

Ghassan and Jon will work with the MENA Exco and the regional leadership team in Memac Ogilvy's 11 offices to drive Memac Ogilvy's promise of borderless creativity across Advertising, PR, Experience, and Health. As Memac Ogilvy embraces this new chapter, it reaffirms its commitment to innovation, talent development, and client excellence. With Ghassan and Jon at the helm, the agency is poised for even greater success as a leading creative force in the MENA region. Jon will be joining Ogilvy in early December this year.

Gulf Bank: Customers can pay for purchases in installments

KUWAIT: As part of its continuous efforts to provide the best services, Gulf Bank is giving customers the option to pay for their purchases in installments through the Easy Pay Plus service. Customers can now choose the number of months to pay for high-value purchases, which can range from two to twelve months, with a one-time fee that does not exceed KD 2 at 0 percent interest.

All Gulf Bank credit cardholders can benefit from this special service when shopping locally or internationally, with a minimum value of KD 150 on their purchases. This service applies on various operating sectors such as car services, health and beauty, schools, home furnishings, jewelry, fashion, sports and fitness, travel and many others.

For Example, if customers make a purchase totaling KD 600 from a local or international store, Gulf Bank provides the option to convert the payment through their Call Center. Customers have the flexibility to choose a repayment period ranging from 2 to



Mohammed Taqi

12 months. For instance, they can opt for a plan where the installment amount becomes KD 300 over two months or KD 150 per month for a four-months installment plan, or KD 50 per month for a 12-months installment plan.

Gulf Bank's Assistant General Manager of Consumer Banking Mohammed Taqi, said: "Our customers can benefit from this service by contacting Gulf Bank's Call Center to convert their transaction to Easy Pay service. Following that process, the service will be soon available on Gulf Bank's Mobile Banking application." Taqi noted that that Gulf Bank is continuously developing its services to keep pace with the requirements and needs of customers, by providing easy and innovative services to simplify customers' lives and achieve sustainable growth. He added: "The bank constantly seeks to provide a distinctive banking experience to customers, by simplifying banking procedures and transactions, and by providing solutions that are both efficient and transparent. We are keen to communicate with customers, explore their

needs and requirements, and work fast to meet them."

Taqi further indicated that Gulf Bank offers its customers the best and fastest rewards program in Kuwait, which enables customers to redeem points for tickets on all airlines and make hotel reservations at more than 300,000 hotels around the world, along with seasonal and exclusive travel packages. He also noted that customers earn more points when spending abroad and reap rewards for every point earned when spending with their credit cards. Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience.

Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining a robust sustainability program at the community, economic, and environmental levels through sustainability initiatives that are strategically selected to benefit both the country and the bank. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait's 2035 vision "New Kuwait" and works with various parties to achieve it.

Pre-election jitters send Argentine peso to new lows

BUENOS AIRES: The US dollar broke through the symbolic 1,000 peso mark on Argentina's parallel market on Tuesday, as citizens scrambled to dump the currency two weeks before a pivotal presidential election. Argentines are heading into the vote with annual inflation at over 120 percent and record poverty levels, as economic malaise in the South American giant reaches a new crescendo.

The dollar has long been a safe haven from the peso, with people buying the currency whenever they can as a form of savings and protection from foreign exchange volatility. However, with strict restrictions on access to dollars, the "blue dollar"—a thriving black market exchange tool—is how most get their hands on the greenback.

With the parallel dollar now trading at over 1,000 pesos, it is worth almost three times the official rate of 365 pesos, propped up at great cost by the government. Uncertainty is high ahead of the vote, and frontrunner Javier Milei, an outsider who has vowed to dollarize the economy, on Monday urged people to steer away from investments in pesos.

"Never in pesos, never in pesos. The peso... isn't worth excrement," Milei told a local radio station just days after saying that a higher dollar rate would make it easier to dollarize the economy. The "blue dollar" has flourished in recent years as the government has restricted citizens to buying \$200 a month due to diminishing foreign reserves. While theoretically illegal, the rate is shown all day on national television.

Buenos Aires-based economist Andres Borenstein, with the Econviews think-tank, said veterans of the country's economic crises knew not to go into an election "with a lot of pesos in your pocket."

US Fed 'on track' to avoid recession

WASHINGTON: The Federal Reserve is on track to tackle US inflation without pushing the country into a damaging recession, a senior official on the bank's rate-setting committee said Tuesday. After pushing its key lending rate to a 22-year high to tackle stubborn inflation, the Fed recently slowed down the pace of its hikes, citing a need to be data-dependent.

Consumer inflation has fallen sharply since the campaign began in March 2022, but remains stuck above the Fed's long-term target of two percent, maintaining the pressure on policymakers.

"We feel like we're on track for a soft landing," Minneapolis Fed President Neel Kashkari told a conference in North Dakota, using a popular term to describe tackling inflation while avoiding a recession. "Inflation has come down quite a bit, the labor market has remained strong, maybe we can



The dollar has long been a safe haven from the peso, with citizens buying the currency whenever they can, as a form of savings and protection from their currency's volatility. — AFP

"The pesos burn you, so you either buy dollars, or you buy whatever non-perishable you can find." Benjamin Gedan of the Washington-based Wilson Center said the blue dollar was a "barometer of panic in Argentina. So when you see the value of the blue dollar sky-rocket, it's a sign of tremendous general anxiety."

"I think there is fear about what dollarization would mean for the value of the peso. I think there is so much uncertainty right now given the likelihood that Javier Milei is elected." After Milei's comments kickstarted a run on the peso, the Central Bank issued a statement on Monday saying the "Argentine financial system presents a solid situation of solvency, capitalization, liquidity and provisioning." The country's Association of Banks urged presidential candidates to "avoid making unfounded declarations that generate uncertainty and volatility." — AFP

get inflation all the way back down and avoiding (sic) a deep recession," he said.

Kashkari also engaged with recent comments from Dallas Fed President Lorie Logan, who said elevated long-term interest rates could mean there is "less need" for another rate hike. Yields on the 10-year US Treasury recently rose to a 16-year high as traders raised their expectations that interest rates will have to remain higher for longer to bring inflation down. Higher yields on longer-term notes feed into increased consumer borrowing costs, which can act to constrain economic activity and reduce the rate at which prices increase. "It's certainly possible that higher long term yields may do some of the work for us in terms of bringing inflation back down," Kashkari said Tuesday.

But he warned that if yields rose due to a change in expectations about Fed policy, the US central bank "might actually have to follow through on their expectations in order to maintain those yields." "So it's a little bit circuitous, and it's hard for me to say definitively, 'hey, because they've moved therefore we don't have to move,'" he added. — AFP

Samsung expects Q3 profits to drop nearly 80%

SEOUL: Samsung Electronics said Wednesday it expected third-quarter operating profits to plunge nearly 80 percent, as the firm grapples with weak demand for memory chips. Operating profits of 2.4 trillion won (\$1.8 billion) were expected for the July-September period, the South Korean tech giant said in a statement, down 77.9 percent from a year earlier. Sales are expected to drop 12.7 percent in the same period to 67 trillion won, it added.

The firm is the world's largest smartphone maker and the flagship subsidiary of Samsung Group, by far the largest of the family-controlled conglomerates that dominate business in Asia's fourth-largest economy. South Korean chipmakers, led by Samsung, have enjoyed record profits in recent years as prices for their products soared, but the global economic slowdown has dealt a blow to memory chip sales. Demand swelled during the pandemic as consumers bought computers and smartphones during lockdowns, prompting chipmakers to ramp up production.

But consumer appetite quickly diminished as lockdowns lifted, and weakened further in the face of soaring inflation and rising interest rates. In April, Samsung said it would make a "meaningful" cut in memory chip production, following the lead of rivals SK Hynix and Micron. Samsung is expected to release its final earnings report at the end of this month. — AFP



THE VILLAGE AT THE END OF THE WORLD

This picture shows the village of Ittoqqortoormiit in Scoresby Fjord.



A woman paints her house in Ittoqqortoormiit.



An arctic hare stands in Ittoqqortoormiit.

The last Inuit hunters of Ittoqqortoormiit are a resilient bunch. Surviving among the icebergs of Greenland's Scoresby Sound, one of the toughest and most remote places on the planet, has never been easy. But their unique way of life is now in grave danger from galloping climate change. The ice cut them off from the rest of the world for 11 months of the year, but it brought them the seals, musk ox, narwhals and polar bears that fed and clothed them through the long polar night.

All those old certainties are melting away with the glaciers as temperatures in the Arctic rise four times faster than elsewhere. AFP photographer Olivier Morin captured life in Ittoqqortoormiit in the dying days of summer when young and old make the best of the few weeks when the living is easier. The age-old and the latest fads rub shoulders in a surreal dance amid the quaint wooden houses painted in red, blue, yellow and ochre. Several have their own trampolines.

Hunters skin seals on the beach while a young girl dips



This picture shows the village of Ittoqqortoormiit in Scoresby Fjord.

the tail of her mermaid costume into the bracing waters of a swimming pool—all under the curious gaze of white "Alice in Wonderland" Arctic hares that seem to be everywhere. Old timers share a beer while polar bear hides that look like the beast has just slipped them off to go for a swim dry in the sun.

Quad bikes are stealing a march on dog teams as the ice melts and the Inuit too have been seduced by the beautiful game. In a place where no grass grows, Ittoqqortoormiit's only patch of green is the astro-turf of its football pitch. But behind the shy smiles, hunters say the cruise ships that are bring-

ing more and more tourists to the fjords are scaring away the wildlife on which they depend, animals whose meat scientists warn is being dangerously polluted by "forever chemicals" from factories on the other side of the world.—AFP



A young girl looks at the school building in Ittoqqortoormiit.



This picture shows a synthetic football field in Ittoqqortoormiit.



Parents carry their child at school with quadbikes in Ittoqqortoormiit.



A young girl plays on a trampoline in Ittoqqortoormiit.



This picture shows a memorial stone paying tribute to French Explorer Commandant Charcot in Ittoqqortoormiit.



A young girl with a mermaid tail plays at the municipal swimming pool, with non heated water, down to a glacier in Ittoqqortoormiit.

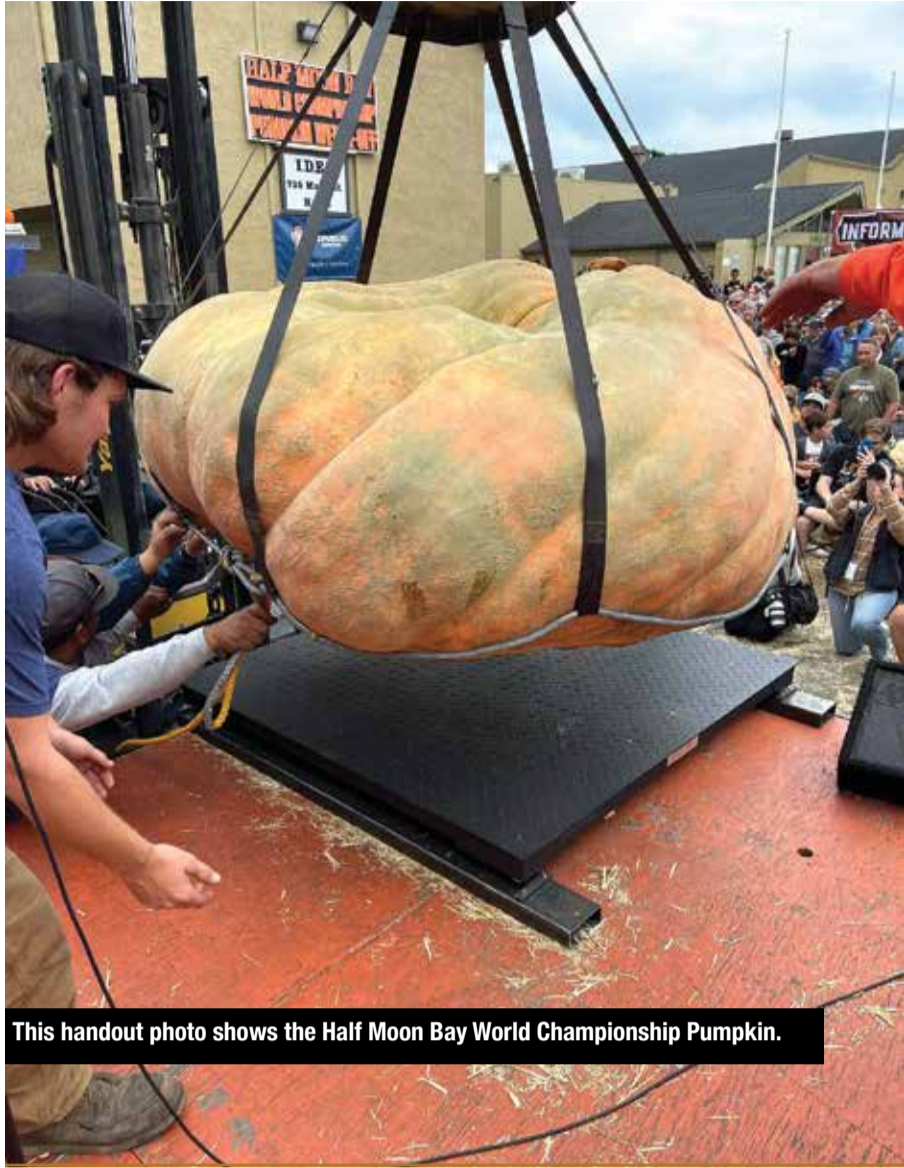


Children enjoy a playground in Ittoqqortoormiit.



This picture shows Greenlandic sled dogs resting near a river in Ittoqqortoormiit.

Lifestyle



This handout photo shows the Half Moon Bay World Championship Pumpkin.

HIPPO-SIZED PUMPKIN IS WORLD'S BIGGEST

A monster pumpkin weighing the same as a hippopotamus has claimed the world record for the mightiest gourd—and bagged its grower a \$30,000 prize. Travis Gienger squashed the competition with his enormous fruit weighing in at an improbable 2,749 pounds (1,247 kilograms) at the Half Moon Bay Pumpkin Festival in California on Monday. An orange-shirted Gienger punched the air and offered hugs all round after the weigh-in, as Queen's "We Are The Champions" blasted out, according to video from the event. The contest, in its 50th year, pits growers of mega-gourds from all over North America against each other to see who can produce the biggest berry.

Gienger, from Minnesota, pipped his nearest rival by a hefty 250 pounds to walk away with this year's title. He also bagged a new world record in the process, besting an Italian effort from 2021 which tipped the scales at a relatively svelte 2,703 pounds, organizers said, and claimed the \$30,000 in the process. The grand champion gourd will be on display in Half Moon Bay this weekend when the town hosts its Art and Pumpkin Festival.



This handout photo shows the Half Moon Bay World Championship Pumpkin Weigh-Off of the 2,749-pound (1247kg) champion pumpkin in Half Moon Bay, California. — AFP photos

The United States is currently in the throes of autumn celebrations with pumpkins of all shapes and sizes available at many stores. While some will be carved into ghoulish designs for Halloween at the end of the month, others will be made into pies or consumed as part

of dinner. Pumpkin spice—a blend of cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg and ginger—is almost inescapable at this time of year, flavoring everything from cookies to coffee and even cans of Spam. — AFP



South Africa's amapiano star Tyla makes Billboard Hot 100 debut

South Africa's rising music star Tyla has made a landmark debut on the Billboard Hot 100 with her viral hit song "Water". Born Tyla Laura Seethal, the 21-year-old amapiano artist, hailed her breakthrough as a "win for the whole of Africa" on social media. "I'm a South African girl born and raised in Johannesburg," she wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter. "This is crazy." "Water" mixes genres including R&B and amapiano—itsself a blend of house, jazz and lounge music, born in South Africa's townships that is experiencing growing global popularity.

The single went in at number 67 on the Billboard chart, the leading weekly music ranking in the United States, helped by Tyla's social media presence. Released in July, the catchy song went viral on TikTok in recent weeks after the artist posted videos of herself dancing

to it that inspired a dance challenge. One clip has gathered more than 70 million views on the platform.

"Tyla scores her first appearance on the Billboard Hot 100 chart (dated Oct. 14), as 'Water,' the breakthrough single for the South African singer-songwriter, debuts at No. 67," Billboard wrote on Tuesday. "TikTok has been a major contributor in the song's growing profile," the magazine added.

Signed by Epic Records, a record label owned by Sony, Tyla has only a few singles to her name but is already considered one of the most promising talents on the continent by industry experts. This year she was the opening act for American RnB singer Chris Brown during his European tour. "Let's take our sound to the world," Tyla wrote on X.



A handout picture shows Mike Heard (left) jumping from the Bungy Pod on the Harbour Bridge in Auckland.



A handout picture shows Mike Heard (right) jumping from the Bungy Pod on the Harbour Bridge in Auckland.

New Zealander smashes record for bungee jumps in 24 hours

A New Zealander smashed the world record Wednesday for the most bungee jumps in 24 hours after making a total of 941 leaps off Auckland Bridge. Mike Heard, 41, topped the previous record of 765 jumps set by Frenchman Francois-Marie Dibon in Scotland last year. Having started at 0700 local time on Tuesday (1800 GMT Monday), Heard passed Dibon's record in the early hours of Wednesday before powering on to set the new best mark, his support team told AFP. "It certainly wasn't easy, and going into it, I knew it would be a massive challenge. The number of jumps we had to hit, added a whole new level of nerves to this attempt for me," Heard said.

"But the record needed to be here, because bungee is a part of our DNA." Heard, who lives in Auckland, was showered with blue confetti after his 941st and final leap just before 0700 local time Wednesday. Bungee jumping is the extreme sport of leaping from a great height while connected to an elastic rope. According to its website, the bungee jump at Auckland Bridge is 40 metres (131 feet) high.

Before starting his record attempt, Heard said he steeled himself for the marathon challenge by adding ice baths and cold showers

to his training regime. He had previously set the record in 2008 and 2017. Heard said he was motivated to bring the record to New Zealand and raise money for a mental health charity. "It feels wrong to let this record be held by any country other than New Zealand and I want it back," he said before attempting the record. — AFP



A handout picture shows Mike Heard (center) celebrates the 766 jump with crew members on the Harbour Bridge in Auckland.

Nice pick up: Guitars owned by Clapton, Cobain hit auction block

Guitars played by music legends Eric Clapton and Kurt Cobain are going under the hammer in the United States next month with an estimated price tag of up to \$2 million each. Up for grabs at the sale organized by Julien's Auctions in Nashville will be Clapton's Gibson SG—popularly known as "The Fool"—which the British rocker began using when his band Cream embarked on its first US tour.

Its custom-painted psychedelic finish makes it one of the most recognizable guitars on the planet, and a key symbol of the "Summer of Love," the 1967 counter-cultural moment that defined a generation. "The Fool" remained with him for years afterwards,

and was key to the development of what was dubbed the "woman tone"—an oft-imitated sound he produced on the guitar.

Clapton, known for monster riffs in songs like "Layla" and "Sunshine of Your Love," is widely seen as one of the premier guitarists of the last half century. Also going under the hammer next month is the left-handed Fender Mustang electric guitar played by Nirvana frontman Kurt Cobain on the band's final tour.

The blue Skystang I was one of a number of the models that Cobain bought for the tour, and was the instrument he played at the band's last ever performance in Munich in 1994,

the auction house said. Martin Nolan, executive director of Julien's, said the Skystang I was an important part of pop culture history.

"We all know that Kurt Cobain loved to break guitars and smash guitars, but the Fender Mustang was... his favorite guitar," he told AFP. "For the last song of his performances, he takes up a cheaper version of the guitar, and that's the guitar that he would smash, but not this baby." The auction will be held at the Hard Rock Cafe in Nashville from November 16 to 18. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of the two guitars will go to mental health charity Kicking the Stigma. — AFP



Martin Nolan, Executive Director, Chief Financial Officer, and a principal of Julien's Auctions shows the tape placed by Kurt Cobain on his Skystang I guitar strap.



Eric Clapton's Fool guitar (left) and Kurt Cobain's Skystang I guitar are displayed at the media preview for Julien's "Played, worn, torn rock'n'roll iconic guitars and memorabilia" in Gardena, California.



Martin Nolan, Executive Director, Chief Financial Officer, and a principal of Julien's Auctions shows Kurt Cobain's Skystang I guitar. — AFP photos



Guitars belonged to famous musicians are displayed at the media preview for Julien's "Played, worn, torn rock'n'roll iconic guitars and memorabilia" in Gardena.



A house is seen at the Sajubal community.



Aerial view of the mountains in Sacapulas, Guatemala.



Aerial view of a corn and bean plantation at the Xecanap community.



General view of the Rio Negro river that passes through the Xecanap community in Sacapulas, Guatemala.--AFP photos



Marta Velasquez, 34, works in her corn plantation at the Xechiley community.



Tomasa Ixcotoyac, 40, gets water from an artisanal well at the Cerro Negro village in San Pedro Jocopilas, Guatemala.



Tomasa Ixcotoyac, 40, purifies rainwater by boiling it for her family's consumption at the Cerro Negro village.



Indigenous woman prepare the ingredients to make organic fertilizers and insecticides at the Xecanap community.



Andres Baten, 33, shows the poor state of the land where he grows beans and corn at the Xechiley community.



View of the corn from Francisco Carrillo's harvest at the Xecanap community in Sacapulas, Guatemala.

As rain vanishes, Guatemalans learn to use every drop of water

As rain becomes ever scarcer in northern Guatemala, communities are learning how to carve out makeshift irrigation canals and purify their water to conserve every last precious drop. "No water, no rain, so not a good harvest," says Francisco Carrillo, 87, as he desolately sifts through his measly corn crop, tossing aside scores of desiccated and stunted heads. Some have given up even trying to plant, and with children constantly sick with stomach bugs from dirty drinking water, new methods are desperately needed.

Guatemala—which forms part of Central America's Dry Corridor—is regularly listed by international organizations among the top ten countries most vulnerable to climate change. Situated on a narrow strip of land between two oceans, and heavily dependent on agriculture, different parts of Guatemala are increasingly battered by drought and intense rains—often at the same time.

These extreme weather events are fueling massive waves of migration, notably to the United States. In the northern region of Quiche, mostly home to indigenous communities such as Mayans, residents are learning to build ditches above their sloped fields of corn or beans, so that water trickles down through the plants and keeps the soil moist for longer.

"During the few rainy days we have, we try to capture the water through these ditches so that the water filters into the



Parents take part in an educational session provided by members of the NGO "Save the Children" at the Xecanap community.

soil," explained Oscar Rodriguez with the Save the Children charity, which is teaching the techniques. To improve their yields, residents are also being taught to make home-made fertilizer with a mixture of herbs, chillis and garlic. The World Food Program (WFP) is trying to encourage the farming of less thirsty plants like carrots and tomatoes, which also grow faster.

'The children get sick'

Save the Children says that 3.5 million of the country's 18 million inhabitants

are threatened with an "unprecedented food crisis." In rural Quiche, Indigenous families without potable water have long collected rainwater from streams or in wells they dig in the ground.

However, with less fresh rainwater, these water sources become contaminated by animals and "the children get sick" when they drink it, said Tomasa Ixcotoyac, 40, as she draws muddy water up from a well with a bucket. Save the Children has also shown the villagers how to use a few drops of chlorine to filter their water before boiling it.

Faced with increasingly erratic weather, the government and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization are implementing a \$66 million plan to improve water collection systems in the arid north. "The rain has become scarcer, it no longer rains like normal," said Gladys Azanon, from the Cerro Negro village.

'Is it fair?'

Guatemala's rainy season runs from May to October. While the El Nino warming phenomenon has intensified the drought in the north, it has had the opposite effect in the south—highlighting the different extremes of climate change. The south of the country was worst hit by Hurricanes Eta and Iota in 2020 and heavy rains this year have led some crops to rot in the soil, said Ilesia Lopez, 31, in the town of Sajubal.

Flash floods have left dozens dead, destroying homes and bridges. "We get scared when it rains," said Lopez. Earlier this month, Guatemala's President Alejandro Giammattei complained in a speech at the United Nations Security Council about the treatment of poor countries like his, which bear the brunt of climate change while being among the least responsible. "We are the ones who suffer the most damage year after year. Is it fair?"—AFP



Maria Hernandez washes clothes in a river at the Cerro Negro village in San Pedro Jocopilas, Guatemala.



Parents take part in an educational session provided by members of the NGO "Save the Children" at the Xecanap community.



Pharrell Williams

Pharrell Williams to hold Vuitton show in Hong Kong

Musician-turned-designer Pharrell Williams will hold his second show as creative director for Louis Vuitton in Hong Kong, the brand announced on Tuesday. Williams will hold a "pre-fall show" for his menswear line on November 30, following his glitzy debut at Paris Fashion Week in June. It emphasizes the importance of Chinese consumers to

Louis Vuitton, which said it "found the cultural vibrancy of this island archipelago an ongoing source of inspiration".

Williams succeeded Virgil Abloh, the first black American to helm a major French label until his death from cancer. The "Happy" singer's appointment was seen as reflecting a broader merging of fashion, hip-hop and pop culture, though

it goes against the grain of most recent appointments at big labels such as Gucci and Chloe who have opted for less flashy but technically proficient artisans.

His first show in June saw Paris's historic Pont Neuf bridge painted gold for a celeb-packed party featuring a concert by Jay-Z. It demonstrated the spending power of the label, which

helped boost profits at parent company LVMH by 30 percent to 8.48 billion euros (\$9.34 billion) in the first half of the year. "What it is that I was brought in here to do is to push expansion and growth not only in sales, but in perspective, culturally," Williams told Business of Fashion this week.—AFP

Sports

Rizwan, Shafique lead Pakistan to WCup record win over Sri Lanka

Victory gives Pakistan huge boost ahead of their high-profile clash against India

HYDERABAD: Mohammad Rizwan and Abdullah Shafique clubbed centuries as Pakistan chased down the highest target in World Cup history to beat Sri Lanka by six wickets in Hyderabad on Tuesday. The diminutive Rizwan overcame leg cramps to score a 121-ball 131 not out while Shafique hit a 103-ball 113 as Pakistan overhauled their 345-run target in 48.2 overs.

The victory gives Pakistan two wins in as many games and a huge boost in confidence ahead of their high-profile clash against India in Ahmedabad on Saturday. "Always proud when you perform like that. It was difficult and when you chase like that, it's special," said Rizwan.

"Every player in the dressing room had the belief we can chase that." On his cramping, he said: "Sometimes cramps, sometimes acting!" Sri Lanka's imposing total of 344-9 was built around brilliant hundreds from Kusal Mendis and Sadeera Samarawickrama.

"I thought with the way the wicket behaved, we were 20-25 runs short," said Sri Lanka skipper Dasun Shanaka. Rizwan cracked eight boundaries and three sixes while Shafique's knock had ten boundaries and three sixes as Pakistan improved on the previous highest World Cup chase of 328 by Ireland against England in Bangalore in 2011.

Rizwan added a match-turning 176 run stand for the third wicket with Shafique and another 95 for the fourth with Saud Shakeel who made a 30-ball 31. Rizwan and Shafique lifted Pakistan from a disastrous start in which they lost Imam-ul-Haq (12) and skipper Babar Azam (ten) to pacer Dilshan Madushanka.

Haq, who completed 3,000 runs in 67 innings to become the second joint fastest to the milestone, hooked into the hands of the fielder while Azam edged a flick behind the wicket. Shafique, who re-

placed out-of-form Fakhar Zaman, justified his selection by reaching his maiden hundred off 97 balls.

Shafique fell in the 34th over to Matheesha Pathirana but Rizwan continued the chase, reaching his third ODI hundred off 97 balls. He hit the winning single and raised his hands in delight. When Sri Lanka batted, after winning the toss, Mendis smashed the fastest century for Sri Lanka in a World Cup match with a 77-ball 122, his highest score in ODIs and third century.

Mendis dropped twice

It was an innings spiced with 14 boundaries and half a dozen sixes, leading the charge for Sri Lanka while Samarawickrama hit an 89-ball 108 for his maiden hundred. Samarawickrama hit 11 boundaries and two sixes.

Mendis twice escaped dropped catches—Shaheen Shah Afridi dropped him off his own bowling in the fifth over and then Imam-ul-Haq blundered in the next over again off Shaheen on 18. Mendis completed his 50 off 40 balls with his seventh boundary, lifting Sri Lanka from the early loss of Kusal Perera (nought) in the second over to Hasan Ali.

Mendis put on a 102 with Pathum Nissanka whose 51 came off 61 balls with seven boundaries and a six. Once Nissanka fell to Shadab Khan, Mendis and Samarawickrama unleashed some superb hitting against Pakistan's pacers and spinners alike, adding 111 for the third wicket.

They were savage on fast bowler Haris Rauf, hitting him for two sixes and a boundary in the 21st over. When Shaheen came back for a second spell, Mendis cracked three fours in the 25th over. Hasan was hoisted by Mendis for a six to allow the batsman his third hundred off 65 balls.



HYDERABAD: Pakistan's Mohammad Rizwan (L) celebrates after scoring a half-century (50 runs) during the 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup one-day international (ODI) match between Pakistan and Sri Lanka. — AFP

It was his first century in three-and-a-half years but he had made 76 in the opening defeat to South Africa and now has at least five half-centuries in his last seven ODIs. Previously, Kumar Sangakkara held the Sri Lanka World Cup record with a 70-ball hundred, scored against England in 2015.

Mendis's previous best was 119 against the West

Indies in Hambantota in February 2020. Mendis hit two sixes off Hasan's 29th over before he holed out at deep mid-wicket boundary. Hasan then removed Charith Asalanka for one but Samarawickrama and Dhananjaya de Silva (25) added 65 for the fifth wicket. Hasan finished as the best bowler with 4-71 while Rauf took 2-64. — AFP



AMRITSAR: Women pose after getting their hands and faces painted ahead of the 2023 ICC men's cricket World Cup, in Amritsar. —AFP

Pakistan's losing World Cup record against India

KARACHI: It is cricket's fiercest rivalry, watched by millions, sparking raucous celebrations in victory and wild accusations in defeat, but when India and Pakistan clash at the World Cup, there has been only one winner. India have defeated Pakistan seven times out of seven at the tournament since they first met in Sydney in 1992, a run that Babar Azam's side will hope to end in Ahmedabad on Saturday. Is it luck? Have India benefitted from winning five of the seven tosses? Are Pakistan more susceptible to pressure? "We played seven games and our neighbouring country reminds us every second day about the 7-0," Pakistan legend Wasim Akram told AFP.

"Frankly speaking, I can't single out one reason for the losing streak." Inzamam-ul-Haq, who ended up on the losing side for Pakistan on four occasions, believes pressure has been a factor. "Maybe India handled the pressure better than us on the day of the match and winning most of the tosses also gave them an advantage," said Inzamam. Even when Pakistan won the toss twice their luck did not change. They were outdone by Sachin Tendulkar's brilliance in the chase at Centurion in South Africa in 2003 and by Rohit Sharma at Manchester in 2019 when India were sent in to bat. The defeat at the 2019 tournament cost Sarfaraz Ahmed the captaincy.

'Couldn't leave our homes'

Due to a quirk of the playing format, Pakistan and India never met in the first four World Cups. Both were favourites to meet in the final when they were co-hosts in 1987, but each fell in the semis. The first encounter happened in 1992 at Sydney, a low-scoring affair which was remembered more for Pakistan's Javed Miandad jumping up and down in a bizarre attempt to mimic India wicketkeeper Kiran More. Pakistan failed to chase a modest 217-run total, losing by 43 runs. However, that defeat was soon forgotten when Imran Khan's team staged a remarkable recovery to win their first and only 50-over World Cup title. Four years later, Pakistan lost again by 39 runs in India's backyard in Bangalore.

The defeat resulted in a furious reaction back home—skipper Wasim Akram was even alleged to have feigned injury. "It was hellish," recalls Wasim. "No one digested that defeat and we had to return home under tight security and couldn't go out of our homes for days." At the 1999 World Cup, Wasim and his team were subjected to a match-fixing inquiry after they lost by 47 runs to India and slumped to a shock loss to Bangladesh. They still managed to finish as runners-up.

Despite boasting an intimidating three-pronged pace attack of Wasim, Waqar Younis and Shoaib Akhtar, Pakistan lost their 2003 World Cup encounter by six wickets. A high-profile semi-final also went to India by 29 runs in Mohali in 2011, a match where respective prime ministers Manmohan Singh of India and Yousuf Raza Gillani of Pakistan watched from the stands.—AFP

Sapporo gives up 2030 Winter Games bid: JOC boss

TOKYO: Sapporo has given up its bid for the 2030 Winter Olympics, the head of the Japanese Olympic Committee said on Wednesday, after corruption scandals over the 2020 Tokyo Games. "JOC decided that proceeding with the bidding hastily but poorly could result in an incurable wound to the Olympics... so I proposed a change to our bidding for the Games to 2034 or later," committee president Yasuhiro Yamashita told reporters. Prosecutors are investigating allegations of bribery and bid-rigging at the 2020 Summer Games in Tokyo, which were postponed to 2021 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. At least 11 people have been found guilty so far, according to Japan's Kyodo News.



TOKYO: Sapporo's Mayor Katsuhiro Akimoto (L) and President of the Japanese Olympic Committee Yasuhiro Yamashita (R) attend a press conference about a Winter Olympics bid, in Tokyo. — AFP

Chaotic start to Cricket WCup a fresh blow for ODIs

NEW DELHI: Poor spectator turnout, a scheduling fiasco and a dubious outfield have cast a shadow over the Cricket World Cup in India, as the 50-over game itself faces an existential crisis. The future of one-day internationals has been thrown into doubt by the growing popularity of the slam-bang Twenty-20 version, and the early optics from the World Cup have not been helping matters. Less than a week since it started, empty seats have plagued the tournament. That has been especially true of games not featuring the hosts but even Sunday's India-Australia match in Chennai, one of the biggest fixtures of this year's event, did not see a full house.

"India's first game in the World Cup and the Chennai stadium in a cricket crazy city has more than a few empty spaces," author and columnist Rajdeep Sardesai wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter. Around 47,000 fans showed up when defending champions England took on New Zealand in the opening game at the 132,000-seater stadium in Ahmedabad named after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

More than 100,000 people had turned out for the T20 Indian Premier League final last year at the same venue. Poor crowds are not making for a pretty picture in a cricket-mad country which is hosting the World Cup for the first time since India's victory in 2011. Ticket sales appear to have been hampered by the late announcement of the schedule. The fixtures were first released around 100 days in advance, compared to more than a year ahead of time for the 2019 World Cup in England.

To make matters worse, the schedule was revised and released again on August 9, less than two months before the first ball of the tournament. A total of nine games were rescheduled, including India's marquee match against Pakistan. Defending champions England saw three of their nine fixtures moved. Ticket sales for non-India games began on August 25, and for India games from August 31 onwards, complicating travel arrangements for fans.

"We may have the richest cricket association in the world, but it seems to be the poorest when it comes to hosting a World Cup," wrote Prince Thomas, managing editor of Indian news website The Morning Context. "The biggest sin you can commit against a cricket lover is to deny him/her a ticket but still have empty stands," he posted on X. Organizers have also been criticized over the state of the outfield in the picturesque hillside city of Dharamsala, one of 10 tournament venues. Heavy rain in the region in the months leading up to the World Cup brought an infestation of fungus to the outfield.—AFP

Sapporo had once been seen as a favourite to win the bid for the Winter Games but the number of potential hosts has dwindled. Other bids to have been withdrawn include Vancouver and Barcelona-Zaragoza.

Sapporo mayor Katsuhiro Akimoto said "distrust" in the Olympics had increased and there were "worries and concerns" among many residents about staging such a large event. The JOC's Yamashita said the cost of mounting the Games was also an issue.

Recent opinion polls have also shown that the bribery and bid-rigging scandals have dragged on public support. Forty-seven percent of Sapporo voters were against hosting the 2030 Winter Games, according to a survey of 1,350 households conducted by the Asahi Shimbun newspaper in April.

A nationwide Asahi poll the month before had shown that as many as 60 percent nationwide were in favour. Other polls indicated that the cost of the Games and distrust of Olympic officials were the main reasons behind opposition to the Games. Even so, Akimoto said Sapporo would still seek to host its second Olympics and its first Paralympics.—AFP



Carlos Correa

Rangers sweep Orioles to advance, Astros rout Twins

LOS ANGELES: The Texas Rangers kept their dream of a first-ever World Series crown alive on Tuesday, defeating the Baltimore Orioles 7-1 to seal a 3-0 clean sweep of their American League Division Series. Corey Seager, Adolis Garcia and Nathaniel Lowe all blasted home runs as the Rangers advanced to the AL Championship Series for the first time since 2011. The Rangers are chasing a first ever Major League Baseball championship this postseason, aiming to remove themselves from the list of six clubs who have never won the World Series. Texas reached the MLB showpiece in back-to-back seasons in 2010 and 2011 but lost on both occasions.

However they will head into the next round of the postseason brimming with confidence after a ruthless demolition job of top-seeded Baltimore, winners of an AL-best 101 games in the regular season.

Seager set Texas on the road to victory with a first inning home run before Garcia smacked a three-run shot to left center field in the second inning to put the hosts 6-0 up in Arlington. Rangers starting pitcher Nathan Eovaldi shut down the Baltimore bats, allowing just one run over seven innings while Lowe homered in the sixth inning to put the seal on the win. Texas will face either the Houston Astros or Minnesota Twins in the ALCS for a place in the World Series. Houston edged closer to setting up that all-Texas showdown earlier Tuesday as Jose Abreu smashed two home runs in a 9-1 rout of the Minnesota Twins. The Astros lead the best-of-five series 2-1.

Cuban slugger Abreu went deep in the first and ninth innings to help the reigning World Series champions claim an emphatic win at Minnesota's Target Field. Abreu's three-run opening homer off Twins starter Sonny Gray flew 422 feet into left field, giving Houston a commanding 4-0 lead after Kyle Tucker had driven in a run earlier in the inning.

Astros star Alex Bregman then added to the Twins problems with a solo home run in the fifth inning to make it 5-0. The Twins meanwhile were unable to find any way to trouble Astros starting pitcher Cristian Javier. The Dominican ace fanned nine batters across five innings, allowing just one hit and no runs to set up the Houston win. Bregman struck again in the sixth inning, with a sharp line drive allowing Jeremy Pena to score and make it 6-0.

Willi Castro finally got Minnesota on the board with a single to right field in the bottom of the sixth that allowed Carlos Correa to score, making it 6-1. But it was only a fleeting rally by Minnesota who were in trouble again in the ninth inning as the Astros bats unloaded on closer Bailey Ober. Yordan Alvarez swatted a solo shot to right field to make it 7-1 and then Abreu uncorked his second homer to make it 9-1. Houston can wrap up the series with victory in game four in Minneapolis on Wednesday. — AFP

Sports

Gatland, Wales' Great Redeemer, eyes third World Cup semi-final

As a group of players, we should be proud of what we've achieved: Gatland

MARSEILLE: Warren Gatland has again underlined his coaching credentials by leading Wales into a fourth successive World Cup quarter-final, introducing a much-needed clarity to transform a misfiring team into contenders in a timeframe not thought possible.

It is hard to believe that in last season's Six Nations, Wales only avoided the wooden spoon by beating Italy in Rome. That was preceded by morale-denting home losses to Australia and Georgia. "As a group of players, we should be proud of what we've achieved," Gatland said of reaching the knock-out phase in France, with one eye on a third-ever semi-final.

"A big part of that is when we've been together as a group, the preparation time and the hard work has helped us in preparation for World Cups." Gatland first took charge of Wales after the 2007 World Cup, when a defeat by Fiji meant they failed to advance out of the pool stages. The New Zealander went on to oversee Wales' most successful period of modern times before leaving in 2019, leading the team to three Six Nations Grand Slams and the last-four stage of both the 2011 and 2019 Rugby World Cups.

In that time Gatland also coached the

British and Irish Lions on three tours, winning the series in Australia in 2013, drawing against New Zealand in 2017 and losing the series against South Africa in 2021. There can be no doubting his coaching pedigree, and it was Gatland the Welsh Rugby Union (WRU) turned to for a second spell after sacking his successor Wayne Pivac. Gatland's team finished fifth in last year's Six Nations campaign, which was overshadowed by a series of off-field issues.

Allegations of sexism, racism and homophobia within the WRU are currently the subject of an independent review. Wales players threatened strike action over contract issues earlier this year, while financial troubles continue to engulf the professional game. Wales also slumped to tenth in World Rugby's official rankings and talismanic figures such as Alun Wyn Jones, Ken Owens, Justin Tipuric and Rhys Webb have all recently retired from the international game.

Second bite of carrot

Gatland admitted he would not have signed up for a second bite of the carrot had he known how entrenched some of the problems were. But he nonetheless

insisted pre-World Cup that his team would do "something special" in France. And true to form, the worm has turned and back has come Welsh success forged on a robust defence that opponents often struggled to crack. Gatland, with Mike Forshaw employed as defence coach—a post once held by Shaun Edwards, now with France, has again enshrined a tough edge with a conservative, possession-based style of rugby critics dub "Warrenball".

"It has been well documented there has been a bit of adversity over the last 12 months," said assistant coach Jonathan Thomas. "The Six Nations didn't go as well as we would have hoped, but then there has been growth, which comes from working hard, being fit and having real clarity in what you want to achieve in your game."

"The balance is excellent in this squad between the senior players and young players." Centre Nick Tompkins, who has been one of the stars of a rejuvenated Welsh team, added that Gatland had brought "clarity, simplicity".

"Give the boys a bit of confidence and continuity and it just shows what you can do. I think we missed a vision and bit of



NANTES: Wales' head coach Warren Gatland looks on ahead of the France 2023 Rugby World Cup Pool C match between Wales and Georgia at the Stade de la Beaujoire in Nantes, western France. — AFP

clarity about what was going on," he said. "Bring that back and it shows what you can do. It's not rocket science but it's not easy to do."

Scrum-half Gareth Davies said the squad "are all back to where we want to

be because of this management". "We are fighting for each other, playing for each other and the environment is good. "Warren has just got his way and it works for me and it obviously works for everyone else in the squad." — AFP

Spain can test De la Fuente project against Scotland

BARCELONA: Spain coach Luis de la Fuente was a surprise appointment and an early humiliating defeat by Scotland in March put his fledgling project on the ropes no sooner than it had begun. The Luis Rubiales forced kiss scandal further shook Spanish football and De la Fuente was criticised for his response to it, but he survived the wave of sackings across the Spanish football federation in September.

On the pitch in the interim period, the 62-year-old's La Roja have been steadily improving and when they face Scotland in Seville on Thursday in Euro 2024 qualifying, they have a chance to prove it. "I feel very strong, and respected—the important thing is the results," said De la Fuente in September, ahead of qualifiers against Georgia and Cyprus, which Spain won emphatically.

De la Fuente led Spain to their first piece of silverware since Euro 2012 in June, overcoming Italy and then Croatia in the Nations League final. In his six matches in charge Spain have secured five victories, with defeat by Scotland in Glasgow the only blemish. Scott McTominay struck twice for the hosts in that match and Scotland boast a perfect record of five wins from five, leading Group A—they can qualify with a win in Seville, or if Norway fail to beat Cyprus. Spain and Manchester City midfielder Rodri angrily described Scotland's style as "a bit rubbish" and "not football".

Rodri quickly became the cornerstone of De la Fuente's team, following the international retirement of holding midfielder veteran Sergio Busquets. After being appointed in December to replace Luis Enrique after Spain's disappointing last-16 exit at the Qatar World Cup, De la Fuente made several other changes to the squad composition.

The coach axed Manchester United goalkeeper David de Gea and gave then-Espanyol



LAS ROZAS DE MADRID: Spain's defender Alejandro Balde gestures next to Spain's coach Luis de la Fuente during the Spanish team's training session ahead of the EURO 2024 qualifying football match between Spain and Scotland, at the Ciudad del Futbol training facilities in Las Rozas de Madrid on October 12, 2023. — AFP

striker Joselu his first call up among other interesting decisions. Only 11 members of the World Cup 26-man group survived. Since then, Real Madrid have signed Joselu on loan and he has scored five times in nine appearances for his club, while De Gea is a free agent after leaving the Red Devils.

Young talent

De la Fuente handed Barcelona starlet Lamine Yamal his debut, with the 16-year-old winger becoming Spain's youngest ever player and scorer in the 7-1 rout of Georgia. The coach called up Granada winger Bryan Zaragoza after his brace against Barcelona on Sunday to replace the injured Jeremy Pino, showing he is not afraid to select on the basis of recent good form. Despite having a limited career in club management—coaching Athletic Bilbao's reserves and then Alaves for four months—De la Fuente had a good record with Spain's youth teams.

His time working within the federation since 2013 means he has a good relationship with many of the current squad, and is adept at handling younger play-

ers. Despite improving results and performances, the "Rubiales case" rumbles on in the background.

De la Fuente has been summoned to appear in court to testify on October 20, with the disgraced former Spanish football federation president being investigated by a Spanish judge over alleged crimes of sexual assault and coercion.

"I will go the day I have been summoned. I will answer the questions they give me and I will leave so happy," said De la Fuente last week. The coach has reiterated he prefers to focus only on the football, and in that area, he is happy with the progress made since the Hampden Park defeat.

"We're not the team from March, nor the one from June, we are a little bit better, we've learned our lesson and we will try to be at the maximum level," added the coach. "We arrived at those games (in March) with just a couple of training sessions, the advantage now is that we've been here a few months. "The message is sinking in, an idea, we know each other better—now we've had a little more time and this will continue to grow." — AFP

Wasmiya, Shareefa in 2nd round of women's bowling championship

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti players Wasmiya Abdullah and Shareefa Iskandar qualified for the second round of the women's doubles of the World Bowling Championship with the group that has Malaysia, Kazakhstan, Canada, Singapore and Philippines. Also players from Korea, Columbia, Denmark, China and Germany qualified.

In the men's doubles Hong Kong, Czechoslovakia, Malaysia, Germany, Singapore, Philippines, Korea and Canada qualified for the next round. Denmark's Bowling Federation President T Anderson said that "we have seen a great organization over seven consecutive days in a specialized complex, in addition to a very strong competition confirming the major development the game experienced around the world. He said we have the opportunity to spread the game in many countries and I hope the new boards under the Chairmanship of Sheikh Talal Al-Mohammad continue their work to advance the game further.



Wasmiya Abdullah and Shareefa Iskandar

Indonesia in talks with Australia for 2034 WCup bid

JAKARTA: Indonesia is in talks with Australia for a possible joint 2034 World Cup bid, its football chief said, despite the Asian confederation declaring its support for Saudi Arabia's candidacy. Global football body FIFA has invited bids from the Asia and Oceania regions for the rotating World Cup hosting rights after naming Morocco, Spain and Portugal as joint hosts for 2030.

Riyadh's bid is the latest step in a campaign to turn the kingdom into a global sports powerhouse but Indonesian FA president Erick Thohir, a gov-

ernment minister and former Inter Milan owner, said Jakarta and Canberra could prepare their own bid. He told reporters on Tuesday he raised the issue with his Australian counterpart at the FIFA Congress in Rwanda in March and talks have continued since.

"At the time, Australia said 'Let's go together', I replied 'Okay, we're ready', it's up to the government of each country to talk," he told a news conference. FIFA's bid deadline of October 31 had accelerated talks, Thohir said. Thohir also said he had raised the prospect with Indonesian President Joko Widodo, who he said responded positively.

"The Australian side asked again 'let's do it seriously'," he said. Football Australia said last week it was exploring the option of bidding for the 2034 World Cup but did not mention a joint bid with Indonesia. However, Australian football officials also said in June they were investigating the possibility

of a joint bid with Indonesia. Thohir said options for a joint bid included Indonesia and Australia with New Zealand, or Indonesia and Australia with Malaysia and Singapore. "We're still open to these options as the bidding process is still a few weeks ahead," he said. However, Indonesian football has been mired in controversy over the past year.

A stadium stampede in Java a year ago killed 135 people and Indonesia lost the hosting rights to the U-20 World Cup after protests in the Muslim-majority nation over Israel's participation. The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) threw its support behind the Saudi bid for the 2034 World Cup shortly after it was announced last week.

"The entire Asian football family will stand united in support of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's momentous initiative," said AFC President Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa of Bahrain. — AFP

Classifieds

Clinics & Hospitals

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134

Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Change of Name

I, **VINITHA ROSHNI DSOUZA** holder of Passport No. X5373929 do hereby change my name to **VINEETHA ROSHNI** (as Given name) **DSOUZA** (as Surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name **VINEETHA ROSHNI DSOUZA** and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. **(C#4243) 12-10-2023**

Dimitrov stuns top seed Alcaraz

Zheng downs Sakkari to reach Zhengzhou last eight

SHANGHAI: Grigor Dimitrov fought back to beat top seed Carlos Alcaraz in three sets and reach the quarter-finals on Wednesday in the latest upset at the Shanghai Masters. The 18th seed won 5-7, 6-2, 6-4 against an out-of-form Alcaraz as the Bulgarian steps up his pursuit of a first ATP title since 2017. He will next face the 22nd-seeded Nicolas Jarry after the Chilean defeated wild card Diego Schwartzman 6-3, 5-7, 6-3. The first Shanghai Masters since the pandemic has opened up for Dimitrov after the early exits of Daniil Medvedev, Stefanos Tsitsipas and Holger Rune. World number one Novak Djokovic is not in China.

"I'm still here, I'm not going anywhere," the 32-year-old Dimitrov said afterwards. Spain's Alcaraz, the world number two, was chasing a seventh tour-level title of the season but he uncharacteristically crumbled after winning the first set. The 20-year-old Alcaraz took time to find his range and Dimitrov broke for 3-2 in the first set with a vicious whipped forehand return. Dimitrov was broken back as he served for the set in a riveting 10th game involving two thrilling rallies that both times saw Alcaraz come out on top.

Alcaraz held and then broke again to wrap the set up in just under an hour. But rather than power on to victory, Alcaraz let the match get away from him. The clean-hitting Dimitrov gathered himself to race into a 2-0 lead in the second set, then broke again for 5-2, before sealing the set when Alcaraz shanked his return.

They went to a decider and an unusually flustered Alcaraz was broken in the third game after yet another unforced error. Alcaraz let out a roar of anger as the match slipped away from him. Dimitrov held his nerve to serve out his first victory over the Spaniard on his second match point.

"I knew what I had to do," said Dimitrov. "I knew I had to apply constant pressure against him. Even if I was down, even if my shots were not good enough, I had to put him in uncomfortable positions. He doesn't like being on the back foot." Alcaraz, who had been the favourite for the Shanghai crown in Djokovic's absence, said he had always been up against it. "He was on another level today, this Grigor," said Alcaraz, who lost to Jannik Sinner in the semi-finals in Beijing and won't look back on his visit to China with much fondness as a result. "I was all not find the way to attack." Later in Tommy Paul plays the highest remaining

seed in the draw at five. The winner meets Ugo Humbert of France in the quarter-finals after the 32nd seed demolished JJ. Wolf of the United States 6-1, 6-2 in just 57 minutes.

Earlier, Zheng Qinwen underlined her status as the future of Chinese women's tennis with a 7-6 (7/2), 6-3 win over sixth-ranked Maria Sakkari at the Zhengzhou

Open on Wednesday. It was the 21-year-old Zheng's fifth top-10 victory of her young career and set up a quarter-final with Ukrainian Anhelina Kalinina.

Zheng sealed victory with her 13th ace of the match, to the delight of the home fans. A quarter-finalist at the US Open last month, Zheng is searching for a second WTA title, having triumphed in Palermo in July. Ranked 24 in the world, Zheng was dealt a blow a few weeks ago when her coach Wim Fissette ended their partnership to go back to working with former world number one Naomi Osaka, who is set to return from maternity leave next season. But the 2022 WTA Newcomer of the Year rebounded in style, clinching gold at the Asian Games in Hangzhou and now taking down third seed Sakkari for the first time in three meetings. "The game plan today was to fight for every single point and try to play aggressive when I can because the last two times I played her I was not aggressive enough and I stayed too long in the same spot," said Zheng. "I think tonight the fans here helped me a lot," she added. The seeds exodus started earlier in the day when Jasmine Paolini knocked out reigning WTA Finals champion and sixth seed Caroline Garcia 3-6, 6-4, 7-5 in two hours and 17 minutes. The Italian world No.31 saved four match points on her own serve at 4-5 in the deciding set before claiming a crucial break in the 11th game to punch her ticket to the quarter-finals for a sixth time in 2023.

The 27-year-old now awaits Laura Siegemund or Liudmila Samsonova in the last eight. "I lost to Caroline four times and it was really tough," she said. "I think I got experience from the matches that I lost to her and I tried to do something better." — AFP



Zheng Qinwen

SHANGHAI: Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov celebrates after winning against Spain's Carlos Alcaraz during their men's singles match at the Shanghai Masters tennis tournament on October 11, 2023. — AFP

Rooney hired as new Birmingham manager

LONDON: Former Manchester United star Wayne Rooney was hired as the new manager of Championship club Birmingham on Wednesday. Rooney has agreed a three-and-a-half-year contract to replace John Eustace at St Andrew's after leaving Major League Soccer side DC United last week. Eustace, in charge for just 15 months, was sacked despite guiding Birmingham to sixth place in the Championship this season and Rooney will be expected to oversee a push for promotion to the Premier League.

"I am absolutely delighted to be joining Birmingham City at such an exciting time. It is very clear that they have a plan and are committed to realizing their ambition for the club," Rooney said. "We are fully aligned on what is expected. I have been building my managerial career, putting myself in challenging environments, to get me ready for this opportunity."

"It's a project that gives me a sense of purpose and I can't wait to get started." Joining Rooney on his Birmingham backroom staff are former England teammate Ashley Cole, currently England Under-21s assistant coach, and John O'Shea, the assistant coach of the Republic of Ireland.

Carl Robinson and Pete Shuttleworth, who both worked with Rooney at DC United, will also move to St Andrew's. "Wayne is a born winner. We believe, with the support of his coaching staff, the club, and our supporters, he will take Blues forward on the next stage of our journey," Birmingham co-owner Tom Wagner said. Rooney previously managed in the Championship with Derby between November 2020 and June 2022.

'Winning culture'

The 37-year-old was unable to stop Derby being relegated to the third tier in 2022 after the club were deducted 21 points for entering administration and financial breaches. He also failed to take DC United into the MLS play-offs this season.

During his glittering player career, Rooney was a teenage sensation with Everton before joining United in 2004. He became United's record goalscorer and won five Premier League titles, as well as the Champions League, Europa League, FA Cup and three League Cups. Wagner is confident Rooney's vast experience at the highest level can revitalize an ambitious club that last played in the Premier League in 2011. "His playing philosophy will help to realize the ambitions we have set for Birmingham City," Wagner said. "Wayne has been preparing for an opportunity like this since he embarked on his coaching education whilst still a player at Manchester United. He and his staff have the full support of the Board and everyone at the football club." US-based Shelby Companies Limited completed a takeover of Birmingham in July and soon afterwards seven-time Super Bowl champion Tom Brady became a minority owner in the club. — AFP

LPGA star Thompson hoping to inspire at PGA Tour event

LAS VEGAS: Lexi Thompson said Tuesday making the cut at this week's Shriners Children's Open will be the highlight of her career as she prepares to become only the seventh female golfer to tee it up on the PGA Tour.

The 28-year-old LPGA Tour star will be the center of attention on Thursday when the Las Vegas tournament gets under way at TPC Summerlin, with Thompson relishing the chance to test herself against her male PGA Tour counterparts.

Thompson is following in the footsteps of an elite band of women golfers who have played in men's events on the PGA Tour, a list that begins with the legendary Babe Didrikson Zaharias in 1935 and runs up to Brittany Lincicome in 2018.

Didrikson Zaharias remains the only woman to have made the cut in a PGA Tour event, although Shirley Spork played all four rounds in the 1952 Northern California-Reno Open, an event which had no cut.

Thompson says matching Didrikson Zaharias' achievement by

extending her Las Vegas campaign into the weekend would take pride of place among her career achievements. "Definitely at the top of my accomplishments," Thompson said Tuesday. "It's been an honor just to get this invite, but one step, one shot at a time. That would be an amazing feeling."

Thompson's invite to play in Las Vegas has not been without controversy. PGA Tour policy board member Peter Malnati described Thompson's invite to the tournament as a "gimmick" last week before quickly retracting the remark. An unfazed Thompson said Tuesday she had expected some negative blowback.

"No reaction. I knew some comments were going to happen," Thompson said. "Like I said, I'm out here playing of course with the men, but I want to leave a message just to the kids that I'm following my dreams and to go after what you want with a positive mindset and don't let anybody's comments or reaction get in the way of that. It's all good. I mean, I expect-



Lexi Thompson

ed it," she said. Thompson added that she hopes to send a message to children that "no dream is too small and they can go after what they want and follow their dreams." The American — who became the youngest golfer ever to qualify for the US Women's Open as a 12-year-old in 2007 — says she

does not expect to be affected by pressure this week. "You just have to block out everything and believe in yourself and go after what you want," she said. "No added pressure. That's what I want. I want to have women support me and me support them. That's what it's all about." — AFP

Marathon world record holder Kiptum sidesteps talk of two-hour mark

NAIROBI: Kenya's freshly-minted marathon world record holder Kelvin Kiptum says he has "no plan" to try and run under the mythic two-hour mark. Kiptum was speaking in Nairobi on Tuesday, back home 48 hours after slicing 34 seconds off the previous best time set by his compatriot Eliud Kipchoge.

Only 23 and competing in just his third marathon Kiptum lit up the streets of Chicago on Sunday to clock two hours and 35 seconds. "I've got no plan to run under two hours but only to improve my own record," said Kiptum who had won his debut over the 26.2 mile (42.195km) distance last December in Valencia, doubling up in London in April.

Kiptum was tearing up the marathon record books one month after Kipchoge celebrated his fifth win in the Berlin Marathon where he had

established the old record of 2:01:09 in 2022. Kipchoge, at 38 1/2 years Kiptum's senior, has broken the two-hour barrier when he clocked 1:59:40 but that was achieved with the aid of pacemakers in a project backed by British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe's Ineos in Vienna in 2019 and consequently not recognized by World Athletics.

The two Kenyans could cross swords at the Paris Olympics next year with Kipchoge possibly gunning for his third gold after Rio in 2016 and the covid-delayed 2020 Games in Tokyo. "Every athlete is happy to represent their country and I am looking forward to run in the marathon in Paris," said Kiptum.

He added: "I have not received a personal message from Eliud Kipchoge. But if I am selected to compete in the Paris Olympics, I am ready to



CHICAGO: Kenya's Kelvin Kiptum poses next to the clock marking his time after winning the 2023 Bank of America Chicago Marathon in Chicago, Illinois, in a world record time of two hours and 35 seconds. — AFP

race with him. "My next target is to take a break, meet my management team and come back strong for the 2024 season".

Kiptum's breakthrough comes at a

time when athletics superpower Kenya is investing heavily in testing to combat a surge in doping cases with a total of 67 Kenyans banned in the last five years for doping. — AFP