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STORM KILLS 2,000 IN LIBYA

Kuwait expresses solidarity as 'catastrophic' Storm Daniel unleashes torrential rains, floods

Deputy Amir meets ASC chief



KUWAIT: HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Monday President of Asian Shooting Confederation (ASC) Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Hmoud Al-Sabah. HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince congratulated him on the post, wishing Sheikh Salman all success to serve the homeland in various regional and international sports forums. — KUNA

BENGAZI: As many as 2,000 people are feared dead in Libya after Mediterranean storm Daniel caused devastating floods that swept away entire neighborhoods and wrecked homes in multiple coastal towns in the North African nation. The head of Libya's eastern government, Oussama Hamad, said more than 2,000 people had died in the coastal city of Derna and thousands more were missing.

The fatalities came after freak floods hit eastern Libya after Storm Daniel swept the Mediterranean, its torrential rains earlier lashing Turkey, Bulgaria and Greece. Images filmed by residents of the Libyan disaster area showed massive mudslides, collapsed buildings and entire neighborhoods submerged under muddy water.

Kuwait expressed sympathy and solidarity with Libya over the storm and floods that swept eastern Libya, claiming the lives of thousands of people and injuring many others. The ministry of foreign affairs expressed condolences to the victims' families, wishing the injured speedy recovery.

Hundreds of residents were still believed to be trapped in difficult-to-reach areas as rescuers, backed by the army, were trying to come to their aid. East Libyan authorities had "lost contact with nine soldiers during rescue operations", said Mohamed Massoud,



DERNA, Libya: Vehicles are piled up along the side of a coastal road in this eastern city in the wake of Mediterranean storm Daniel on Sept 11, 2023. — AFP

a spokesman for the Benghazi-based administration in Libya. He said Hamad, prime minister of the east-based government, and the head of a rescue committee as well as other ministers had travelled to Derna to evaluate the extent of the damage.

Hamad's government — which in war-bat-

tered Libya rivals a UN-brokered, internationally recognized transitional administration in Tripoli — on Monday declared Derna a "disaster area". Libya's western government under Abdelhamid Dbeibah, during an extraordinary ministerial meeting broadcast

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Mawlid holiday on Sept 28

KUWAIT: The Cabinet announced a holiday in the public sector on Thursday, Sept 28, 2023 on the occasion of the Prophet's (PBUH) birthday.

Dr Amer Al-Ajmi govt spokesman

KUWAIT: A decree was issued on Monday appointing Dr Amer Al-Ajmi as official spokesman of the Kuwaiti government and president of the Center for Government Communication.

Egypt imposes school niqab ban

CAIRO: Egypt announced a ban on wearing the niqab at school, starting from the new academic year on Sept 30, 2023. Students have the right to choose whether to wear a hijab or not, Egyptian Education Minister Redha Hejazi said in a statement on Monday, noting it must not cover the student's face. — AFP

Second pilot found dead in UAE

DUBAI: The second pilot of a Bell 212 helicopter that crashed off the coast of the UAE has been found dead, authorities said Monday, days after he was declared missing. "Search teams have found the body of the second pilot of the AeroGulf helicopter that crashed off the coast of Umm Al Qaiwain," the state news agency WAM cited the aviation authority as saying. — AFP

Dolly cloning lead scientist dies

PARIS: The British scientist who led the team that cloned Dolly the sheep, a breakthrough in cloning, has died at the age of 79, his former university said on Monday. Ian Wilmut, who revealed in 1981 he had been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, helmed the team at the Roslin Institute at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, which cloned Dolly in 1996. — AFP

Modi hails Saudi ties after 'historic' route unveiled

NEW DELHI: India hailed its "strategic" partnership with oil-rich Saudi Arabia on Monday, days after unveiling a major trade and transport route linking Europe, the Middle East and India as part of a broad alliance. "Together, we made the historic start to establish an economic corridor," Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi told Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in New Delhi.

On Saturday, the pair took part alongside other G20 leaders in the unveiling of ambitious plans to create a modern-day Spice Route, boosting trade ties with potentially wide-ranging geopolitical implications. "This

corridor will not only connect the two countries, but economic cooperation, digital connectivity between Asia, West Asia and Europe," Modi added, in talks following the end of the two-day Group of 20 leaders' summit he hosted. India and Saudi Arabia, along with the United States, the European Union, the United Arab Emirates

and others launched the initiative to link railways, ports, electricity and data networks and hydrogen pipelines. Although heavily trade-focused, the scheme could have wide-ranging implications.

US President Joe Biden called the trade and transport scheme "historic" at the launch event. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the so-called India-Middle East-Europe economic corridor was "much more than just a railway or a cable". Signatories hope it can help integrate India's vast market

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NEW DELHI: Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Indian President Droupadi Murmu and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi attend a ceremonial reception at President House on Sept 11, 2023. — AFP

Zionist officials make first open visit to Saudi

RIYADH: A Zionist delegation attended a UNESCO meeting in Riyadh on Monday, marking the country's first publicly announced visit to Saudi Arabia as speculation grows about a potential normalization of ties. The five-member delegation arrived on Sunday, a Zionist official told AFP, for the meeting to update UNESCO's world heritage list of cultural and historic sites. "We are happy to be here — it's a good first step," said the official, who did not want to be named given the sensitivities of the visit, during the meeting. "We thank UNESCO and the Saudi authorities."

The team travelled through Dubai, the official said, as there are no direct flights between the Zionist entity and Saudi Arabia, and arrived on Sunday. They received their visas via UNESCO, the United Nations' educational, scientific and cultural organization. The delegation, including a security official, joined the UNESCO meeting on Monday, sitting behind a sign that said (the Zionist entity) on the front of their desk.

"The visit has been "very good — they treat us very well", the official said. The sign drew stares from Saudis working at the meeting, where more than 50 sites are contenders to join the coveted world heritage list. "That is God's command. The issue is bigger than us and we can't object to it," said a young Saudi man working among the support

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RIYADH: A delegation from the Zionist entity attends a UNESCO meeting at Al-Murabba Palace on Sept 11, 2023. — AFP

'No time to rest' for AC workers in sweltering Saudi

RIYADH: Mohammed Sayed wipes sweat from his brow as he repairs another broken air conditioning unit at the height of the Saudi summer, his most stressful time of year. The 28-year-old Sudanese national and his fellow technicians clock long hours as temperatures in the capital Riyadh clear 40 degrees Celsius on a dai-

ly basis, highlighting the Gulf kingdom's dependence on machines the government is trying to make less environmentally taxing.

"The summer season brings abnormal work pressure. It is very stressful... there is no time to rest," Sayed tells AFP as his colleagues climb ladders to replace the dust-choked filter of the latest faltering unit at a villa in eastern Riyadh. Within minutes, the team has also inspected the fan, compressor and level of Freon refrigerant, all under the watchful eye of Mishal Ayyad, the grateful homeowner. "The air conditioner is the beating heart of the Saudi home," Ayyad says. From bedrooms to living rooms and even kitchens, it is not uncommon for every room in a

Saudi home to have its own air conditioning unit that hums around-the-clock during the high-temperature months of April to October. The intensive use leads to frequent malfunctions, meaning Sayed and his team are called to repair dozens of units per day.

Their work continues even between the hottest hours of 12:00 pm and 3:00 pm, a period which the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development says is off-limits for outdoor labor from June to September. "Unfortunately we are forced to work during this period, but I try as much as possible to have our work be inside homes and not on outdoor units," Sayed says.

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Local

Kuwait Cabinet approves draft decree establishing College for Fire Services

Ministers briefed on Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port project



KUWAIT: Ministers attend Cabinet's weekly meeting, chaired by Acting Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: Kuwait Cabinet on Monday approved a draft decree establishing a College for Fire Services and referred it to His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. This came during the Cabinet's weekly meeting, chaired by Acting Prime Minister

and Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. After the meeting, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Eissa Al-Kandari affirmed that the Cabinet was briefed on the Civil Service Bureau decision regarding the birth anniversary of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Therefore, the Cabinet announced September 28 as a holiday to mark the birth anniversary of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The ministers said public institutes and ministries would suspend work while other entities would continue work and operation in accordance with their own

specialized nature. Moreover, the Cabinet was briefed on the recommendation of the Coordinating Committee for Enhancing Non-Oil Revenues regarding the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port project to take the necessary procedures to complete the project. — KUNA

Minister praises Chinese medical team

KUWAIT: The Minister of Health, Dr Ahmad Al-Awadi, has praised the outstanding efforts of the Chinese medical team and the therapeutic services it provides to patients at the Natural Medicine and Health Rehabilitation Hospital in accordance with the agreement concluded between the Kuwaiti and Chinese ministries of health. This came in a press statement by Minister Al-Awadi after receiving on Monday the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the country, Zhang Jianwei, and the Chinese medical delegation, where they discussed ways to enhance cooperation in the health sector and follow-up health services provided by the Chinese medical team.

For his part, Ambassador Jianwei expressed in a similar statement his happiness at the continued success of Kuwaiti relations. China is witnessing a significant development through the agreements concluded between the two countries to exchange specialized experiences in the fields of scientific research and traditional Chinese medicine. Jianwei stressed the depth of bilateral relations between the two friendly countries, which is an ideal model as Kuwait is one of the first Gulf countries to attract a Chinese medical team working in its hospitals since 1976. — KUNA



Kuwait National Guard selects new students

KUWAIT: The National Guard held a public draw to select a new batch of students applying to join the National Guard as non-commissioned officers. The event was held under the patronage of Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Deputy Chief of the National Guard. The Undersecretary of the National Guard, Lieutenant General Engineer Hashem Al-Rifai, Chairman of the Admission Committee and Commander of Protection and Reinforcement, Major General Hamad Salem, and a number of commanders and officers attended the event.

The Deputy Chief of the National Guard said the National Guard is keen to consolidate the principle of transparency and justice in choosing the applicants who are honored to join the military service and defend their dear homeland under the wise leadership of the Amir, HH Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and the Crown Prince, HH Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. He stressed that the admission procedures in the National Guard took into account the principle of parity.



KUWAIT: Ambassadors, Kuwaiti generals, US army leadership and senior officials attend the Patriot Day remembrance ceremony at Camp Arifjan on Monday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

US Embassy marks Patriot Day on 9/11

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The US Embassy in Kuwait held a Patriot Day remembrance ceremony at Camp Arifjan on Monday. The ceremony was attended by several ambassadors, Kuwaiti generals and senior US Army leadership. In his opening remarks, Chargé d'Affaires James Holtsnider noted that September 11 serves as a poignant reminder of how a seemingly ordinary day can quickly turn into a day of tragedy that will never be forgotten.

"Despite the terrible events of September 11, there were numerous examples of bravery and patriotism. We remember the firefighters, police and first responders who answered the call to help others. Among the nearly 3,000 people who perished, we lost over 180 servicemembers and civilians at the Pentagon, and more than 350 firefighters and policemen who heroically rushed into the World Trade Center to save lives," Holtsnider said.

"Today, on Patriot Day, let us all be reminded that patriotism can take many forms. This observance and day of remembrance serves two purposes. First, we must commemorate and never forget the innocent people who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks. Second, let this day remind us that 'freedom is not free,'" he added. Holtsnider praised Kuwait's ongoing efforts in conducting joint exercises with the United States to combat terrorist activities in the region. "Kuwait has been a terrific partner over the last 20 years. It continues to be important not only for the US, but also for the rest of the world," he pointed out.

He also revealed that in 2023, both countries are prioritizing cybersecurity training and collaboration. These efforts are crucial for enhancing cybersecurity defenses and bolstering international security. He highlighted that the US is closely collaborating with Kuwait, particularly as Kuwait has been a leader in this domain, having established a national cybersecurity center.

Social media platforms becoming modern-day diaries, memory albums

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: Social media platforms have revolutionized the way individuals communicate, share experiences and document memories of their lives. Due to the rise of its multiple platforms, social media has transformed into a digital modern-day diary or memory album for many people. Similar to a traditional diary, people use social media platforms to keep memories of their past, celebrate their achievements and challenges with their friends, family and even strangers.

However social media platforms also provide users with special features that allow them to document their feelings and express opinions in an easy and more appealing way, which may encourage individuals to unleash their thoughts and feel a sense of validation. Kuwait Times interviewed Al-Kawther Ghloom and Zainab Dashti, two young adults who shared their thoughts on social media's role in documenting their experiences in life and preserving beautiful memories.



US Charge d'Affaires James Holtsnider



On the sidelines of the ceremony, British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis commended the visit of HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the United Kingdom, characterizing it as excellent and contributing to the strengthening of strategic relations. She noted that discussions between HH the Crown Prince and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak covered a wide range of topics related to bilateral relations, including trade and investment.

"During the visit, an investment partnership agreement between the two countries was signed,

which will further expand Kuwaiti investments in Britain," Lewis said. "We look forward to developing areas of common interest such as education, technology, renewable energy and scientific research."

The British ambassador also mentioned that the talks encompassed the free trade agreement, with the British prime minister encouraging Kuwait to elevate its ambitions regarding the agreement. She expressed her hope for progress, whether with Kuwait or other GCC countries. She indicated that the next meeting of the joint steering committee would take place in the UK before the end of the year.

"What makes social media a better alternative for preserving memories is that it gives you easy access to visual content. For instance, platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok enable us to post pictures and videos that are visually appealing, and at the same time give us the option to write a caption alongside our posts, as well as other features that can add beauty to the memories, such as adding music and filters," Ghloom said.

These platforms also keep our memories documented and saved in the digital archives. So basically, instead of relying on physical photo albums or written memories that might be kept away and uneasy to find, we can now easily access our digital archives through our social media accounts and recall our nostalgic memories of the past, in addition to having the option to choose who views our content and share with them whatever we like," she added.

According to Ghloom, unlike old school diaries or photo albums, which are usually shared with a limited audience, social media allows individuals to connect with a vast network of users. This allows fostering a sense of community and connection among people who may share similar interests.

On her part, Dashti said social media works as a window that introduces one's character to the world. "Social media platforms often provide tools to pres-



ent one's life in a way that reflects their desired image to people. Users can present their interests, achievements and experiences selectively by carefully crafting a narrative that represents who they are or how they want to be perceived. Therefore, social media is a double-edged sword that users should be careful with," she said.

Thus, social media platforms provide individuals with an opportunity to build their social image and presentation by carefully shaping the image they portray to the outside world, cultivating an online character that has significant achievement and even failures.

Local

Japan, GCC strengthen ties, boost trade links

FOIP offers cooperation rather than division and confrontation

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Ambassador of Japan to Kuwait Yasunari Morino discussed with local media the importance of Japan's cooperation with Gulf states at the first Japan-GCC Foreign Ministers' Meeting. "Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi, during the Third Japan-Arab Political Dialogue, explained Japan's vision for a 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP),' aimed at leading the world towards cooperation rather than division and confrontation. He expressed Japan's hope to collaborate with GCC members in maintain-



Ambassador of Japan to Kuwait Yasunari Morino



KUWAIT: Ambassador of Japan to Kuwait Yasunari Morino (center) takes a group photo with local media representatives. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

ing and strengthening the free and open international order based on the rule of law," Morino said.

The Japanese ambassador emphasized that his country is eager to play a more active role in stabilizing the region and aims to strengthen cooperation with the GCC. Regarding Japan's efforts towards achieving a carbon-neutral society, he noted: "Energy security is a crucial challenge due to increasing global warming. In this context, it is essential to transition to new energy sources and cooperate at the Gulf level."

Morino added Kuwaiti-Japanese relations are deep and historical, as Kuwait is considered one of the largest suppliers of oil to Japan, and Japan ap-

preciates Kuwait's efforts in ensuring energy security. "Japan would like to collaborate with Kuwait to further the transition to new energy. Both Japan and Kuwait contribute to the stability of the region, and both sides can make significant contributions and foster cooperation. Regarding the transition to renewable energy, Japan aims to reach zero carbon emissions by 2050, while Kuwait aims for 2060. Therefore, Japan and Kuwait share a common goal and can enhance their cooperation," he explained.

The Japanese ambassador highlighted that in June, a forum took place involving private Japanese companies and Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) to discuss ammonia production, transporta-

tion methods, modern technologies for future fuels and carbon capture.

On another note, he confirmed the presence of many Japanese products in Kuwait, including Japanese-made cars, and numerous Japanese companies operate in various fields in Kuwait, particularly in infrastructure. Regarding tourism, Morino revealed that his embassy issues between 300 to 400 visas per month, and the number of tourists is increasing, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. He added that Kuwaitis are showing growing interest in Japan and embark on a captivating journey that bridges two distinct cultures. He also pointed out that visas for Kuwaitis are typically issued within three days.

PAAET organizes 2nd exhibition for new students

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, represented by the Deanship of Student Affairs, announced the organization of the second student exhibition for new students of colleges and institutes for the academic and training year 2023-2024 on September 18 under the slogan Light Up Your Ideas. The exhibition will last three days.

The Dean of Student Affairs, Dr. Abdulkarim Al-Uray'ir, said in a press statement on Monday that the exhibition is held under the patronage of the Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Dr. Adel Al-Mane, and is organized for the second year in a row. Al-Uray'ir added that the exhibition comes from the desire of the deanship to repeat the experience after the good echoes achieved by the first exhibition last year.

"The exhibition also aims to guide students to everything related to the academic system and introduce them to the disciplines that are lucrative in the labor market, as well as provide them with important advice about academic life and how to deal with it," he added. He congratulated the students and wished them success in their academic lives. — KUNA



Deputy FM receives envoys

KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrar Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Monday received Ambassador of United Kingdom and North of Ireland to Kuwait Belinda

Lewis, Ambassador of Australia Melissa Kelly and US Charge d'Affaires Jim Holtsnider. Matters of mutual interests were discussed during the meeting. — KUNA

KFAS announces winners of Jaber Al-Ahmad Award for Young Researchers

KUWAIT: Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) announced on Sunday the names of the winners of the 33rd Jaber Al-Ahmad Award for Young Researchers, which is awarded annually to Kuwaiti researchers who hold a doctoral degree worth KD 10,000. The foundation said the announcement of the names of the winners of the award came after it was approved by HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Chairman of the foundation's board of directors, based on the recommendations of the board of directors and the awards council at the foundation as well as the jury committees.

It explained that in the field of medical and auxiliary medical sciences, the award was won by Dr. Mohammed Haider Jamal, who works as an associate professor at the Department of Surgery at the Faculty of Medicine at Kuwait University and holds Canadian and American board certifications in surgery, adding that he has published 64 scientific research papers in peer-reviewed scientific journals, three books, and three chapters in medical books.

KFAS said the award was won in the field of natural sciences and mathematics by Dr. Dhari Adel Al-Hawail, who works as an associate professor in the Department of Information Sciences at the Faculty of Life Sciences at Kuwait University and holds a doctorate in information systems manage-

ment from the University of Maryland, indicating he has published 45 scientific papers in peer-reviewed journals and is a fellow of the International Academy of Informatics and Health Sciences and the American Medical Informatics Association.

It said the award was won in the field of engineering sciences by Dr. Yacoub Youssef Al-Asiri, who works as a researcher in the coastal management program at the Center of Environmental and Life Sciences at the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research and holds a doctorate in water engineering from Cardiff University, adding he has published 18 scientific papers in scientific journals.

In the field of social and human sciences, the award was won by Dr. Abdullah Rashed Al-Shibli, who works as an associate professor at the Department of Private Law at Saad Al-Abdullah Academy for Security Sciences and holds a doctorate in economic



Dr. Yacoub Youssef Al-Asiri



Dr. Mohammed Haider Jamal



Dr. Abdullah Rashed Al-Shibli



Dr. Dhari Adel Al-Hawail



Dr. Abdullah Jawad Sultan

laws and corporate governance from the University of Leeds, indicating he has published 15 scientific papers in refereed journals and six books.

KFAS added that in the field of administrative and economic sciences, the award was won by Dr. Abdullah Jawad Sultan, who works as an associate professor in the Marketing Department at the Faculty of Administrative Sciences at Kuwait University and holds a doctorate in business administration from the University of Washington, indicating he has published 17 scientific papers in refereed journals.

KFAS extended its best wishes to the award recipients, encouraging them to continue their research

endeavors and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in various fields. The foundation emphasized the importance of recognizing and supporting the outstanding work of Kuwaiti researchers, as they play a vital role in enriching the field of science.

It is worth noting that the Jaber Al-Ahmad Award for Young Researchers was established in 1988 as the Scientific Production Award, in line with the vision of the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who sought to honor young Kuwaiti scientists and researchers with doctoral degrees across various knowledge domains, thereby promoting and incentivizing their scientific contributions.

In my view

Oversight or conspiracy?



Dr. Khalid Al-Saleh

Local@kuwaittimes.com

Western countries and Zionists are collaborating to manipulate the image of Arab people. This collaboration has become increasingly prevalent, with a particular focus on Islam and Arab Islam. The campaign to distort the Arab image did not begin recently; rather, it has its roots in decades past. Some suggest that even the BBC radio was among the first to adopt this campaign, eroding Arab confidence in their identity and values. Many media-savvy individuals have collected numerous examples of this phenomenon.

Some Arabs may defend these foreign media outlets, arguing that they are funded by taxpayers to provide news, promote democracy, or present alternative viewpoints not commonly heard in Arab countries.

Media researchers commonly agree that the tools of persuasion employed by media outlets serve to shape the recipient's perception, known as the "policy of acquiescence" (as described in Walter Lippmann's 1922 book, "Public Opinion"). Over the past decades, the media's content in the form of news, discussions, and cultural exchanges is perceived to have contributed little to the development of the Arab world. Instead, it is seen as having diminished Arab pride and self-confidence while elevating the Western world, until we got the Western inferiority complex, seeking the help of foreign expertise, studying in foreign schools and being treated in foreign hospitals.

Today, many decision-makers in the Arab world, influenced by foreign media messages from earlier generations, readily seek the assistance of foreign experts as the easiest solution to their problems. This extends to the point where figures like Tony Blair, the former British Prime Minister, who brags to be an LGBTQ symbol, was hired to duplicate reports from Arab experts and present them as solutions.

It is not uncommon to find individuals within Arab countries advocating for foreign medical teams, scientists, and experts, even among members of our National Assembly, who are expected to prioritize the nation and its people.

Past experiences involving foreign assistance have often failed to develop aspects of Arab life, leading some to recall instances such as the Canadian management of Kuwait Cancer Control Center (KCCC), which resulted in a significant financial loss of KD 25 million and inefficiency. In contrast, experiences involving local experts within Arab institutions have been more successful in various areas, such as the social security system, citizen services and cooperatives, which were initiated by citizens themselves.

In today's interconnected world, global communication allows for easy collaboration and access to knowledge and expertise from across the globe. You can live in a remote town in India and be closer to a scientist in a faraway country, closer than a colleague who works in the same establishment. Arab countries, like Kuwait and others in the Gulf and Arab region, have the potential to harness the skills and capabilities of their own people.

However, resistance to this change persists, due to a sense of humiliation instilled by Western media. India is going ahead, Japan is ahead of the West, China is near global crowning, Malaysia achieved a miracle, South American countries have entered the race, Turkey has developed and Bangladesh took the express development train, but we are still demanding help from the West to take our money and make fun of us. We still invite them to come and help us to go backwards, while others are going forward at the hands of their people.

The critical question remains: Is this resistance to change due to ignorance and oversight on our part, or is it part of an ongoing conspiracy?

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News in Brief



MOCI busts company

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has busted a food company in Shuwaikh Industrial Area accused of committing a commercial fraud violation by extending the expiration dates of food items, which poses a risk to the health of consumers. An arrest was made after monitoring and verification processes were carried out by the Commercial Control Emergency Team.

Minister inspects zones

KUWAIT: Education Minister Adel Al-Mana inspected the educational zones, where he met with principals and officials in these areas and discussed the details of the work related to equipping schools and providing the appropriate environment for teachers and students. He also discussed how to overcome the obstacles—to ensure the readiness of schools and provide an appropriate environment for academic activities. The minister stressed the need to ensure the completion of all work requirements in schools and to ensure a good start, stressing the need for district managers to immediately report any obstacles to work and find appropriate solutions according to the available resources. He instructed all sectors to work in a team spirit and cooperate among themselves to overcome all obstacles.

Two suspects arrested

KUWAIT: In reaction to a video clip circulating on social media about an assault in the Mahboula area, security officials have arrested the main suspect and his accomplice after intensifying search operations. They have been referred to the competent authorities for proper legal action.

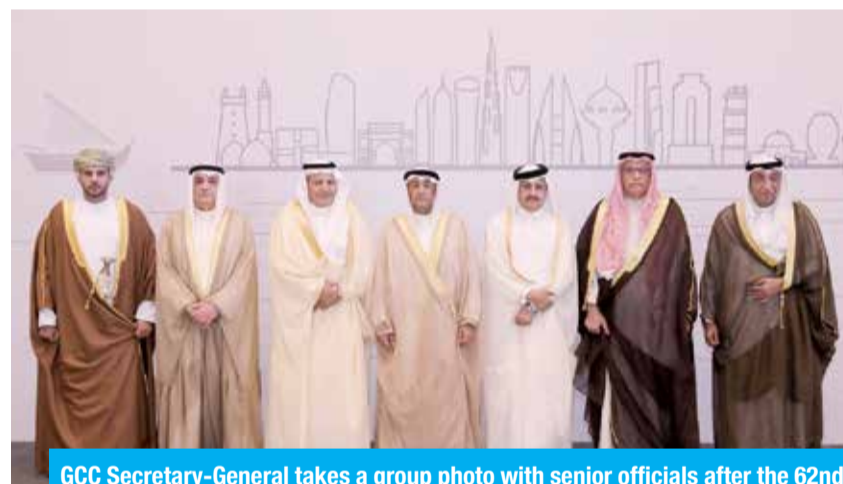
Photo of the day



The Egyptian Navy ship ENS "Abu Simbel 2" docks in Port Sudan on September 10, 2023 after arriving carrying 190 tons of humanitarian aid provided by Kuwait's Red Crescent Society. — AFP

Private sector 'vital' to ensure sustainable economy in GCC

Kuwait underlines Gulf commerce chamber gatherings as pivotal



GCC Secretary-General takes a group photo with senior officials after the 62nd meeting of the Board of Directors of the Gulf Chambers. — KUNA photos



Kuwait Chamber of Commerce chief Mohammad Al-Saqer is seen during the meeting.

MANAMA: Talks involving the chiefs of commerce chambers in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are pivotal in pushing forward cooperation within the six-member bloc, Kuwait Chamber of Commerce chief Mohammad Al-Saqer said on Sunday. Such talks are also instrumental in bolstering cooperation between the public and private sectors in the region, Kuwait Chamber of Commerce chief Mohammad Al-Saqer told KUNA on the sidelines of pan-GCC talks in the Bahraini capital that brought together commerce chamber heads and the bloc's secretary general, Jasem Al-Budaiwi. These talks are also imperative to solidify economic relations within the wider Gulf Arab region, he emphasized.

Meanwhile, GCC Secretary-General Jasem Al-Budaiwi said that the private sector is one of the most essential pillars in ensuring a sustainable Gulf economy capable of facing economic challenges. This came in a speech during his participation in the 62nd meeting of the Board of Directors of the Gulf Chambers, hosted by the Kingdom of Bahrain, headed by the Saudi President of the Federation of Gulf Chambers for the current session, Hassan Al-Huwaizi, and with the participation of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry Chief, Mohammad Al-Saqer.

Al-Budaiwi conveyed to the Board of Directors the assurances of the leaders and presidents of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries to support the process of

joint Gulf action to achieve the aspirations of their citizens towards greater interconnection, cooperation, and integration in various fields. He also expressed his aspiration to increase cooperation and integration between the GCC and the Gulf private sector to address different challenges and obstacles.

For his part, Al-Huwaizi called for the establishment of a joint Gulf financing and investment fund directed to support initiatives of mutual Gulf companies that seek to build partnerships and economic integration among the GCC countries. He pointed to the success achieved by government financial funds in the GCC countries that support private sector projects in various development fields. — KUNA



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Heritage jewelry exhibition showcases antique items

KUWAIT: Jewelry, since ancient times, has been either used for decoration, showing one's status, or displaying certain beliefs. In this regard, jewelry dating back to the Stone, Bronze, and Hellenistic ages is put on display at the heritage jewelry exhibition in the Avenues Mall. A number of traditional charms, metals, and gemstones were used in the manufacturing of the displayed pieces, giving them elegance and value. The exhibition is organized by the Department of Antiquities and Museums at the Kuwait National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters (NCCAL) as part of the 15th Cultural Summer Festival (Saifi-15). — KUNA





'Finished here': Moroccan village vanishes in quake

Small islands turn to court as they lead climate justice fight

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SOCHI: Russian President Vladimir Putin sees off his Turkish counterpart in this pool image distributed by Sputnik agency on September 4, 2023. — AFP photos



PYONGYANG: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un visiting Kumsusan Palace of the Sun in Pyongyang to mark the 75th founding anniversary of North Korea in this picture released from North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

Kim Jong Un takes train to meet Putin

Putin to use summit as 'gentle diplomatic blackmail' of Seoul: Expert

SEOUL: North Korea said Monday that leader Kim Jong Un would visit Russia and meet President Vladimir Putin, with the reclusive leader's armored train reportedly on its way to the border. Experts suggest that Putin is seeking artillery shells and antitank missiles from North Korea for Moscow's war in Ukraine, while Kim is reportedly in search of advanced technology for satellites and nuclear-powered submarines, as well as food aid for his impoverished nation.

Kim "will soon visit the Russian Federation at the invitation of ... Putin," the North's official Korean Central News Agency said. "The respected Comrade Kim Jong Un will meet and have a talk with Comrade Putin during the visit," it added. The Kremlin also confirmed Monday that Kim would visit Russia "in the coming days".

The announcement ends days of speculation after US and other officials told The New York Times at the weekend that Kim, who rarely leaves North Korea, was likely to head by armored train to Vladivostok for arms talks with Putin. Kim has not travelled outside North Korea since the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

South Korea's Yonhap news agency quoted an unidentified official as saying "intelligence authorities believe the train presumed to be carrying Kim Jong-un is moving to Vladivostok". Broadcaster YTN said Seoul "expects that Chairman Kim will hold a meeting with President Putin of Russia around the day after tomorrow", meaning Wednesday.

Moscow, a historical ally of Pyongyang, was a crucial backer of the isolated country for decades and their ties go back to the founding of North Korea

75 years ago. Kim has been steadfast in his support for Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, including, Washington says, supplying rockets and missiles. In July, Putin hailed Pyongyang's "firm support for special military operations against Ukraine". Vladivostok will be hosting the Eastern Economic Forum until Wednesday.

'Pay a price'

The White House warned last week that Pyongyang would "pay a price" if it supplies Moscow with weaponry for its war in Ukraine. Washington said Russia could use weapons from North Korea to attack Ukrainian food supplies and heating infrastructure heading into winter to "try to conquer territory that belongs to another sovereign nation".

Andrei Lankov, a North Korea ex-

pert at Kookmin University in Seoul, told AFP that a Putin-Kim summit was part of "gentle diplomatic blackmail" by Moscow of Seoul because Russia did not want South Korea to supply weapons to Kyiv. Seoul is a major arms exporter and has sold tanks to Kyiv's ally Poland, but longstanding domestic policy bars it from selling weapons into active conflicts.

"The major worry of the Russian government now is a possible shipment of the South Korean ammunition to Ukraine, not just one shipment but a lot of shipments," Lankov said. Cheong Seong-chang, researcher at the Sejong Institute, told AFP that, were North Korea to expand military cooperation with Russia, "there is an increased likelihood of prolonged conflict in Ukraine".

And Pyongyang's reward for aiding

Moscow could mean that "advancements in North Korea's nuclear submarine and reconnaissance satellite development might then progress at a faster pace", he said. Kim has become well-known for his preference for train travel when it comes to international trips. His father and predecessor, Kim Jong Il, was famously scared of flying.

The current leader reportedly lacks confidence in his private jet and harbors "concerns about the potential for aerial bombing by Washington", said Yang Moo-jin, president of the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul. In 2019, he made the 60-hour return train trip from Hanoi to Pyongyang by train after a summit with then-US president Donald Trump collapsed, and reportedly hinted at physical fatigue from spending hours on the rails. — AFP

What we know about N Korea, Russia ties

SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is travelling to Russia to meet President Vladimir Putin, in part to discuss providing arms to Moscow for its war in Ukraine. AFP takes a look at what we know about North Korean-Russian ties:

What can North Korea offer Russia?

In late August, Washington said that despite its denials, Pyongyang supplied infantry rockets and missiles to Moscow in 2022 for use by the privately controlled Wagner military group. Joseph Dempsey, a researcher at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, said Moscow would be most interested in artillery shells that can be easily integrated.

"North Korea likely represents the largest stockpiles of Soviet-era legacy artillery shells and artillery that could be used to restock depleted Russian inventories from the Ukraine conflict," Dempsey told AFP. North Korea's more sophisticated weaponry would be harder to integrate into Russian service, he added, and their capabilities and capacity to produce en masse remained unclear.

What does North Korea want in return?

Analysts say Russia has everything that impover-

ished North Korea needs. "Russia is a food export country, a fertilizer export country, an energy export country," said Cho. It could also seek the transfer of "key technologies, knowledge and manufacturing capacity for North Korea's arms industry to advance and be more sustainable," added Dempsey.

A 2022 UN report highlighted the role of a North Korean diplomat in Moscow in procuring a range of ballistic missile technologies and going as far as attempting to get some 3,000 kilograms of steel for Pyongyang's submarine program.

What would a Pyongyang-Moscow deal mean?

Two weeks ago at the United Nations, the United States, Britain, South Korea and Japan said any deal to increase cooperation between Russia and North Korea would violate Security Council resolutions forbidding arms deals with Pyongyang — resolutions that Moscow itself had endorsed.

To avoid accusations of breaching the resolutions, the two allies are likely to "reach the deal behind closed doors without official announcement" Cheong Seong-chang, director of North Korean studies at the Sejong Institute told AFP. "Kim and Putin are expected to simply say they agreed to cooperate in a wide range of areas without specifying what they are in an abstract manner."

If Moscow and Pyongyang proceed with shipments of arms, locating them will become the "responsibility of the international community" to hold them accountable. "In case of shells, the North could transport them to Moscow via trains for their relatively small size." — AFP

6 dead as clashes rock Palestinian camp in Lebanon

SIDON: At least six people have been killed and dozens wounded in clashes in a Palestinian refugee camp in southern Lebanon, first responders said Monday as fighting raged for a fifth day. Violence broke out late Thursday in the Ain Al-Helweh camp on the outskirts of the coastal city of Sidon, just weeks after similar clashes pitted members of the Palestinian Fatah movement against Islamist militants.

The toll has risen to at least "six dead, one of them killed on Monday, and more than 70 wounded", said Imad Hallak from the Palestinian Red Crescent's Lebanon branch, revising an earlier figure of 60 wounded. The casualties include both fighters and civilians, he added.

Lebanon's powerful Iran-backed Hezbollah group urged a halt to the fighting. "We call for an immediate ceasefire," Hezbollah said in a statement on Monday, adding that the group expressed "deep regret" at the violence. An AFP correspondent in Sidon reported ongoing clashes with automatic gunfire and shelling, after fighting had subsided somewhat overnight. Bullets and shells fell outside the camp's walls in past days, the correspondent said. Lebanon's official National News Agency (NNA) said the



AIN AL-HELWEH: A fighter of the Palestinian Fatah movement takes cover during clashes at one of its centers in the Ain Al-Helweh camp on September 10, 2023. — AFP

city's southern entrance was closed to traffic. The UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, said Sunday that "hundreds of families have left the camp" since the clashes began. Some 400 families were sheltering in a mosque, while others were taking refuge with relatives or in emergency shelters, it added in a report. The Lebanese army said Sunday that shells hit two military sites near the camp, "leaving five soldiers wounded, one of them in critical condition". By long-standing convention, the army stays out of the Palestinian camps and leaves the factions to handle security there. In a statement on X, formerly Twitter, the army warned "the relevant parties inside the camp" against endangering military sites, adding that it would "take appropriate measures". — AFP



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International

Small islands turn to court as they lead climate justice fight

Case demands UN court clarify international climate protection obligations

HAMBURG: Leaders of small island states turned to the UN maritime court on Monday to seek protection of the world's oceans from catastrophic climate change which threatens the very existence of entire countries. The nine island states are asking the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) to determine if carbon dioxide emissions absorbed by the oceans can be considered pollution, and if so, what obligations countries have to prevent it.

"This is the opening chapter in the struggle to change the conduct of the international community by clarifying the obligation of states to protect the marine environment," said the prime minister of Antigua and Barbuda, Gaston Browne. "The time has come to speak in terms of legally binding obligations rather than empty promises that go unfulfilled," he said, addressing the court in Hamburg, Germany.

Ocean ecosystems create half the oxygen humans breathe and limit global warming by absorbing much of the carbon dioxide emitted by human activities. But increasing emissions can warm and acidify seawaters, harming marine life. At the heart of the case is the international treaty UNCLOS that binds countries to preventing pollution of the oceans. The UN treaty defines pollution as the introduction by humans of "substances or energy into the marine environment" that leads to harm to marine life. But it does not spell out carbon emissions as a specific pollutant, and the plaintiffs argue that these emissions qualify.

Marine heatwave

The push for climate justice won a big boost when the UN General Assembly in March adopted a resolution calling on the International Court of Justice to lay out nations' obligations on protecting Earth's climate and the legal consequences they face if they fail to do so. The ICJ's advice is still pending but the action has opened up a new front to bind countries to pledges on reducing emissions.

The move at the UN had been led by Vanuatu, which also counts among the islands that had brought Monday's case before the ITLOS. Small islands like Vanuatu are particularly exposed to the impact of global warming, with seawater rises threatening to submerge entire countries.

"Just a few years — this is all we have before the ocean consumes everything my people built across centuries," Tuvalu's Prime Minister Kausea Natano told the court. "If international law has nothing to say about an entire country going underwater ... then what purpose does it serve?" he asked, pleading for a clear direction from the court.

Across the two-thirds of the planet covered by seas, nearly 60 percent of ocean surface waters experienced at least one marine heatwave in 2022, according to the annual State of the Climate report led by scientists from the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. This is 50 percent more than pre-industrial levels and "the highest in the modern atmo-



HAMBURG: (From left) Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda Gaston Browne, Attorney General of Vanuatu Arnold Loughman and Prime Minister of Tuvalu Kausea Natano arrive for a hearing at the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea on Sept 11, 2023. — AFP

spheric record and in paleoclimate records dating back as far as 800,000 years", the report published this month noted.

The world's oceans also set a new temperature record in August. Average sea surface temperatures reached an

unprecedented 21 degrees Celsius (69.8 degrees Fahrenheit) for over a week, according to the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service, after months of unusually high temperatures. Other island states joining the ITLOS case include

The Bahamas, Niue, Palau, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia as well as St Vincent and the Grenadines. Thirty-four other state parties will also participate in the court hearing, with sessions scheduled through to September 25. — AFP

Climate 'dystopian future already here': UN official

GENEVA: Climate change is sparking human rights emergencies in numerous countries, the UN rights chief said Monday, stressing the need to fight the impunity of those who "plunder our environment". Speaking before the United Nations Human Rights Council, Volker Turk pointed to recent examples of the "environmental horror that is our global planetary crisis".

He described visiting Basra, Iraq, where date palms once lined canals, but now "drought, searing heat, extreme pollution and fast-depleting supplies of fresh water are creating barren landscapes of rubble and dust". "This spiraling damage is a human rights emergency for Iraq, and many other countries," he said in his address opening the 54th council session in Geneva.

"Climate change is pushing millions of people into famine. It is destroying hopes, opportunities, homes and lives. In recent months, urgent warnings have become lethal realities again and again all around the world," Turk said. "We do not need more warnings. The dystopian future is already here. We need urgent action now." Turk was speaking after the G20 at the weekend failed to commit to a phase-out of fossil fuels, something he said was desperately needed.

'Nonchalance' at migrant deaths

At a time when the ravages of climate change are forcing more and more people to leave their homes,

the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said he was "shocked by the nonchalance" seen towards surging numbers of migrant deaths. "It is evident that far more migrants and refugees are dying, unnoticed," he said, pointing to the more than "2,300 people reported dead or missing in the Mediterranean this year, including the loss of more than 600 lives in a single shipwreck off Greece in June."

He also highlighted migrant deaths in the English Channel, the Bay of Bengal, in the Caribbean, along the US-Mexican border, and at the Saudi border, where he said his "office is seeking urgent clarification about allegations of killings and mistreatment". The UN rights chief also highlighted a wide range of other concerning situations around the world, including in Russia, Pakistan and the Palestinian territory.

On China, he reiterated concerns raised in a report by his office a year ago about the situation in the far-western Xinjiang region, which cited possible crimes against humanity against Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities. "As my Office highlighted a year ago, the concerns in the Xinjiang ... requires strong remedial action by the authorities," Turk said Monday, also voicing concern at "continued detention of human rights advocates".

'Ecocide'

Turk also spoke about the situation in Lebanon, decrying a total lack of accountability for the 2020 Beirut port blast, that killed more than 220 people, urging "an international fact-finding mission to look into human rights violations related to this tragedy." And he mentioned the situation in Iran, one year after the death of Mahsa Amini in custody after her arrest for allegedly breaching the strict dress code for women. Turk voiced concern at a bill that would impose harsher penalties for breaching the dress



GENEVA: UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk (right) listens to China's ambassador Chen Xu (left) prior to the opening of the 54th UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, on Sept 11, 2023. — AFP

code, and "renewed deployment of the morality police." Climate change and environmental degradation played a role in a number of the rights situations he mentioned, including in Africa's Sahel region.

Turk insisted on the need to "counter the impunity of people and businesses who severely plunder our environment", welcoming a proposal to recognize "ecocide" as an international crime.

Amid the towering problems facing the world, Turk decried "politics of deception". "Helped by new technologies, lies and disinformation are mass-produced to sow chaos, to confuse, and ultimately to deny reality and ensure no action will be taken that could endanger the interests of entrenched elites," he said. "The most apparent case of this is climate change." — AFP

Modi hails Saudi ties after 'historic...'

Continued from Page 1

of 1.4 billion people with countries to the west, offer a counterbalance to lavish Chinese infrastructure spending, boost Middle Eastern economies and help normalize relations between Israel and Gulf Arab states.

For New Delhi, the world's most populous country, and Riyadh, the world's biggest crude exporter,

it was another step in bringing the nations closer, with bilateral trade already reaching \$42.8 billion last year, according to Saudi's investment ministry. "As two of the world's fastest growing economies, our mutual cooperation is important for the peace and stability of the entire region," Modi added, in footage shown on state broadcasters.

"For India, Saudi Arabia is one of most important strategic partners," he said. Indian foreign ministry spokesman Arindam Bagchi said the leaders discussed issues included energy security, trade, investment and defense, without giving further details. — AFP

Saudi Arabia, which is trying to reshape and revitalize its oil-reliant economy, has made a number of landmark diplomatic moves in recent months including a surprise rapprochement with Iran, years after the two heavyweights severed ties. The fact that the visit was coordinated by UNESCO suggests "obstacles" remain to Saudi-Zionist normalization, said Aziz Alghashian, a Saudi analyst and expert on the bilateral relationship.

"This is most likely a result of Saudi Arabia being more open to the world, which will include (Zionists), not a result of bilateral relations between Saudi Arabia and (the Zionist entity)," Alghashian said. Saudi officials have realized they cannot ban anyone if they want to transform the kingdom into a global business and tourism hub under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030 reform agenda, Alghashian said. "The (Zionists) will definitely milk this as the first step, when actually it was facilitated by UNESCO. It's not really because of their diplomatic skill or diplomatic victories." He compared the Zionist delegation's visit to a visit this summer by Zionist eSports players for the Gamers8 festival, which also required "third-party coordination" by global tournament organizers. — AFP

Storm kills 2,000 in...

Continued from Page 1

live on television, announced three days of national mourning and emphasized "the unity of all Libyans" in the face of the disaster.

The National Petroleum Company, whose main oilfields and terminals are in eastern Libya, declared "a state of maximum alert" and suspended flights between production sites where activity was drastically reduced. Experts have described storm Daniel — which killed at least 27 people when it struck parts of Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria in recent days — as "extreme in terms of the amount of water falling in a space of 24 hours".

A Derna city council official described the situation in the city as "catastrophic" and in need of "national

and international intervention", speaking to the local TV channel Libya al-Ahrar. He reported the collapse of four main bridges and two buildings in Derna, a city of 100,000 people that lies in a river wadi 900 km east of the capital Tripoli. The storm struck eastern Libya on Sunday afternoon, hitting especially the coastal town of Jabal al-Akhdar but also Benghazi, where a curfew was declared and schools closed for several days.

The United Nations mission in Libya on Monday said on X, formerly Twitter, that it was "closely following the emergency caused by severe weather conditions in the eastern region of the country". It expressed its condolences over the deaths and said it was "ready to support efforts by local authorities and municipalities to respond to this emergency and provide urgent humanitarian assistance".

Libya, sitting on Africa's largest known oil reserves, was plunged into chaos following the 2011 NATO-backed uprising that toppled and killed former dictator Muammar Gaddafi. — Agencies

Zionist officials make first open...

Continued from Page 1

services, when asked about the Zionist delegation. A UNESCO diplomat said the agency's director-general Audrey Azoulay had been instrumental in securing the Zionist entity's participation in Riyadh. "It's the result of several years of work by Audrey Azoulay to create, in the heart of UNESCO, the conditions for a dialogue between all the states of the region," said the diplomat, who did not want to be named.

While the visit does not have any overt political significance, it comes at a time of growing rumors of moves to bring the two countries closer. According to reports, a Palestinian delegation visited Riyadh last week to discuss the way forward if Saudi Arabia and the Zionist entity were to formalize relations. Saudi Arabia, which contains two of Islam's holiest sites, does not recognize the Zionist entity and did not join the 2020 US-brokered Abraham Accords where the Zionist entity established ties with Gulf countries the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

'No time to rest' for AC workers in...

Continued from Page 1

The white van that shuttles the technicians around has a weak air conditioning system, making it difficult to cool down between stops — an irony that is not lost on the group.

Saudi Arabia is no stranger to hot weather, and those who don't travel abroad to cooler locations depend on air conditioning to get through the summer months. The research firm Enerdata says air conditioning makes up more than 70 percent of household electricity consumption, the highest portion in the world. The Saudi Energy Efficiency Centre, which was established in 2010 and provides a similar breakdown of household consumption, has tried in recent years to introduce new insulation standards for buildings, and efficiency standards for individual air con-

ditioners. It says improved insulation alone could reduce energy consumed by the units by up to 40 percent.

"The region will gradually move towards adopting more efficient solutions in cooling systems, such as systems that rely on solar energy and renewable energy," says Ibrahim Al-Ghitani, an energy sector expert based in the United Arab Emirates. For individual consumers, various initiatives offer cash incentives for Saudis to swap out old window units with newer, better models. Under one scheme, citizens can obtain a discount of 900 Saudi riyals (\$240) on up to six high-efficiency air conditioners.

But until these programs spur widespread change, many Saudis will need to keep their existing machines running, meaning technicians will remain in high demand. Fares Al-Faridi, who owns a repair company in Riyadh, laments that most people don't bother to request maintenance until there is a problem, sometimes leading to serious damage. "It is better to perform maintenance to improve the quality of the air conditioner while it is working, rather than repair it while it is not working," he says. — AFP

International



TIKHT: A general view shows the damage and destruction in the village of Tikht two days after a devastating 6.8-magnitude earthquake struck Morocco. — AFP photos



First responders dig in the rubble of the village on September 10, 2023.

'Finished here': Moroccan village vanishes in quake

'Now, people have less than nothing'

TIKHT: It was delicate work for the searchers to remove the woman's body from the rubble of a village that effectively ceased to exist in Morocco's deadliest earthquake in over six decades. Her 25-year-old fiance Omar Eyat Mbarek watched the digging Sunday with his eyes red and full of tears, and surrounded by on-lookers, just kilometers from the quake epicenter in the Atlas Mountains. He was on the phone with her when the shaking started late Friday and he heard kitchen utensils crash to the floor before the line cut out. He knew she was gone. "What do you want me to say? I'm wounded," he told AFP after Mina Ait Bihi, weeks from becoming his wife, was carried away in blankets to a makeshift cemetery that already held 68 others.

The men who had carefully used their hands to scoop away the dirt that covered her also found her phone and handed it over to the grieving man. All around him the village of Tikht, previously home to at least 100 families, was a tangle of timbers, chunks of masonry as well as broken plates, shoes and the occasional intricately patterned rug. "Life is finished here," said Mohssin Aksum, 33, who had family liv-



Omar Eyat Mbarek, 25, reacts as he cries for his fiancée who died in the September 8 earthquake.

ing in the tiny settlement. "The village is dead." Like many of the hardest-hit villages, it was a small rural place with a significant number of buildings constructed with a traditional mix of stone, timber and

a mortar composed of mud. Dozens of residents, mourning relatives and soldiers were gathered at the ruins. Several said they couldn't remember any previous earthquake in the area.

"It wasn't something people here thought about when building their houses," said 23-year-old student Abdelrahman Edjal, who lost most of his family in the disaster. But the quality of the building materials was not uppermost in his mind as he sat on a boulder among the rubble under the strikingly blue sky and surrounded by mountains.

He had gone out for a walk after dinner when the shaking began and saw people trying to escape their collapsing houses. He pulled his own father from the ruins of the family home, but the injuries were too serious. He died with his son close by. Twisted steel reinforcement rods poked out of the debris in Tikht, so clearly some more recent building techniques were part of the local structures. Daily life was already hard in the area, which is a roughly two-hour drive from the jobs that Marrakesh's massive tourist industry can offer.

'Less than nothing'

Aksum, who has local roots but lives in Rabat, said the quake has taken away the little bit that people had. As he spoke, he gestured to his nose, and said the livestock that had been kept by locals was now buried under the debris and beginning to rot. "Now, people have less than nothing," he noted. While he spoke, two young men in clothing streaked with the white dust of the ruins sat on boulders and cried, but said nothing. By Sunday, emergency housing in the form of yellow tents was visible on the road into town. Members of the government's civil protection service were carrying camp beds from a military-type truck toward the tents.

Non-profit groups were also in the area, assessing what the people remaining in villages like Tikht need, beyond the obvious shelter, food and water. Several people said they were still in shock over their losses and the scale of the damage and could not say with any certainty what their next steps might be. But Omar Eyat Mbarek said he was sure of one thing: "I will rebuild my house," he said, still holding his late fiancée's dust-covered phone, before walking away into the debris. — AFP

Foreign rescuers join quake race against time

TALAT NYACOUB: Moroccan rescuers supported by foreign teams on Monday faced an intensifying race against time to dig out any survivors from the rubble of mountain villages after the country's strongest-ever earthquake. The 6.8-magnitude quake struck the Atlas mountains late Friday southwest of the tourist center of Marrakesh. It killed at least 2,681 people and injured over 2,500 others, according to the latest official toll.

In the disaster-stricken community of Talat Nyacoub, 12 ambulances and several dozen 4x4s from the army and police were deployed while around 100 Moroccan rescuers were searching for signs of life amid the collapsed buildings. Nearby, AFP saw a Spanish team of 30 firefighters, a doctor, nurse and two technicians coordinating with Moroccan authorities before starting to dig, as a helicopter flew overhead. "The big difficulty is in zones remote and difficult to access, like here, but the injured are choppered out," Annika Coll, who heads the Spanish team, told AFP. About 70 kilometers (40 miles) north, another Spanish team from the Military Emergencies Unit (UME) had set up camp since Sunday night on the edge of Amizmiz village.

'Completely lost'

AFP journalists in Amizmiz saw Moroccan troops handing out hundreds of blankets to residents who had lost their homes. "My mother died, her house is ruined. My place in Amizmiz no longer exists so we sleep outside in tents with my two children aged four months and six years," said Hafid Ait Lahcen, 32, a construction worker.

"No one from the authorities has offered us accommodation. We are completely lost." Albert Vasquez, the Spanish unit's communications officer, said his team was awaiting a meeting with Moroccan civil defence to determine exactly where they were needed. Time was short, and Vasquez warned that "it's very difficult to find people alive after three days" but "hope is still there".

The rescuers are assisted by four dogs and microcameras that can be fed into the rubble in an ef-

fort to detect signs of life. For Lahcen and Habiba Barouj, the help came too late.

An ambulance took their father, 81, to hospital with a broken leg. The previous evening, they buried their mother who was killed in the quake. "We didn't see any rescuers. We had to get our father out from the rubble ourselves," said Habiba Barouj, her face drawn. "Our house has been swallowed up."

Rabat on Sunday announced it had accepted offers to send search and rescue teams from Britain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, as well as Spain. "The UK is deploying a team of search and rescue specialists, including 60 people, four search dogs and rescue equipment, as well as a medical assessment team," the British Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office said in a statement late Sunday.

The earthquake wiped out entire villages in the foothills of the Atlas mountains, where civilian rescuers and members of Morocco's armed forces have searched for survivors and the bodies of the dead. Many houses in remote mountain villages were built from mud bricks. While the foreign teams begin to arrive, Moroccan authorities have erected emergency shelters. Bright yellow tents were visible along the road into Tikht, a village which has effectively ceased to exist. Members of the government's civil protection service carried camp beds from a military-type truck toward the tents.

Blood donations

Citizens reported to hospitals in Marrakesh and elsewhere to donate blood for the injured. Among the donors were members of Morocco's national football team and renowned French-Moroccan comic Jamel Debbouze. Other volunteers organized food and essential goods to help quake victims, after complaints that authorities were slow to respond.

"Everyone must mobilize," said one volunteer, Mohamed Belkaid, 65. "And that includes the authorities, but they seem to be absent." Yacine Benhania, another volunteer, complained of a "shortage of medicines, particularly for diabetes and hypertension".

The education ministry announced that school classes were "suspended" in the worst-hit villages of Al-Haouz province, the quake epicenter. Some parts of Marrakesh's historic medina and its network of alleyways saw significant damage, with mounds of rubble and crumpled buildings in the World Heritage site. Dozens of people continued to sleep outdoors overnight in the modern quarter of Marrakesh. — AFP

Armenia holds drills with US amid Russia rift

YEREVAN: Joint military drills between Armenian and US forces kicked off Monday, the latest sign the Caucasus country is drifting from Moscow's orbit, as Russia's invasion of Ukraine reshapes the post-Soviet space. The exercises come with frustration growing in Armenia that Russia has failed to act as a security guarantor as tensions build with historic rival Azerbaijan backed by Turkey.

"Exercise Eagle Partner's opening ceremony has kicked off," US Army Europe and Africa spokesperson told AFP. Armenia's defense ministry said the exercises aim to "increase the level of interoperability" with US forces in international peacekeeping missions. And the US Army Europe and Africa Command said around 85 soldiers will train with 175 Armenian troops between 11 and 20 in the Zar and Armavir grounds. It said the drills would help prepare Armenia's 12th Peacekeeping Brigade to meet NATO standards for an evaluation later this year.

Moscow, which leads a military alliance that includes Armenia, summoned Armenia's ambassador this week to complain about "unfriendly steps" the country was taking. The ministry said Armenia's envoy was given a "tough" rebuke but stressed the countries "remain allies." "It sounded more like a threat to Yerevan than a description of reality," said independent analyst Gela Vasadze. "In fact, Russian-Armenian relations have reached a strategic impasse," he told AFP.

'Weakened Russia'

In Armenia's capital Yerevan, residents expressed frustration over Russia's lack of military and political support as tensions build again with Azerbaijan. Mariam Anahyan, 27, told AFP that Armenia had made a mistake by "pinning its hopes on the Russians." "So now let's try with the Americans. The consequences may be bad but not trying would be even worse," she said.

Arthur Khachaturyan, a 51-year-old security guard, said: "Russia failed to keep its commitments during the war and has even made our situation worse." He was referring to a brief but bloody conflict between the countries in 2020 for control of Nagorno-Karabakh, a separatist region in Azerbaijan. Russia brokered a ceasefire and deployed 2,000 peacekeepers to the Lachin corridor, which connects Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh.

But Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan recently said Moscow was either "unable or unwilling" to control the passage. His government says Azerbaijan has closed the road and blockaded the mountainous region, spurring a humanitarian crisis in Armenian-populated towns. Pashinyan also recently claimed that Armenia's historic security reliance on Russia was a "strategic mistake." His wife visited Ukraine last week to deliver aid and attend a conference on mental health. He travelled to Moscow in May for a World War II commemorative parade.

Bogged down in its invasion and isolated on the world stage, "weakened Russia is rapidly losing influence in its Soviet-era backyard," said independent analyst Arkady Dubnov. "Armenians are frustrated with Russia, which failed to help them during the Karabakh war and its aftermath," he said, adding that Moscow "also seems to be lacking a clear plan, strategy in the Caucasus." — AFP



MIDI: In this file photo, a joint Saudi-backed Sudanese-Yemeni military experts force removes and deactivates some 5,000 landmines on January 30, 2021 in Yemen's north. — AFP

Yemen's explosives contamination among world's worst: ICRC

DUBAI: Yemen has one of the world's highest rates of contamination with landmines and other deadly explosives, the International Committee of the Red Cross has warned, nine years after the start of the brutal civil war. The impoverished Arab nation, plunged into conflict when Iran-backed Huthi rebels seized the capital in September 2014, is among the three worst affected countries, the ICRC said.

Experts estimate that at least one million mines have been planted during Yemen's years of turmoil, causing a daily hazard along with unexploded shells and other military detritus. "When it comes to weapon contamination, with Afghanistan and Iraq, Yemen is among the three countries most affected by this," Fabrizio Carboni, the ICRC's Near and Middle East regional director, told AFP. "It is really devastating and has a very important impact on people, their safety, and also their livelihood."

According to the UN-linked Civilian Impact Monitoring Project, landmines, unexploded shells and other leftovers from fighting caused 1,469 civilian casualties over the past five years. "The presence of unexploded ordnance is just massive," said Carboni. Twenty percent of livestock owners living in two areas close to frontlines reported explosives contamination on their land, the ICRC found after conducting a series of interviews last year. Another ICRC survey of shepherds found that 70 percent had lost animals to landmines and other explosives. "The contamination is so important and widespread that you won't be in a position to decontaminate everything," even if the conflict ended today, Carboni said. Clearing the land of explosives would take many years, he said, adding that it would require resources, expertise and machinery. "We are talking about, maybe, decades. But again, it's a matter of resources," he said. "Today, we inform, we train," Carboni added. "We have sessions with communities where we inform them about the risks related to unexploded ordnance, or if they find remnants of war ... they have to inform us so we can organize (clearance) with the various authorities and partners. That's quite new for us." — AFP



IMI N'TALAT: People carry the remains of a victim of the deadly 6.8-magnitude September 8 earthquake, in the village of Imi N'Tala near Amizmiz in central Morocco on September 10, 2023. — AFP

Business

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2023

Biden leads US tech push in Vietnam

US sees Vietnam as an important part of its plan to decrease reliance on China



HANOI: US President Joe Biden (C-L), Vietnam's Chairman of National Assembly Vuong Dinh Hue (C-R) and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken (L) pose with US veterans Chuck Searcy (2L), Matt Keenan (3L) and Vietnamese Nguyen Van Thien (3R) during a ceremony to exchange war artifacts at the National Assembly in Hanoi on Sept 11, 2023. — AFP

HANOI: President Joe Biden and senior executives from top US tech firms including Google and Intel met Vietnamese business leaders Monday after the two countries agreed to deepen cooperation as Washington seeks to counter China's growing clout.

Biden and Vietnam's ruling Communist Party chief—the country's paramount leader—struck a "comprehensive strategic partnership" as Washington pushes to boost its network of allies around Asia and the Pacific.

The United States sees manufacturing dynamo Vietnam as an important part of its plan to decrease reliance on China for supplies of strategic resources, and the new pact includes agreements on semiconductors and rare earths. Executives from tech behemoth Google, chip makers Intel and GlobalFoundries, and aviation giant Boeing joined Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken for an "innovation and investment summit".

They held talks with senior figures from a host of leading Vietnamese tech and manufacturing companies including electric car maker VinFast, internet firm VNG and digital wallet Momo. At the talks, Biden announced that flag-carrier Vietnam Airlines had agreed a \$7.8-billion deal with Boeing to buy 50 medium-haul 737 airliners.

Other deals announced include Microsoft developing a "generative AI-based solution tailored for Vietnam" and NVIDIA teaming up with local companies to deploy artificial intelligence in the cloud.

Arm's listing on NY exchange is a big wager

NEW YORK: Shares in the British chip designer Arm will be listed Thursday on New York's Nasdaq exchange in the biggest such offering in two years, a \$50 billion wager by principal shareholder SoftBank Group amid a still uncertain market.

SoftBank, a Japanese investment holding company, is counting on the reputation of Arm, a leading microprocessor designer whose products are used in 99 percent of the world's smartphones. Through an Initial Public Offering (IPO) of some 10 percent of the capital of the jewel of British technology, SoftBank hopes to raise between \$4.5 billion and \$5.2 billion, valuing the company at up to \$52 billion.

That is considerably more than the \$32 billion the Japanese multinational spent in July 2016 to take control of Arm, but also substantially less than the \$60 billion to \$70 billion that SoftBank was hoping for even a few weeks ago, according to several reports. The stakes are high for the company founded by Masayoshi Son, whose record in tech investments in recent years has been mixed at best. SoftBank suffered enormous losses over its investments in shared office space provider WeWork and China's e-commerce giant Alibaba.

'A very long desert'

"Nobody disputes that this is a quality company that has substantial sales, substantial profits..." said Jay Ritter, a professor specializing in stock launches at the University of Florida. "The question is about future growth potential."

He added: "There doesn't seem to be a lot of enthusiasm among institutional investors for a \$50 billion valuation." Some analysts have pointed out that

automotive and healthcare sectors. Biden left Vietnam on Monday to fly to Alaska for a 9/11 memorial. The new partnership includes an agreement on semiconductors, with the United States committing to help Vietnam develop its capabilities and expand production, including by funding workforce training. Tiny semiconductors are vital to modern life, found in every electronic device from children's toys and smartphones to electric cars and sophisticated weapon systems.

Biden moved last month to restrict US investment in Chinese technology in sensitive areas including semiconductors, quantum computing and AI. With Washington looking to diversify and strengthen its supply chains after a series of shocks hit the global economy, it is increasingly looking to Vietnam, which has the world's second-largest deposits of rare earths—another strategically vital resource—after China. The White House highlighted US investment in chipmaking in Vietnam, pointing to a new \$1.6 billion factory near Hanoi due to start operations soon.

China difficulties

Biden insisted Sunday that he did not want to "contain" China, but accused Beijing of seeking to change the rules of the international order. And in their joint statement, Biden and Trong launched a fresh broadside at Beijing in the sprawling, multi-state territorial row over the South China Sea.

They warned against "threat or the use of force",

and insisted the competing claims to the strategic waterway must be settled under international norms.

Beijing claims almost the entire sea, through which trillions of dollars in trade passes annually, and has ignored an international court ruling that its assertion has no legal basis. The president met Chinese Premier Li Qiang—the country's number two leader—on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Delhi on Sunday.

Biden said the major economic problems Beijing was wrestling with would limit its scope for action, particularly on Taiwan—which China regards as a renegade province. "China has a difficult economic problem right now for a whole range of reasons that relate to the international growth and lack thereof and the policies that China has followed," he said, pointing to high youth unemployment and real estate issues.

"I don't think it's going to cause China to invade Taiwan. As a matter of fact, the opposite—it probably doesn't have the same capacity that it had before." Vietnam has its own squabbles with Beijing, notably over the contested South China Sea.

Hanoi's state media on Monday hailed the deal with former war foe the United States as "historic". Biden ended his 24-hour visit by paying his respects at a memorial to his friend John McCain, the former US Senator shot down in Hanoi as a pilot during the Vietnam War. — AFP



TOKYO: In this file photo Pedestrians walk outside the headquarters for Japanese company SoftBank Group in Tokyo on May 11, 2023. With the IPO of Arm, its owner, the Japanese SoftBank Group and its fanciful boss Masayoshi Son, are hoping for a coup capable of restoring their own image after often disastrous investments in recent years. — AFP

Arm designs microprocessors, or CPUs, while the revolution in generative artificial intelligence relies on more powerful GPUs, or graphics processing units. The IPO also poses a large-as-life test for the capital markets, which have not seen a stock introduction of similar magnitude since that of American e-vehicle maker Rivian, valued at \$77 billion in November 2021.

"To say it's eagerly anticipated would be an understatement," said Mark Roberts, managing director of San Francisco-based Blueshirt Capital Advisors. After what he called "a very long desert of new issue," Roberts said he expects Arm is "really going to emerge as a bellwether technology stock."

In the 18 months from January 2022 through June 2023, just \$18.7 billion was raised in US stock offerings, compared to \$155.8 billion in the single year of 2021, according to EY Capital Advisors. The last time numbers as small as 2022's were seen was in 1990.

'A good harbinger'

Roberts pointed out that 27 banks are taking part in the IPO. "So you've got a lot of the Wall Street community focused on this deal being done correctly, and well," particularly since Arm decided to place its bet on Wall Street rather than London.

SoftBank also lined up a prestigious group of clients, from Apple to Nvidia, prepared to invest \$735 million in Arm. "If this deal goes well, that's a good harbinger for momentum building into a stronger 2024," Roberts said. But another analyst, Avery Spear of Renaissance Capital, said the Arm deal would be just one data point. "I don't think that this deal will necessarily tell us too much," she said. "We're looking for more deals like Instacart and Klaviyo to provide us maybe more information on what appetite will look like for the majority of companies looking to go public right now." — AFP

EU cuts eurozone 2023 growth forecast

BRUSSELS: The European Commission cut its 2023 and 2024 eurozone economic growth forecasts on Monday, with the single currency area weighed down by Germany's poor performance. The EU's executive arm predicted the German economy would contract by 0.4 percent in 2023, compared to a previous forecast of 0.2 percent growth.

Germany faces recession in its vast industrial sector and a lacklustre performance in exports, both of which have significant impacts for the whole of the economy. In its report, the commission pointed to manufacturing weakness and said Germany was "hit particularly hard" by energy price shocks linked to the war in Ukraine.

The European Central Bank's efforts to tame inflation via interest rate-hikes also contributed to the slowdown in the eurozone, the report added, days before the ECB meets to decide whether to raise borrowing costs again or pause its campaign.

The International Monetary Fund had already predicted Germany would be the only major advanced economy to shrink in 2023. Growth in the eurozone and the European Union as a whole will continue but will be lower than predicted earlier this year.

In May, the commission said the eurozone would grow by 1.1 percent in 2023 — but revised that on Monday to 0.8 percent. "While we avoided a recession last winter, the multiple headwinds facing the EU economy this year have led to somewhat weaker growth momentum than we projected in the spring," the economy commissioner, Paolo Gentiloni, said during a press conference.

The commission in its report said there would be "slowing economic activity in the summer and months ahead, with continued weakness in industry and fading momentum in services, despite a strong tourism season in many parts of Europe". Europe will also not be able to "count on strong support" from exports amid weak global growth and demand.

'Sick man' Germany?

Gentiloni, however, sounded an optimistic note for improvement in Germany's economy. "The situation of domestic consumption, domestic demand, household purchasing power, could be improved in the coming months and this could bring the German economy back to a growth trajectory," he told reporters in Brussels. But, he added, "the structural challenges on energy and other aspects are there. You don't solve this in a couple of weeks".

The gloomy German data prompted an Economist cover story in August that asked: "Is Germany once again the sick man of Europe?" Asked whether he would agree with the "sick man" description, Gentiloni rejected using such titles in the EU's analysis. — AFP

Business

From Lehman Brothers to Credit Suisse, 15 years of bank regulation

Collapse of Lehman Brothers triggered a wave of consolidation in banking sector

PARIS: From the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008 to this year's fire sale of Credit Suisse, the landscape of the banking sector has changed profoundly following a wave of consolidation and tighter regulation.

Tougher regulation

After Lehman Brothers crumbled, regulators in the United States and Europe tightened the regulatory framework on banks to ensure they are better prepared to handle crises. They are now required to hold certain amounts of capital which is meant to absorb losses.

Banks are also required to keep large reserves of cash and assets that can be quickly sold in case of a sudden rush by depositors to withdraw their funds. These rules aim to avoid the need for governments to use taxpayer funds to rescue lenders.

Ana Botin, the head of Spanish lender Santander and then head of the European Banking Federation, said the region has a "framework that can guide a failing bank through intervention, recovery and eventually resolution, regardless of its size."

The takeover of Credit Suisse by rival UBS in March, arranged in haste by Swiss authorities, shows that a key lesson of the Lehman Brothers collapse was indeed learned: some banks are indeed "too big to fail" as that would cause shockwaves not only through the banking sector but the wider economy.

Since then, Swiss experts have recommended

stepping up financial buffers for such large institutions as they were insufficient in the case of Credit Suisse and an ad-hoc solution might not always be so easy to find.

Consolidation

The collapse of Lehman Brothers also triggered a wave of consolidation in the banking sector. During the months of September and October 2008, Bank of America bought Merrill Lynch for \$50 billion, BNP Paribas took control of Fortis in Belgium and Luxembourg for \$20.3 billion, Lloyds snapped up Halifax-Bank of Scotland (HBOS) for \$12.2 billion, and Santander took over the banking network of Britain's Bradford & Bingley after it was nationalised.

"The crisis, in short, cleaned house by killing off the most fragile players," said Xavier Musca, who was the head of the French Treasury during the global financial crisis and now heads up Credit Agricole's investment bank. Europe saw less consolidation than the United States, where the "crisis was an opportunity for the US government to restructure the banking sector," said Musca.

David Benamou, chief investment officer at Axiom Alternative Investments, said US banks now dominate the global business banking sector as they "profited from certain regulatory differences to take parts of the European market".

Benamou pointed to limits on bonuses in Europe.



SINGAPORE: In this file photo office workers walk out during their lunch break past a construction site with a Lehman Brothers advertising logo sign on a wall in Singapore on Sept 17, 2008.—AFP

Still fragile?

The collapse of a number of US regional banks at the beginning of the year, which hastened the demise of Credit Suisse, revived concern about the stability of the sector.

For Musca, the crisis showed the need to maintain regulation on the banking sector and avoid a return to the past. After Donald Trump became president he decided to exempt all but the largest banks from much of the regulation brought in to ensure they can

better handle crises, which set the stage for the turbulence earlier this year.

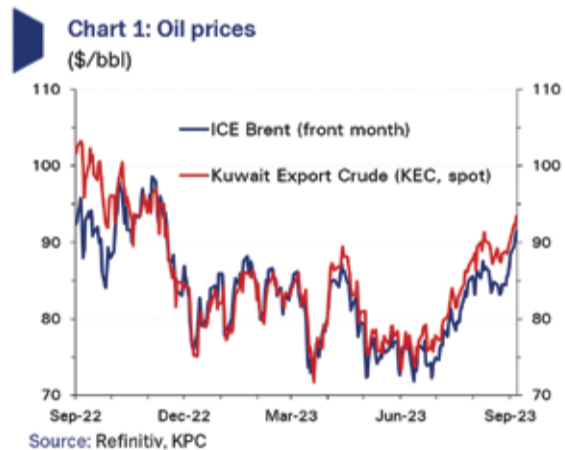
US banking regulators have since proposed to tighten measures to strengthen medium-sized lenders. The biggest banks "are subject to a much tougher regime today than they were back in 2007-2008," said William Dudley, who was deputy head of Federal Reserve Bank of New York at the start of the global financial crisis. "We've definitely got work to do but we're in a better place." — AFP

Oil extends gain on strong seasonal demand

KUWAIT: Oil prices notched up a third consecutive month of gains in August, with positive sentiment extending amid visible signs of market tightness thanks primarily to OPEC+ supply cuts, chief among these Saudi's steep unilateral output cut, but also better than expected summer oil demand. Brent crude ended August up at \$86.9/bbl (+1.5 percent m/m; +1.1 percent ytd), while local marker Kuwait Export Crude (KEC) finished higher at \$89.8/bbl (+2.3 percent m/m; +9.4 percent ytd).

- Reflecting the improvement in sentiment over the summer months, Brent money manager net length (the difference between the number of contracts betting on prices rising and those betting on prices falling) topped 200k contracts regularly in August and rose to a four-month high 230.8k by mid-month.
- Prices have since firmed further moving into September, breaking through the \$90/bbl level for the first time in ten months after Saudi Arabia and Russia surprised the markets by announcing an extension of their voluntary supply cuts, of 1 mb/d and 300 kb/d, respectively, to the end of the year, tightening the market even more.
- Despite prevailing macroeconomic softness, global oil demand has remained fairly robust this year. The International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates that growth will average 2.2-2.4mb/d in 2023 after oil demand topped a record 103 mb/d over the summer months thanks to resilient Chinese and OECD demand. For 2024, however, the IEA sees oil demand growing at a much slower rate of 1 mb/d amid softer global macroeconomic conditions, tighter efficiency standards and accelerating uptake of electric vehicles.
- On the supply side, OPEC secondary source data showed total OPEC-10 output falling 886 kb/d m/m to 22.6mb/d in July, led by Saudi Arabia's voluntary cut of around 1 mb/d, which took the group's output to a near two-year low. Offsetting the Saudi reduction were output increases

in Angola and Iraq of about 40 kb/d m/m. Meanwhile production in quota-exempt members, Iran and Venezuela, continues to edge up despite US sanctions. Iran's crude production is up nearly 250 kb/d this year to 2.82 mb/d, the highest level since December 2018. There seems to be minimal appetite from the US to pursue this breach while it has its hands full coordinating the more important sanctions front and G-7 price cap against Russia. Indeed, there appear to be below-the-radar negotiations to bring Iran and Venezuela back into the fold, with the US likely figuring that the price of readmitting these two 'difficult' oil partners more fully into the global oil market as worth bearing if it leads to a better supplied market and therefore lower pump prices for consumers. Total OPEC+ production



- (quota members only), which includes Russia's 9.42 mb/d, fell 936 b/dm/m in July to 35.6 mb/d.
- It should be noted that Russia's recent supply cut pledges of 500 kb/d in August and 300 kb/d in September—extended last week to end-2023—specifically referred to its exports rather than production. It does not translate that production will automatically adjust downwards; production could remain constant or even increase, so long as crude volumes previously exported were instead directed towards storage tanks or even used to increase exports of refined products, which are not subject to OPEC quotas.
- In Kuwait, crude production was unchanged in July at 2.55 mb/d, for the third month in a row,

according to official sources. Kuwait is expected to maintain this level until the end of the 2023, after which it is scheduled to raise output to 2.68 mb/d, reversing voluntary cuts in effect since May as per OPEC policy.

- Meanwhile, Kuwait's production and export of refined products surged to a record high in June, as operations at the Al-Zour refinery continue to ramp up. Refined product exports reached 1.1 mb/d, a 38 percent y/y increase, according to the Joint Organizations Data Initiative (JODI). Volumes of Euro-specification diesel/gasoil and low Sulphur fuel oil have surged as Kuwait looks to supply both Europe and the Far East with these products. To support rising demand for refinery through puts while crude production is capped due to OPEC+ policy, KOC has had to redirect crude that was destined for export markets to domestic refineries (crude exports declined 11 percent in the year-to June). But with refined products commanding a premium over raw crude, the switch makes commercial sense.
- In the US, weekly US Energy Information Administration (EIA) data showed crude production surging to 12.8 mb/d in August (+5.8 percent), a gain of 700 kb/d in the year to August (+5.8 percent), more than double last year's rate. This is on the back of higher shale well productivity and upstream activity amid elevated oil prices. The EIA expects crude output to increase to an average of 13.1 mb/d next year, helped by higher reinvestment rates by oil producers. Meanwhile, the Department of Energy postponed purchase of 6 mb of crude for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) for October and November delivery, citing rising prices. The SPR has fallen to a 40-year low of 346.7 mb after a 250 mb drawdown over the past two years.
- We expect oil market fundamentals to continue to tighten amid extended Saudi (and OPEC+) supply cuts, keeping oil prices elevated (a new resistance level of \$85/bbl) over the next month or so. The near-term oil demand outlook is expected to remain supportive, even while the threat of recession in some OECD economies remains ever-present. Recent improvement in Chinese economic metrics allied to the potential for further government stimulus could even provide some upside.

Strike worries overshadow Detroit Auto Show

NEW YORK: This week's Detroit Auto Show is meant to showcase impressive new electric vehicles, but the fanfare looks destined to be upstaged by a brewing labor dispute and the increasing likelihood of a strike. The show, known officially as the North American International Detroit Auto Show, opens to the public on Saturday following media and technology days earlier in the week. But this year's Detroit gathering—now mainly a forum for products of the three legacy Michigan automakers—comes as Detroit's "Big Three" face down-to-the-wire contract negotiations with the United Auto Workers led by its ambitious new president Shawn Fain.

"The labor contract negotiations are on everyone's mind," said Alan Amici, president of the Center for Automotive Research, a nonprofit in Ann Arbor, Michigan. "There's a degree of nervousness in the Detroit area." As the two sides have traded proposals and counterproposals in recent days, Fain has made clear his displeasure with Ford, General Motors and Stellantis, reiterating the possibility of a strike at all three companies if there is no agreement by September 14, when the current contracts expire.

The UAW represents about 150,000 workers at the three companies. "If we hit 11:59 Thursday without a deal at any of the Big Three automakers, there will be a strike at all three if need be," Fain said Friday night in a webcast briefing. Fain has said rank-and-file workers merit the same 40 percent pay hikes as enjoyed by the automakers' CEOs. But the latest pay offers from the companies fall well below this level. —AFP



COWLEY: The new MINI electric car is unveiled at the BMW group plant in Cowley, near Oxford on July 9, 2019. German car making giant BMW is to make a multi-million pound investment in its Mini plant in the UK, the government in London said Monday. — AFP

BMW to invest in UK Mini plants to fuel electric car output

LONDON: German car giant BMW on Monday said it would invest more than £600 million (\$751 million) in its UK plants making the Mini, with the Oxford site producing only electric vehicles from 2030. British media said the UK government will invest £75 million, helping to safeguard 4,000 jobs. "BMW's investment is another shining example of how the UK is the best place to build cars of the future," Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said in a statement. "By backing our car manufacturing industry, we are securing thousands of jobs and growing our economy right across the country." The first generation of the iconic British vehicle's electric model was launched at the Oxford plant in 2019.

BMW said production of two new electrified models—Mini Cooper3-door and Mini Aceman—would start in the UK in 2026. "BMW Group has announced today a new investment of more than £600 million in the Mini factories at Oxford and Swindon," the statement said. "With this new investment we will develop the Oxford plant for production of the new generation of electric Minis and set the path for purely electric car manufacturing in the future," added Milan Nedeljkovic, member of the board of management of BMW responsible for production.

Business and Trade Secretary Kemi Badenoch called the BMW investment "a big vote of confidence in the UK economy". She added: "We are proud to be able to support BMW Group's investment, which will secure high-quality jobs, strengthen our supply chains and boost Britain's economic growth." Britain plans to ban the sale of new high-polluting diesel and petrol cars from 2030, forcing its largely foreign-owned manufacturers to switch to electric models—and sparking investment in battery production. —AFP

Pause or hike? ECB rate decision on a knife edge

FRANKFURT: The European Central Bank is walking a tightrope between still-high inflation and a darkening eurozone outlook as it decides whether to lift interest rates again or finally pause its historic hiking cycle.

Whether to raise borrowing costs for a 10th straight time when they meet Thursday is shaping up to be rate-setters' trickiest decision since the tightening campaign began. The central bank for the 20 countries that use the euro has already lifted rates by 4.25 percentage points since July last year to combat runaway consumer prices.

But the Frankfurt institution now finds itself in a "difficult spot," HSBC said in a note, as officials struggle to digest competing data. On one hand prospects for the single currency area are looking bleaker, particularly due to a poor performance in its biggest economy, Germany, which sank into a recession over the winter and is struggling to climb out of it. Latest data showed eurozone second-quarter growth reached just 0.1 percent, lower than previously estimated, while a recent survey pointed to the economy contracting at its fastest rate in three years as a manufacturing slowdown spread to services.

The weak data has fuelled calls for the ECB to pause the aggressive hiking cycle for fear it could deepen a downturn, and president Christine Lagarde finally opened the door to doing so at the bank's last meeting in July.

Eye-watering inflation

But consumer prices, which began surging after Russia's invasion of Ukraine due to galloping energy costs, continue to rise strongly. This would support arguments for another hike to borrowing costs, with the aim of further depressing demand and slowing inflation. Consumer price rises came in unchanged at 5.3 percent in August, way above the ECB's two percent target, although closely-watched core inflation—excluding volatile energy and food prices—eased a little.

While inflation has slowed since last year as energy costs fall, officials are now worried that other factors, particularly wage increases in a tight labour market, are keeping it elevated. The data makes for a "very complicated mixed bag," said ING economist Carsten Brzeski. "We expect a very heated debate with a close outcome." Brzeski said he expected the 26-member governing council to opt for one final increase, which would take the closely-watched deposit rate to a record high.

Other analysts, however, are betting on a pause on Thursday, although they also think the ECB might then impose one final hike at a later meeting. This would be similar to what the US Federal Reserve has done—taking a break in June before resuming lifting rates again in July. The Fed and the Bank of England are due to hold their next meetings the week after the ECB.

Hawks versus doves

ECB officials have insisted their decision will depend on incoming data, which has put the focus on updated forecasts the central bank is also due to release on Thursday. In the run-up to the meeting, they have mostly been cagey about what will happen, a contrast to other recent meetings where the decision was usually well telegraphed in advance. And mixed signals have emerged in recent days. Governing council member Peter Kazimir called for another 25-basis-point hike, with the Slovak central bank chief writing in an op-ed it is "better to be safe than sorry".

But another member, Italian central bank boss Ignazio Visco, disagreed with those who think it is better to overdo it, rather than undershoot, while ECB chief economist Philip Lane welcomed signs inflation was easing in some areas.—AFP

Business

Alibaba announces surprise departure of ex-CEO Zhang

Daniel Zhang due to take charge of the firm's new cloud computing branch

BEIJING: Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba has announced the surprise departure of former CEO Daniel Zhang, who had been set Monday to take charge of a key subsidiary as the firm undergoes a major restructuring. Hangzhou-based Alibaba is one of China's most prominent technology firms, with business operations spanning cloud computing, e-commerce, logistics, media and entertainment, and artificial intelligence.

After years of turbulence in the Chinese tech sector, Alibaba in March announced the biggest restructuring in its history, dividing itself into six entities, with the goal of listing them on the stock exchange separately. CEO Daniel Zhang was due to take charge of the firm's new cloud computing branch, now a separate entity, on Monday.

But two months after announcing his appointment, Alibaba said its now ex-boss was no longer with the company. "The board of our Company expresses its deepest appreciation to Zhang for his contributions to Alibaba Group over the past 16 years," the company said in a statement to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, where it is listed, late on Sunday.

It gave no reason for his departure. Plans for a spin-off cloud computing firm would go ahead, Alibaba said, "under a separate management team to be appointed". The company announced in June

that Zhang would be replaced by Joseph Tsai as chairman and Eddie Wu as CEO.

The executive played a vital role in the company's success in the past decade, spearheading the now hugely popular Singles' Day shopping festival since its first edition in 2009. Shares in the firm sank nearly 3.5 percent Monday — the first working day of its new reorganization into six distinct branches.

In addition to e-commerce and cloud computing, Alibaba's reach stretches into everything from logistics to media, entertainment and artificial intelligence. But its vast size brought it into the crosshairs of Chinese regulators as Beijing sought to crack down on the tech sector.

In 2020, Alibaba became the country's first tech giant to bear the brunt of increased oversight, when authorities called off what would have become one of the most valuable public listings in history — valued at \$34 billion — for its former subsidiary Ant Group.

Ant Group is the owner of Alipay, a mobile payment application widely used in China. One month after officials hit the brakes on its IPO, Alibaba was investigated for alleged anti-competitive practices, then issued a \$2.8 billion fine. And in July authorities fined Ant Group nearly \$1 billion for breaching banking regulations. — AFP



HONG KONG: In this file photo Alibaba Group independent non-executive director Daniel Zhang (L) and Joseph Tsai, co-founder and executive vice chairman of Alibaba Group (R), attend the company's stock trading debut at the headquarters of the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing in Hong Kong. — AFP

News in Brief

HK stocks start week with losses

HONG KONG: Hong Kong stocks finished Monday in negative territory as traders turn their focus to the release of US inflation data later in the week. The Hang Seng Index slipped 0.58 percent, or 105.62 points, to 18,096.45. The Shanghai Composite Index rose 0.84 percent, or 26.06 points, to 3,142.78, while the Shenzhen Composite Index on China's second exchange added 0.90 percent, or 17.37 points, to 1,952.91. — AFP

Vietnam Airlines signs \$7.8bn deal

HANOI: Vietnam Airlines has signed a \$7.8 billion deal with US aircraft manufacturer Boeing, the White House said in a statement Monday. Following a meeting in Hanoi, US President Joe Biden and Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh "welcomed a landmark deal" between Boeing and Vietnam's national carrier, the White House said. The deal "will support more than 30,000 jobs in the United States", the statement added. Vietnam Airlines will purchase 50 of the 737 aircraft, Biden said during a roundtable with senior executives from top American and Vietnamese firms — including from both aviation companies. Vietnam Airlines currently has a fleet of 100 aircraft, with 15 Boeing 787 Dreamliners. The Boeing jets will replace aircraft that are more than a decade old, according to state media. — AFP

China to crack down currency market

BEIJING: China's central bank said on Monday it would crack down on speculation that distorts the value of the yuan as the country's currency sees persistent volatility. The onshore yuan, whose trade is regulated by Beijing, last week briefly hit its lowest level against the US dollar in almost 16 years. The unit has come under pressure as the People's Bank of China lowers interest rates in a bid to kickstart the world's number two economy, at the same time as the Federal Reserve has tightened policy to temper inflation. The PBoC said in a statement Monday that it had convened a "special meeting" to discuss "the recent situation in the foreign exchange market and issues around the exchange rate of the renminbi", the official name for the yuan. "The financial management authorities have the capacity, confidence and resources to maintain the stability of the renminbi exchange rate and take action when necessary," the central bank said. "They are determined to correct unilateral and pro-cyclical behaviors, deal with disruption to the market order, and guard against the risk of overshooting the exchange rate," it said. — AFP

Instacart seeks \$10b valuation

NEW DELHI: US grocery delivery startup Instacart is seeking a valuation of under \$10 billion as it goes public later this month, the Wall Street Journal reported Sunday, substantially less than its \$39 billion valuation in 2021. The company is to start pitching its initial public offering to investors at the lower valuation as early as Monday, "in the latest sign of diminished investor enthusiasm" for tech IPOs, the financial daily reported, citing sources close to the matter. Shares trading under the symbol "CART" are expected to debut on the tech-rich Nasdaq the following week. The valuation — which the company is targeting at \$8.6 to \$9.2 billion — could change between now and then as the company receives investor feedback, the Journal reported. Founded in 2012, the venture capital backed startup saw its business soar early in the coronavirus pandemic as people avoided grocery stores due to the risks from COVID-19. The company's business went on to cool, however, leading to a cut to its workforce of shoppers. In recent years Instacart has put a focus on orders being ready for pickup at grocery stores instead of being dropped off at customers' doors. — AFP

China to invest billions in Serbian copper, gold mine

BELGRADE: China is set to pour billions into a copper and gold mine in eastern Serbia, marking another dramatic increase in investment in the Balkan country by Beijing. According to a memorandum of understanding

signed over the weekend in China's Xiamen, Chinese state-owned company Zijin Mining will invest 3.8 billion dollars (3.5 billion euros) into the mining complex in the eastern city of Bor.

"Thanks to this memorandum (...) Serbia will align itself with Europe's largest copper and gold producers, but also create opportunities for new investments," said Dubravka Djedovic Handanovic, Serbia's minister of mines and energy, in a statement posted online.

In 2018, Zijin purchased a majority

stake in the copper and gold mining operation in Bor following years of failed efforts by Belgrade to privatize the troubled operation.

Serbia's state mining company had once been a pillar of its industrial sector before the collapse of communist Yugoslavia in the early 1990s.

But it became a burden on the country's struggling economy because of mismanagement and international sanctions during the 1990s regime of late president Slobodan Milosevic.

Copper plays a key role in renew-

able energies and green technologies due to its thermal and electrical conductivity properties — leading to a surge of investment in mining operations around the globe.

Beijing has invested billions in Serbia and neighboring Balkan countries in recent years, hoping to expand its economic footprint in central Europe.

Serbia has been quick to cash in on China's interest, as it seeks to court a range of investors amid the ongoing tug of war between the East and West over influence in the Balkans. — AFP

Korea power equipment and supplies trade delegation in Kuwait

KUWAIT: The Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency in Kuwait (KOTRA Kuwait) orchestrated a direct trade connection event between a Korean power equipment delegation and Kuwaiti entrepreneurs. Held at the Crowne Plaza Kuwait Hotel on September 11, 2023, this event symbolizes the enduring partnership between the two countries.

Seven distinguished Korean companies, specializing in power equipment and supplies, actively participated in this trade delegation. In collaboration with the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce, 30 Kuwaiti companies engaged in approximately 60 business meetings. The discussions spanned a wide array of topics, including water surge management, scaffolding, electric actuators, electrical cables & ducts, conductor materials, and environmental equipment.

KOTRA emphasized Korea's continuous investments in energy infrastructure and its recognition of Kuwait as a valuable partner in its pursuit of advanced power solutions. The "Korea Power Equipment and Supplies Trade Delegation" of-



fers a unique platform for Kuwaiti companies and government officials to engage with their Korean counterparts and explore cutting-edge technologies in the power sector.

His Excellency Chung Byung-ha, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, expressed his enthu-

siasm about the event, stating, "We believe that this trade delegation will pave the way for a strong and mutually beneficial partnership between our two countries. Korea has a rich history of innovation in the power sector, and we are eager to share our expertise with our friend Kuwait."

Huawei Smartwatches: Smart choice even for iOS and Android users

KUWAIT: Before getting a smartwatch for yourself or your loved ones, there are a whole bunch of things to consider. Depending on their features, looks, and prices, they vary a lot. But above all, you should think about whether or not a particular brand or model will work with your smartphone because not all smartwatches are compatible with all smartphones. The only exception to this rule, however are the Huawei smartwatches. Thanks to the excellent cross-platform compatibility that Huawei wearables offer, anyone can enjoy their convenience and features, regardless of what smartphone they use. So, if you are looking for a smartwatch that works well with any smartphone or want to gift one to your family members and don't know what smartphone they use, you might want to consider Huawei smartwatches.

HUAWEI Health APP: Available on Huawei, iOS and Android devices

So, the biggest factor that makes Huawei smartwatches unique from everything else out there is that they can work with any smartphone. It doesn't matter whether you have a Huawei smartphone, an iOS, an Android device; they gel with anything, regardless of the brand or operating system. All you have to do is download the Huawei Health App on your phone, connect with the watch, and you are ready to enjoy the amazing features of Huawei smartwatches. That said, the process of getting the Huawei Health app is a bit different

for Android and iOS devices.

For iOS devices, getting the HUAWEI Health app is as simple as downloading it from the App Store. Search "Huawei Health" and install. Done!

If you're using an Android phone, head over to the Huawei AppGallery website. You can either download the HUAWEI Health App directly from the browser or by installing AppGallery on your phone. If you download the HUAWEI Health app from the browser, you can click on the downloaded apk file to install. Your phone might give you a warning that it is harmful to download the file, but there is nothing to worry about as you are downloading it from the official AppGallery website. Before you install the apk file, you will have to allow apps from unknown sources to be installed on the phone.

If you choose to install AppGallery, search for the "HUAWEI Health" app on AppGallery and install it on your device. And you're good to go!

Keep Going for Weeks Without Plugging In

One of the most common complaints about smartwatches is that they run out of battery in a matter of days, requiring frequent charging that interrupts your daily activities. However, with Huawei wearables, you don't have to worry about that. If you have ever been on a week-long trip, and forgot to bring your smartwatch charger? With most other smartwatches, it means that you will have to do a few days without your trusty smartwatch.



HUAWEI Smartwatches: Seamless integration with Android and iOS*

Thanks to remarkable battery architecture and intelligent power-saving technology, Huawei's smartwatches can serve you day and night for up to 2 weeks. You can use your smartwatch for days or even weeks without even bothering to charge it.

Even if you push your smartwatch to its limit by tracking your health, fitness, sleep, stress, and more, you can still enjoy 7 days of battery life on a single charge. And if you ever run low on power, you can use the wireless fast charging feature that only takes 10 minutes to charge for full-day use.

There's a Watch for Everyone

If you want more reasons to choose Huawei wearables as your companion over everything else, how about the sheer range of options they give you? From entry-level smart bands to high-end luxury smartwatches with leading-edge features, you can find anything that fits your needs, style, and budget. If what you want is an affordable smart band to track your health and fitness, you can go for the HUAWEI Band Series. You have

the HUAWEI WATCH FIT Series if you want something more than a smartband but not a full-fledged smartwatch.

Even when it comes to smartwatches, options are numerous. There is the HUAWEI WATCH Series and the HUAWEI WATCH GT Series. Each has a range of different colorways and a wide selection of designs to fit your style. The choice of materials, sizes, styles, colors and straps can give you unlimited freedom to style yourself the way you like. They are carefully crafted with attention to detail and offer incredible personalization catering to diverse tastes and preferences.

The HUAWEI WATCH GT series also offers a variety of watch faces that you can customize according to your preferences and needs. You can also download more watch faces from the HUAWEI Health app or create your own.

In short, Huawei wearables are the best choice if what you want is a smartwatch that works with any smartphone, has a long battery life, and offers a wide range of options and styles to suit your preferences.



A worker sifts coffee beans at the Camocim coffee plantation in Domingos Martins, Espírito Santo state, Brazil. — AFP photos



A cup of coffee is pictured at the Camocim coffee plantation in Domingos Martins, Espírito Santo state, Brazil.



The droppings of a Jacu bird are pictured on the Camocim coffee plantation in Domingos Martins.



Rogério Lemke sorts coffee beans from other seeds found in the dried droppings of the Jacu bird in Domingos Martins.



Henrique Sloper evaluates coffee during a tasting session in Domingos Martins, Espírito Santo state, Brazil.



The droppings of a Jacu bird are pictured at the Camocim coffee plantation in Domingos Martins, Espírito Santo state, Brazil.



From the rear end of a pheasant, Brazil's best coffee

In Brazil, the proverbial goose that lays the golden egg is in reality something closer to a pheasant that excretes coffee beans. At the Camocim coffee farm, deep in the bucolic hills of Espírito Santo state in Brazil's southeast, jacus — a type of pheasant native to tropical forests there — are considered some of the most astute pickers (or rather, eaters) of coffee cherries. "He chooses the best fruits, the ripest," said worker Agnael Costa, 23, delicately scooping up droppings left behind by one of the birds between two tree trunks.

What goes in as ripe cherries comes out as beans, which can go on to be sold as some of the most delicious — and expensive — coffee in the world. The coffee at Camocim grows in the middle of the lush forest, and the jacus here are wild, eating (and defecating) at their own pace. "It was this agroforestry system that created the necessary conditions for this exotic coffee to exist here," farm owner Henrique Sloper tells AFP. Domestically, jacu coffee can sell for 1,118 reais per kilogram (or around \$100 a pound) - a price that can rise significantly upon export. Foreign distributors include British department store Harrods, among others.

From enemies to allies

The jacu, with its black feathers and red throat, wasn't always welcome at the farm. It was originally seen as a hungry pest feeding off precious crops. But when Sloper discovered "kopi luwak," an expensive Indonesian coffee

made with beans from civet excrement, he figured jacus might make good allies in the quest to make a better brew. Kopi luwak sometimes has a bad reputation, with farmers accused of pressing civets — small mammals similar to weasels — into captivity to boost production.

Jacu droppings look a bit like a cereal bar, with beige grains protruding from a blackish, pasty mess. Once collected and dried, the beans are carefully sorted and hulled, and put into a chilled room. "It is naturally expensive. There is no way to make a jacu coffee at a low

'Delicious'

While jacus help select the best coffee, there's nothing in particular about their digestive system that imparts a different taste on the beans. "The birds have an extremely short intestinal transit time," Ensei Neto, a coffee specialist, tells AFP. "So there is not exactly any kind of biochemical process, there is no time." Their digestive process is much faster than civets or elephants — another animal whose dung is used, in Thailand, to produce specialty coffee.

Some think the fermentation process stemming from those animals' longer digestion times imparts a better flavor on the resulting beans. The jacu "only goes for the ripe fruits," says Neto, producing a coffee with "sweet notes, with good acidity." "It doesn't add anything else. But the story is good."

The jacus have found a fan in Poliana Cristiana Prego, 37, a Brazilian tourist who has come to visit Camocim. "It's a delicious coffee and the story behind its production is very original. It's a new experience for us," she says. "Our customers are lovers of exotic products, but also those who value the idea of sustainable development," says Sloper.

For him, "the future of coffee will come from Brazil," already the world's top producer. Whether it comes from jacus or otherwise, Brazilian coffee "is showing the world that we really are able to do what nobody else can." — AFP



Workers pack ground Jacu bird coffee at the Camocim coffee plantation in Domingos Martins, Espírito Santo state, Brazil.

The wild jacus at Camocim, meanwhile, roam, eat and poop at their leisure. "It's 100 percent natural," said farm production supervisor Rogério Lemke. "The jacu is within its own natural habitat," in Brazil's Atlantic Forest. Linking production to the whims of a jacu's appetite is just one of the reasons it fetches such a high price.

cost," says Sloper. All told, jacu coffee represents less than 2 percent of the estate's production. The bird also carries other advantages, both for farmers and those seeking a cheaper — if less intentionally intimate — cup of Joe. "It serves not only as a selector (of the best beans), but also as a harvest alarm" says Sloper. "Where it eats, the coffee is ripe."



A worker collects coffee beans at the Camocim coffee plantation in Domingos Martins, Espírito Santo state, Brazil.



Rogério Lemke, a supervisor at the Camocim coffee plantation, inspects dried droppings from the Jacu bird containing coffee beans in Domingos Martins, Espírito Santo state, Brazil.



A Jacu bird is pictured at the Camocim coffee plantation.



A worker collects coffee beans at the Camocim coffee plantation in Domingos Martins.

Lifestyle



A silver pony expected to fetch between 400 and 600 Swiss francs (\$450-\$670) is displayed ahead of sales at Geneve Encheres auction house, in Geneva.



Geneve Encheres auction house's Cyril Duval poses with an Indian Sport Scout 750cc motorcycle expected to fetch between 15,000 and 20'000 Swiss francs (\$16'000-\$22,000) in Geneva.



A cup with blue and gold motif representing a young man decorated with the Order of the Holy Spirit ahead of sales at auction house.

Savoy dynasty daily life on display with Geneva auction

Porcelain figurines, a white faux-leather sofa and a foosball table: these are among the items in a House of Savoy auction, providing a rare glimpse into the everyday life of royals. More than 200 objects are going under the hammer this week, drawn from the former Geneva home of Vittorio Emanuele of Savoy — the son of the last king of Italy, Umberto II — and his wife Marina.



A cup adorned with the coat of arms of the royal family of Savoy is displayed in a showcase ahead of sales at Geneve Encheres auction house, in Geneva.

Royal aficionados may be interested in a delicate 18th century tea cup, a modernist game of chess, or two motorcycles owned by the couple's 51-year-old son, Emanuele Filiberto of Savoy. A portion of the lots are being sold off online until September 18, while others

will feature in an in-person auction two days later hosted by the Geneve Encheres auction house.

In all, the objects being sold by the couple are expected to fetch between 100,000 and 150,000 Swiss francs (\$112,000-\$168,000). But Cyril Duval, a partner at Geneve Encheres, told AFP the value estimates were not really important, since the collection was more about "falling in love".

This auction, he said, "makes it possible for collectors to obtain certain objects they may have dreamt about after seeing them in magazines or on the screen". The collection comprises of historical memorabilia and some household items from the villa the Savoy family had built in the 1970s in Vesenaz, on the outskirts of Geneva. Vittorio Emanuele is the 86-year-old head of the House of Savoy, whose family was forced to leave Italy after the monarchy was abolished in 1946.

'Rock and roll'

Among the items for sale is "a 19th century dinner set used during a ball hosted by Queen Victoria in London City Hall", Duval said. There are also objects linked to the Savoy family heritage, including engraved silver coat of arms and porcelain figurines, but also bronze statuettes recalling the modernist interior style of the Geneva villa. The collection also includes items that are "much more pop", Duval said.

He highlighted one of the two motorcycles, a 1941 Indian Sport Scout, with



Geneve Encheres auction house's Cyril Duval poses holding a plate adorned with the coat of arms of the royal family of Savoy next to household items ahead of sales in Geneva. - AFP photos

an asking price of 15,000-20,000 Swiss francs (\$16,800-\$22,400). "It belonged to crown prince Emanuele Filiberto, a 20th century rock and roll prince with tattooed arms," he said.

The grandson of Italy's last king, who is married to French actress Clotilde Courau, enjoyed riding his motorcycles with Johnny Hallyday, the late French rock legend, he added. Duval explained that the auction was taking place after "the prince and princess left and sold" the Geneva villa this year,

opting to stay in their residence in the luxury Swiss ski resort town of Gstaad instead.

Vittorio Emanuele was born in Naples in 1937, less than a decade before the monarchy ended and his family was forced to leave Italy. He and other male heirs of the Savoy family were sent into exile because his grandfather Vittorio Emanuele III had collaborated with the fascist regime of Benito Mussolini on anti-Jewish laws during World War II.

Vittorio Emanuele III abdicated in May 1946 after 46 years on the throne, and his son Umberto II succeeded him, but only for a month before a June referendum abolished the monarchy. The Italian parliament only ended a constitutional ban on the House of Savoy's male heirs returning to Italy in 2002, after Vittorio Emanuele and Emanuele Filiberto swore loyalty to the republic, but they have continued living mainly in Switzerland. — AFP

Waititi, Keaton go behind lens at Toronto film festival

Every day at the Toronto International Film Festival features a jam-packed schedule with screenings from morning to midnight at multiple venues, making it a challenge to keep up with all the world premieres on offer. Here's a quick look at three movies that debuted this weekend in Canada's largest city. All of them come from talents also known for work in front of the camera: Oscar winner Taika Waititi, Michael Keaton, and "Scandal" star Tony Goldwyn.

'Next Goal Wins'

Waititi earned huge cheers and laughs on Sunday with "Next Goal Wins," a feel-good comedy about the efforts of American Samoa's football team to qualify for the World Cup, little more than a decade after losing 31-0 in a qualifying match.



(From left) Football coach Thomas Rongen, football player Jaiyah Saelua and director Taika Waititi arrive for the premiere of "Next Goal Wins" during the Toronto International Film Festival at the Princess of Wales Theatre in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. - AFP photos

The 48-year-old actor-director ("Thor: Ragnarok," "What We Do in the Shadows") cast Michael Fassbender against type in a comedic role as Dutch-American team manager Thomas Rongen, who is sent to try to whip the hapless team into shape.

The story had already been told in documentary form, but Waititi infused this slightly fictionalized take with his signature offbeat sense of humor — a winning

formula, if the enthusiastic applause from the crowd was any indication. "I wanted to tell this story because it's uplifting... I had never attempted to make a sports film, so I just wanted to give myself a new challenge and get out of my comfort zone," Waititi said on the red carpet.

The Maori filmmaker is right at home in Toronto: his Nazi satire "Jojo Rabbit" won the coveted TIFF People's Choice Award here in 2019, and went on to win an Oscar for Waititi for best adapted screenplay. "For me, the most important thing is to put ourselves on screen — by that, I mean Polynesians, Pacific Islanders, because we often get overlooked,

'Knox Goes Away'

Keaton did double duty for "Knox Goes Away," directing and starring in the story of John Knox, a hit man with memory loss who is trying to finish one last job — helping his estranged son (James Marsden) cover up a murder. The way forward is complicated and so Knox enlists his friend Xavier (Al Pacino) to help him remember all the details of his job before it's too late.

At times darkly funny, the film offered a unique look at the ravages of memory loss and the inclination to make amends in one's final days. The ongoing Hollywood actors' strike meant that Keaton and other artists involved in the project did not attend the premiere, in solidarity with their Screen Actors Guild (SAG-AFTRA) colleagues, who joined writers on the picket line in July. Some of the film's producers walked the red carpet.

'Ezra'

Goldwyn, a stage and screen actor known for "Ghost" and a years-long run on ABC's "Scandal," is also an accomplished director, with multiple films under his belt. This time out, he tapped Robert De Niro, Bobby Cannavale and Rose Byrne to star in "Ezra," a crackling family drama based on the experiences of Goldwyn's friend and screenwriter Tony Spiridakis in raising an autistic son.

Cannavale plays Max, a standup comic trying to land a spot on a late-night talk show while navigating a divorce from Jenna (Byrne, his real-life partner) and the complex needs of their son Ezra (William Fitzgerald). An impromptu — and illegal — road trip upends the family dynamic and leads to a new normal for everyone, including Max's father Stan (De Niro). — AFP

Denzel hangs in but 'Nun' better in North American theaters

Warner Bros' new horror movie "The Nun II" floated to the top of the North American box office this weekend with an estimated take of \$32.6 million, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations reported Sunday. Horror movies had proved resilient during the pandemic, and this ninth chapter in "The Conjuring" series continued the trend, though falling short of the original \$53.8 million take of 2018's "The Nun." "This is a very good opening for a horror follow-up sequel," said David A. Gross of Franchise Entertainment Research.

Taissa Farmiga — younger sister to horror film veteran Vera Farmiga — Belgian actor Jonas Bloquet and Storm Reid star in the gothic tale of spiritual infestations, mystifying deaths, swirling fog and a demonic goat. Last weekend's box office leader, Sony's "The Equalizer 3" starring ever-popular Denzel Washington, slipped to second, taking in an estimated \$12.1 million for the Friday-through-Sunday period.

The vigilante action film again has Washington playing a retired US Marine and drug-enforcement agent, this time battling an Italian gang. In third for the weekend, at an even \$10 million, was new release "My Big Fat Greek Wedding 3," from Focus Features and Universal Pictures. Gross called that opening "weak" for a romantic comedy sequel, noting that few in the genre — "Bridget Jones" being a partial exception — can keep the romantic complica-

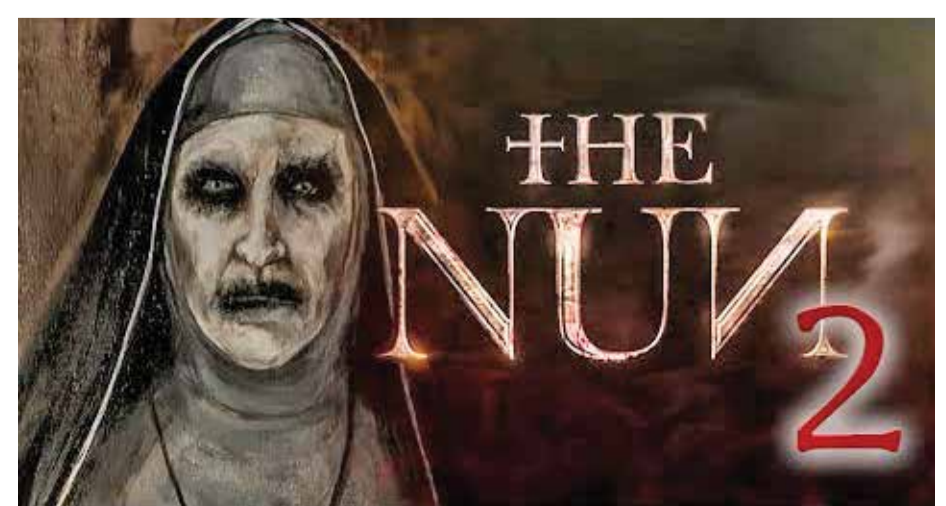
tions fresh and funny enough to sustain interest through three episodes.

"Greek Wedding 3" was written and directed by Nia Vardalos, the actor and comedian who had her breakthrough in the series' first film. New release "Jawan" from Yash Raj films came in fourth at \$6.2 million — a bit of a coup for a Hindi-language action thriller in somewhat limited North American release.

Actor/director Shah Rukh Khan "is opening films as big as the domestic box office, if not bigger, as most American comedies on one-fourth the screens with only grassroots promotion," Exhibitor Relations noted on the platform now called X. Bollywood's Khan himself stars in the action-packed story, which begins with the hijacking for ransom of a Mumbai Metro.

And in fifth — finally losing a bit of the pink in its cheeks in its eighth weekend out — was Warner Bros' long-dominant "Barbie," starring Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling. It took in \$5.9 million, raising its domestic total to \$620 million. With its \$782 million in tickets sold abroad, the Greta Gerwig film has now surpassed \$1.4 billion. Rounding out the top 10 were:

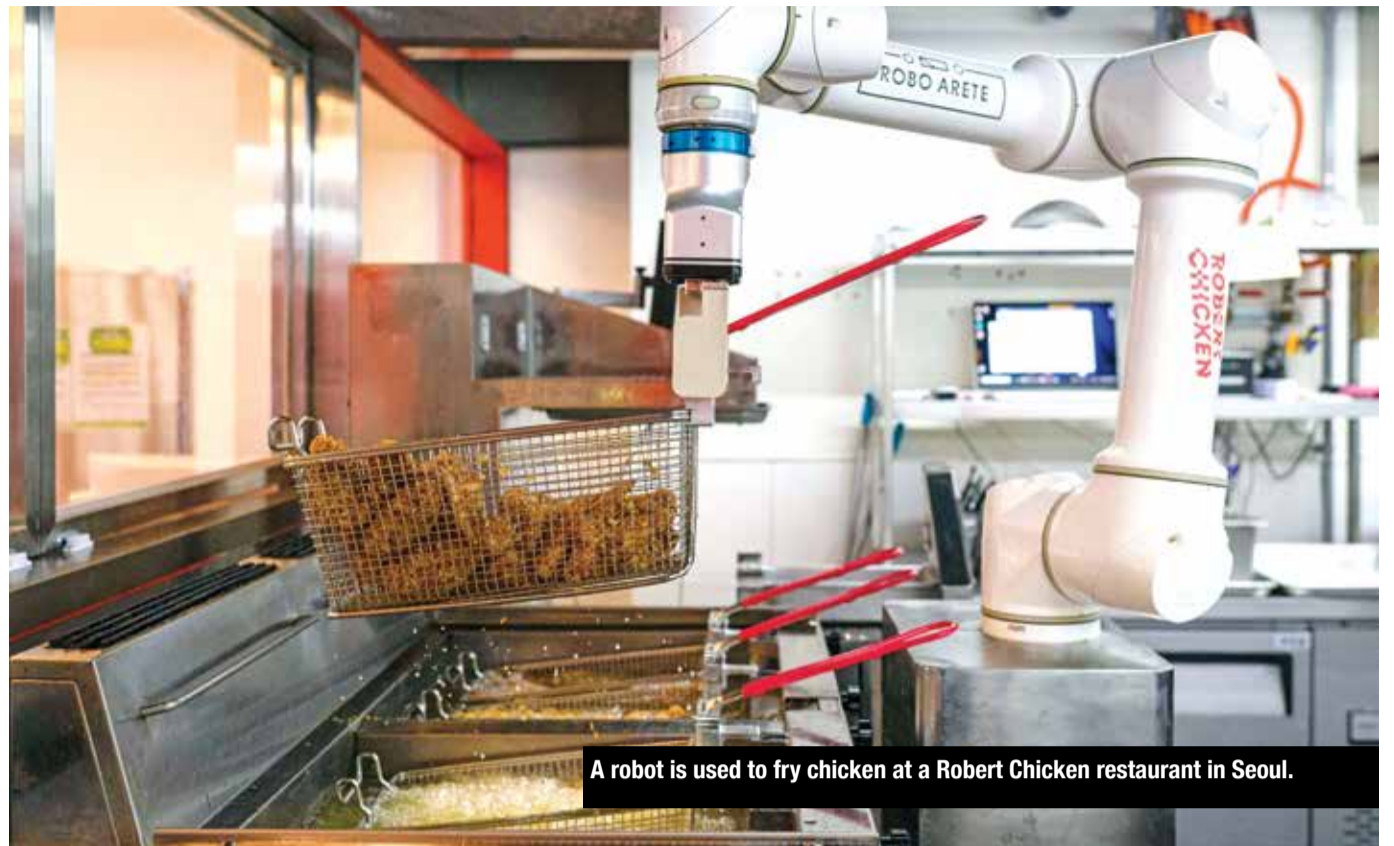
"Blue Beetle" (\$3.8 million)
"Gran Turismo" (\$3.4 million)
"Oppenheimer" (\$3 million)
"Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem" (\$2.6 million)
"Bottoms" (\$2.1 million). — AFP



Lifestyle



South Korean entrepreneur Kang Ji-young poses in her Robert Chicken restaurant franchise, where a robot is used to fry chicken.



A robot is used to fry chicken at a Robert Chicken restaurant in Seoul.

Robot fried chicken: Entrepreneur seeks to improve South Korea's favorite food

In fried-chicken-obsessed South Korea, restaurants serving the nation's favorite fast-food dish dot every street corner. But Kang Ji-young's establishment brings something a little different to the table: a robot is cooking the chicken. Eaten at everything from tiny family gatherings to a 10-million-viewer live-streamed "mukbang" — eating broadcast — by K-pop star Jungkook of BTS fame, fried chicken is deeply embedded in South Korean culture.

Paired with cold beverage and known as "chimaek" it is a staple of Seoul's famed baseball-watching experience. The domestic market — the world's third largest, after the United States and China — is worth about seven trillion won (\$5.3 billion), but labor shortages are starting to bite as South Korea faces a looming demographic disaster due to having the world's lowest birth rate.

Around 54 percent of business owners in the food service sector report problems finding employees, a government survey last year found, with long hours and stressful conditions the likely culprit, according to industry research. Korean fried chicken is brined and double-fried, which gives it its signature crispy exterior, but the process — more elaborate than what is typically used by US fast food chains — creates additional labor and requires extended



South Korean entrepreneur Kang Ji-young poses in her Robert Chicken restaurant franchise.

worker proximity to hot oil.

Enter Kang, a 38-year-old entrepreneur who saw an opportunity to improve the South Korean fried chicken business model — and the dish itself. "The market is huge," Kang told AFP at her Robert Chicken franchise. Chicken and meat cutlets are the most popular delivery orders in South Korea, and the industry could clearly benefit from more automation to "effectively address labor costs and workforce shortages", she said.

Kang's robot, composed of a simple, flexible mechanical arm, is capable

of frying 100 chickens in two hours — a task that would require around five people and several deep fryers. But not only does the robot make chicken more efficiently — it makes it more delicious, says Kang. "We can now say with confidence that our robot fries better than human beings do," she said.

Investing in 'foodtech'

Already a global cultural powerhouse and major semiconductor exporter, South Korea last year announced plans to plough millions of dollars into a "foodtech" fund to help startups working on high-tech food industry solutions. Seoul says such innovations could become a "new growth engine", arguing there is huge potential if the country's prowess in advanced robotics and AI technology could be combined with the competitiveness of Korean food classics like kimchi.

South Korea's existing foodtech industry — including everything from next-day grocery delivery app Market Kurly to AI smart kitchens to a "vegan egg" startup — is already worth millions, said food science professor Lee Ki-won at Seoul National University. Even South Korea's Samsung Electronics — one of the world's biggest tech companies — is trying to get in on the action, recently launching Samsung Food, an AI-personalized recipe and meal-planning platform, available



Fried chicken is seen on a plate after it was cooked by a robot.

in eight languages.

Lee predicted South Korea's other major conglomerates are likely to follow Samsung into foodtech. "Delivering food using electric vehicles or having robots directly provide deliveries within apartment complexes, known as 'metamobility', could become a part of our daily lives," he said. "I am confident that within the next 10 years, the food tech industry will transform into the leading sector in South Korea."

'Initially struggled'

Entrepreneur Kang now has 15 robot-made chicken restaurants in South Korea, and one branch in Sin-

gapore. During AFP's visit to a Seoul branch, a robot meticulously handled the frying process — from immersing chicken in oil, flipping it for even cooking, to retrieving it at the perfect level of crispiness, as the irresistible scent of crunchy chicken wafted through the shop.

Many customers remained oblivious to the hard-working robotic cook behind their meal. Kim Moon-jung, a 54-year-old insurance worker, said she was not sure how a robot would make the chicken differently from a human "but one thing is certain — it tastes delicious".

The robot can monitor oil temperature and oxidation levels in real time while it fries chicken, ensuring consistent taste and superior hygiene. When Kang first started her business she "initially struggled" to see why anyone would use robots rather than human chefs.

But "after developing these technologies, I've come to realize that from a customer's perspective, they're able to enjoy food that is not only cleaner but also tastier", she told AFP. Her next venture is a tip-free bar in Koreatown in New York City, where the cocktails will feature Korea's soju rice — and will be made by robots. — AFP



An employee prepares to serve fried chicken at a Robert Chicken restaurant in Seoul.



A robot fries chicken as an employee prepares to serve food to customers.



Customers use tongs to serve themselves fried chicken at a Robert Chicken restaurant.

Tourists 'not going to let quake' stop Morocco trip

Marrakesh's ancient medina was nearly empty on Sunday after a deadly earthquake that hit Morocco, but it did not stop some tourists who told AFP they chose to stay on. Tourism is the lifeblood of the North African country's economy, and Marrakesh is its main attraction. Friday's devastating quake which killed over 2,000 people has also spurred fears of a repeat of the tourism slump suffered during the Covid pandemic.

Some visitors, however, were in no rush to leave. "We're not going to let the earthquake ruin everything," said 35-year-old Kirian Fischer from Germany who was on a guided tour of the historic city. "There was no warning of any major risk, so we stuck to our plans." Just four people were on the tour, however, and all had been evacuated from their rooms as the earthquake hit late

on Friday at 11:11 pm (2211 GMT).

The 6.8-magnitude quake was the strongest ever to hit Morocco, and wiped out entire villages in the hills of the Atlas mountains southwest of Marrakesh. "We're still a bit hesitant about whether to leave," said tourist Dominik Huber, 26. "But it seems relatively safe. And also, by staying we are contributing in a small way to supporting the Moroccans." The small group stood outside the imposing studded wooden doors of the Bahia Palace, a top tourist attraction built in the 1860s which is now closed.

It has suffered some damage, with smashed green-glazed terracotta tiles on the ground. Jagged cracks have appeared in the rose-colored walls of buildings in nearby streets, and some houses are now just piles of rubble. Guide Abderrazzaq Ouled assured the group that their tour of the city founded nearly 1,000 years ago can still go ahead. "Most of the visit is still feasible," he said.

Changed city

Not far away, three Italians asked police officers whether attractions in the city — a UNESCO World Heritage Site — were still open to visitors. They too decided to stay, as did a couple sipping tea in the shade of a tiled terrace, and a

lady in flip-flops and straw hat haggling in the one of the few shops still open for a leather bag she had her eye on.

In Marrakesh's famous Jemaa El-Fna square, perfume and fruit juice vendors have replaced residents who spent the night in the open, wrapped in blankets, because their homes have been damaged or destroyed.

On Saturday, the SETO group which includes around 70 of France's main tour operators said that as far as it was

aware, none of its clients in Marrakesh had suffered because of the earthquake. But the city itself has changed, its frenzied activity gone. The human toll of the tragedy continues to mount. Already 2,012 deaths have been recorded and 2,059 people have been injured, mostly in rural mountainous areas southwest of Marrakesh. The country's Tourism Observatory is concerned that the economic consequences of the disaster may negate the upturn in visi-

tor numbers recorded this year.

'Entire groups cancelled'

The observatory recorded some 6.5 million tourists in Morocco in the first half of 2023, mainly from Western Europe and the United States, an increase of 92 percent compared with the same period last year. And Marrakesh is Morocco's main magnet for tourists, with more than 4.3 million visitors, the observatory's figures show.

But the economic effects of the quake are already being felt by some tourism professionals in the city. "Entire tour groups have already cancelled, fearing aftershocks," said 56-year-old Daehmen Ziani who runs a hammam. "The medina is the pride and soul of Marrakesh, and tourism accounts for 99 percent of our income. If that dies, then everything will stop" as it did during Covid, Ziani said, speaking on the marble steps of his now deserted business.

Morocco imposed a strict lockdown in spring 2020 because of the pandemic, and its tourism industry ground to a halt. "Then, we could only cross our fingers and hope that such a disastrous time doesn't happen again," Ziani added. — AFP



Sports

Dixon wins IndyCar season

Newly crowned series champion Palou settles for third

News in Brief

Yankees overwhelm Brewers

NEW YORK: The New York Yankees seized an unlikely triumph Sunday, spoiling Milwaukee's no-hit bid in the 11th inning before beating the Brewers 4-3 in 13 innings at Yankee Stadium. Brewers pitchers Corbin Burnes, DeVin Williams and Abner Uribe had combined to hold the Yankees without a hit through 10 innings and were looking for Major League Baseball's first ever 11-inning no-hitter. Burnes carried much of the load, dominating through eight innings before he was lifted in favor of Williams. Williams retired three straight before he was replaced by Uribe in the 10th. The Brewers had taken a 1-0 lead in the top of the 11th when they sent Joel Payamps to the mound in the bottom of the inning. Oswaldo Cabrera belted a run-scoring double for the Yankees' first hit of the game and the tying run. — AFP

Gambia book Africa Cup place

JOHANNESBURG: Gambia reached the Africa Cup of Nations finals on Sunday after a dramatic 2-2 draw with Congo at a Moroccan stadium in the area of an earthquake that claimed more than 2,120 lives. Goals from substitutes Yankuba Minteh and Muhammed Badamosi in the last 11 minutes of regular time earned Gambia the point they needed to seal back-to-back qualifications. Gambia hosted the final Group G fixture in Marrakech because they lack an international-standard stadium. When the quake struck late on Friday 72 kilometers southwest of the central city, Gambian and Congolese players fled their hotels and slept outdoors. Rival Belgian coaches Tom Saintfiet of Gambia and Paul Put of Congo said the squads had been traumatized, but the African Football Confederation (CAF) ordered the match to go ahead. — AFP

Norrman wins Irish Open

STRAFFAN: Sweden's Vincent Norrman won the Irish Open as Rory McIlroy's title bid fell apart in Sunday's final round at The K Club. Norrman hit a superb 65 to finish on 14 under par, one shot ahead of second-placed Hurly Long. Former champion Shane Lowry was part of a four-way tie for third on 12 under. Norrman was six shots behind overnight leader Long at the start of the round, but he fired six birdies in the space of eight holes from the seventh and then two-putted the par-five 18th. Long was briefly on the same score thanks to a birdie on the 12th, but bogeyed the next two holes and was unable to make an eagle on the last to force a play-off. — AFP

N Zealand squad boosted

WELLINGTON: Kane Williamson and Tim Southee were included Monday in an experienced New Zealand squad for next month's 50-overs World Cup in India. Williamson will captain the Black Caps despite still working his way back to fitness after a serious knee injury last April. The 33-year-old led New Zealand in their nail-biting defeat by England in the 2019 World Cup final and was named player of the tournament. Williamson's return to the crease will boost the Black Caps as he has scored more than 6,500 runs in one-day international cricket. New Zealand coach Gary Stead said it is unclear whether Williamson will be ready in time for their opening World Cup game against England on October 5 in Ahmedabad. — AFP

Pakistan ex-cricketer jailed

BADHOEVEDORP: A Dutch court on Monday sentenced former Pakistan international cricketer Khalid Latif to 12 years in prison for urging the murder of anti-Islam MP Geert Wilders. Latif, 37, had offered 21,000 euros (\$22,500) for the head of Wilders in an online video after the fire-brand lawmaker sought to arrange a competition for cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). "It was not a stretch to think that somebody around the world would have taken heed of the call to kill Mr Wilders," presiding judge G Verbeek told the court. "The accused knew this and his call fuelled the fire to have Wilders killed." It is extremely unlikely that Latif, who was convicted in absentia, will serve his sentence. Dutch authorities have sought in vain to question Latif over the case and requested legal assistance from Pakistan, also to no avail. — AFP

Laurent Blanc axed by Lyon

LYON: Laurent Blanc has been sacked as coach of Ligue 1's bottom side Lyon, a source close to Blanc told AFP on Monday. After finishing third last season, Lyon have started the new campaign with three defeats and a draw, leaving them propping up the table. Blanc, who won the 1998 World Cup as a player and was in charge of the national team between 2010 and 2012, replaced Dutchman Peter Bosz in October 2022 and still had a year on his contract. Sports daily L'Equipe has been floating for several days that Lyon are looking for a successor ahead of the next round of Ligue 1 matches, when they host promoted Le Havre on Sunday. The team will be prepared by one of Blanc's assistants, Jean-Francois Vulhez, while Lyon's new American owner John Textor hunts for a successor. — AFP

SAN FRANCISCO: New Zealand's Scott Dixon won a wild IndyCar season finale at Laguna Seca Raceway on Sunday as newly crowned series champion Alex Palou settled for third. Spain's Palou had seized the lead on lap seven and led 51 laps before he came out on the wrong side of a pit-lane closure during one of the race's eight cautions. Perhaps not surprisingly, it was canny six-time champion Dixon who emerged from the chaos with a third win in four races despite a penalty for a collision on the opening lap.

Dixon crossed the line 7.3180sec in front of fellow New Zealander Scott McLaughlin, driving a Penske. The multi-car crash on the first lap proved a harbinger of things to come. Felix Rosenqvist, who started on pole, led Palou, Will Power and Pato O'Ward at the restart on lap seven, but Palou dived past him on the final turn of the lap to take the lead as Rosenqvist dropped back to third.

A spin by Josef Newgarden brought the yellow flag out again, Palou maintaining the lead as drivers jockeyed behind him and tried stay out of the gravel. Brazilian veteran Helio Castroneves, in his final race as a full-time IndyCar driver, spun, left the track and narrowly avoided hitting Palou as he found his way back onto the circuit. Marcus Ericsson tangled with Rosenqvist to bring out another caution.

They got underway again on lap 42 with Palou leading O'Ward and Sebastien Grosjean. O'Ward pitted on lap 58, moments before David Malukas made contact with Devlin DeFrancesco to bring out the caution flag. It proved disastrous for Palou, who pitted under yellow and with pit-lane closed dropped to 15th. Two more re-start attempts saw more crashes before O'Ward led Grosjean out of a



Scott Dixon

clean re-start with 23 laps remaining. Two laps later, however, Castroneves made contact with Colton Herta to bring out the yellow flag for an eighth time.

Dixon cycled to the front and when they re-started again with 17 laps remaining, he took firm control of the lead. "It's a credit to the team, they've been executing like that all season," Dixon said. "But we won. That's all that matters. We won."

take American Lilia Vu for the top spot, missed out by two strokes on a playoff for the Queen City title between Australia's Minjee Lee, who won the title with a birdie on the second extra hole, and England's Charley Hull.

But Yin fired a final-round five-under par 67 to finish third on 14-under 274 at Kenwood Country Club in Cincinnati, Ohio, and become the fifth different player atop the rankings this year. "It's just amazing," Yin said. "My mind is blank right now." Second-ranked Yin won her first major title in June at the Women's PGA Championship, two months after collecting her first PGA victory at the LA Open. Others atop the rankings this year included New Zealand's Lydia Ko, Americans Vu and Nelly Korda and South Korea's Ko Jin-young.

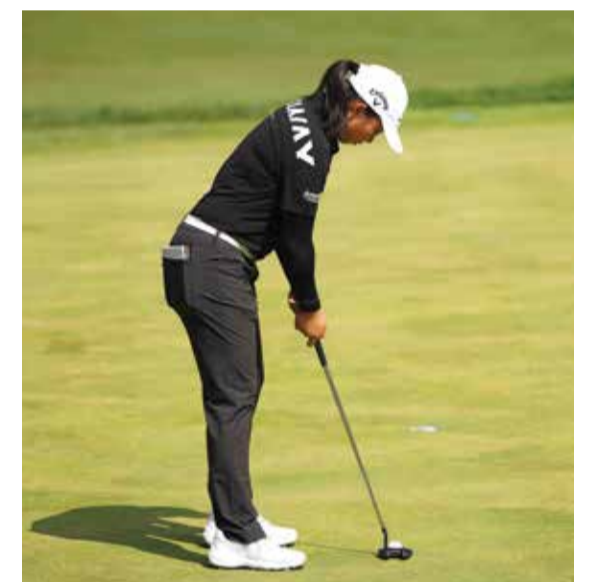
Vu's three triumphs this year included major wins at the Chevron Championship in April and the Women's British Open in August. Yin never managed to share the lead, settling for her fourth third-place finish in five events, but did what she needed to leap to the top of the rankings. "I'm pretty comfortable," Yin said. "Just every week I know I'm in good spot and every week I can put myself into that winning circle. It's just amazing to see I can play good, but also consistent." — AFP

Two-time series champion Will Power of Australia finished fourth for Penske and Callum Hott was fifth for Juncos Hollinger Racing. Palou and Chip Ganassi teammate Dixon had already locked up first and second place in the season points race in Portland last weekend. Their teammate Marcus Armstrong finished eighth on Sunday to grab Rookie of the Year honors. — AFP

China's Yin Ruoning becomes women's world number one

WASHINGTON: China's Yin Ruoning became the world number one in women's golf on Sunday by finishing third at the LPGA Queen City Championship. The 20-year-old became only the second Chinese woman to claim the world number one ranking after Feng Shanshan, who reached the summit from November 2017 to April 2018. "It means a lot. For me it's like dream come true," Yin said. "I've got goosebumps. World number one is the big step on the way to chasing Shanshan."

Yin will play on a Chinese team coached by Feng in the Asian Games, which open on September 23 on home soil at Hangzhou. "I didn't get a lot of chance to chat with Shanshan," Yin said. "But I'm looking forward to going back to China and play the Asian Games and spend more time with her, considering she's the head coach on our national team." Yin, who needed a top-four result to over-



CINCINNATI: Yin Ruoning of China putts on the fourth green during the final round of the Kroger Queen City Championship presented by P&G at Kenwood Country Club on September 10, 2023. — AFP

Lee secures LPGA Queen City crown

WASHINGTON: Australia's Minjee Lee birdied Sunday's second playoff hole to defeat England's Charley Hull and win the LPGA Queen City Championship while China's Yin Ruoning finished third to become world number one. Lee blasted her approach from the left rough to within three feet of the hole on the decisive third playing of the par-4 18th, and, after Hull missed her birdie putt, the Aussie tapped in for her ninth career LPGA triumph. "I played every shot to the best I could and won the playoff so it feels nice," Lee said.

World number 13 Lee fired a one-under par 71 while ninth-ranked Hull charged late to shoot 69, leaving both on 16-under 272 after 72 holes at Kenwood Country Club in Cincinnati, Ohio. Yin fired a 67 to finish third on 274, two strokes ahead of American Ally Ewing, and the 20-year-old Asian star overtook American Lilia Vu to become the second Chinese woman to reach world number one after Feng Shanshan in 2017 and 2018. "It means a lot. For me it's like dream come true," Yin said. "I've got goosebumps. World number one is the big step on the way to chasing Shanshan."

Lee sent her approach at the par-4 12th out of bounds left of the green on the way to a double bogey while Hull's second found a watery grave as she



OHIO: Minjee Lee of Australia celebrates with the trophy after winning in a two-hole playoff against Charley Hull (not pictured) of England during the final round of the Kroger Queen City Championship on September 10, 2023. — AFP

made bogey, leaving Lee on 16-under with a three-shot lead. Hull then reeled off three birdies in a row, sinking putts of eight feet at the par-3 14th, 10 feet at the par-5 15th and 15 feet at the par-4 16th hole to match Lee for the lead. Both parred the last two

holes to force a playoff. "I had a few moments where I really felt like I was losing but I wasn't," Lee said. "I was just like, 'Let's just play 'til the end and see where it ends up,' so I didn't give up."

Hull was over the green with her approach at the first playoff hole, but rolled a putt over a ridge and to the edge of the cup as two pars sent the playoff back to the 18th tee. On the second playoff hole, Lee blasted her second shot from the left rough to within three feet of the hole, setting up her winning putt. "My goal for the rest of the season was to finish well," Lee said. "I wanted to reset my goals here, as this event is my last one in the States until Tampa. I just wanted to finish off on a high and I got to win so that's really nice."

The 27-year-old from Perth won for the first time since capturing last year's US Women's Open for her second major crown, having also won the 2021 Evian Championship. "Resetting your goals is always hard after a really amazing year," Lee said. "I feel like maybe I can reset well here and have a great Asia." Hull, second at the US Women's Open and Women's British Open this year, missed out on her third LPGA title.

Lee began the day with a two-stroke lead and birdied the par-5 second hole. She matched Hull's birdie at seven and birdied the par-3 eighth to lead by four at the turn, setting the stage for Hull's rally. Yin, who won her first major title at the Women's PGA Championship in June, became the fifth different woman at the top of the rankings this year after New Zealand's Lydia Ko, Americans Vu and Nelly Korda and South Korea's Ko Jin-young. — AFP

Livingstone turns tide; England beat NZ in 2nd ODI

SOUTHAMPTON: Liam Livingstone's unbeaten 95 powered England to a 79-run win over New Zealand in the second one-day international in Southampton on Sunday. England, who begin the defense of their World Cup title against New Zealand in Ahmedabad on October 5, collapsed to 8-3 in a match reduced by rain to 34 overs per side. They were still struggling at 55-5 in the 13th over when Livingstone came into bat. But he took England to 226-7 and New Zealand were then dismissed for 147 as the hosts leveled the four-match series at 1-1.

Reece Topley, whose 3-27 ended a wait of over a year for an ODI wicket, and fellow left-arm quick David Willey (3-34) did the damage with the ball. New Zealand great Trent Boult had marked his 100th ODI — and first in nearly a year — by taking the first three England wickets to fall, the veteran left-arm quick removing Jonny Bairstow, Joe Root and Ben Stokes. But Livingstone's career-best ODI innings, a tribute to his composure as much as his celebrated hitting power, bolstered the total and enhanced his prospects of selection for England's final 15-man World Cup squad.

Sam Curran (42) offered fellow all-rounder Living-



SOUTHAMPTON: England's Liam Livingstone (left) plays a shot as New Zealand's Tom Latham (right) keeps wicket during the second One Day International cricket match between England and New Zealand on September 10, 2023. — AFP

stone excellent support in a sixth-wicket stand of 112 in 77 balls. "I wouldn't quite say it was a rescue mission," said man-of-the-match Livingstone. "We pride ourselves on depth in our batting and getting out of situations like today. I thought Sammy (Curran) batted really well." Livingstone, whose 52 was a rare England highlight during their comprehensive eight-wicket defeat by New Zealand at Sophia Gardens on Friday,

added: "It has been a frustrating year for me...The innings at Cardiff did myself the world of good."

England captain Jos Buttler was elated after a victory that ended a run of three straight white-ball losses to New Zealand, who won the last two matches of a drawn Twenty20 series. "From the position we found ourselves in to post a score was credit to the way we wanted to play," he said. — AFP

Sports

Dutch edge out Ireland as Poland beaten in Albania

Weghorst keeps Netherlands on course for Euros as Ireland stumble

PARIS: Wout Weghorst scored a second-half winner as the Netherlands beat Ireland 2-1 in Dublin to boost their Euro 2024 qualifying hopes on Sunday, while Poland lost for the third time in qualifying against Albania. Ronald Koeman's Dutch side had to come back from behind against a spirited Ireland but did enough to stay in the second qualifying spot in Group B behind France. They are level on points with third-placed Greece who have played an extra match and thrashed Gibraltar 5-0.

The Netherlands were stunned inside the first five minutes when Adam Idah scored a penalty awarded for handball against Virgil van Dijk. But Ireland's momentum was halted in the 19th minute when a mistake from Matt Doherty led to Denzel Dumfries being brought down by home goalkeeper Gavin Bazunu. Cody Gakpo stepped up to put away the spot-kick and score for the second time in the international break.

Bazunu made a good save to keep out an effort from Donyell Malen before half-time but the Netherlands did take the lead in the 56th minute when Weghorst fired home from Dumfries' header across goal. Ireland could not summon a late push for an equalizer and remain fourth in the table, six points behind the Dutch with only three matches left. In Tirana, Poland's bid to qualify for a fifth straight European Championship suffered another blow with a 2-0 loss.

Albania moved to the top of Group E, two points above the Czech Republic and surprise package Moldova, with Poland two points further behind in

fourth. Jasir Asani, who plays his club football for Gwangju in South Korea, sent Albania on their way to a massive victory with a magnificent left-footed strike from outside the right-hand side of the area. Mirind Daku secured the three points by adding a second goal just after the hour mark. The other game in the group saw Moldova continue their remarkable bid to qualify with a 1-0 win over the Faroe Islands in their first qualifier since shocking Poland in June.

Hojbjerg downs Finland

Denmark, semi-finalists at Euro 2020, took a big step towards qualification from Group H as Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg's 86th-minute strike grabbed a 1-0 away win over Finland. The Danes jumped a point above their beaten opponents into the top two, level with Slovenia who saw off San Marino 4-0.

"The goal was a relief and this was a very important win for us. Finland are a good team and they did not make it easy for us," said Denmark coach Kasper Hjulmand. The top four teams in the group are separated by just a single point after Kazakhstan kept their bid to reach a maiden major tournament alive with a 1-0 success against Northern Ireland. Aleksandar Mitrovic scored a first-half hat-trick as Serbia beat Lithuania 3-1 to stay on course for next year's finals in Germany. Serbia sit second in Group G, two points ahead of Montenegro who kept pace thanks to Stevan Jovetic's 96th-minute winner in a 2-1 victory over Bulgaria. — AFP



DUBLIN: Ireland's Adam Idah (left) and Ireland's midfielder Ryan Manning (right) watch as Netherlands' striker Wout Weghorst crosses the ball during the UEFA Euro 2024 group B qualification football match between Republic of Ireland and Netherlands on Sept 10, 2023. — AFP

S Africa off mark as Wales avoid Fiji World Cup slip-up

PARIS: Fly-half Manie Libbok was named man of the match as South Africa opened the defense of their Rugby World Cup title with victory over Scotland on Sunday as Wales held out against a spirited Fiji comeback. Libbok's highlight was a second-half no-look assist for Kurt-Lee Arendse as the Springboks began their search for a record fourth Webb Ellis trophy in clinical fashion in the Marseille heat, winning 18-3. Former World Player of the Year Pieter-Steph Du Toit had crashed over earlier in the tie for Jacques Nienaber's outfit in Pool B.

Their next major test to reach the quarter-finals will be world number one side Ireland on September 23, six days after facing Romania. "I think it could have been a slippery one. Scotland are a good side, they are not number five in the world for nothing," Nienaber told the BBC. "I thought we had a little bit of dominance in the first-half but we had to grind the win out."

Earlier in the game, Springboks centre Jesse Kriel avoided a yellow card despite making contact with the head of Scotland No. 8 Jack Dempsey during a tackle. It was a similar incident which led to Tom Curry being shown a red card in England's victory over Argentina on Saturday, raising questions about consistency in refereeing decisions just three days into the tournament. "It looked like a head-on-head collision and I was expecting the TMO (television match official) to come in," said Scotland head coach Gregor Townsend.

Wales began their campaign by overcoming Fiji 32-26 in Bordeaux, avoiding defeat to the highest ranked side in Pool C. Winger Josh Adams claimed one of four tries for Wales as experienced fly-half Dan Biggar crossed the 100-point mark for his country at World Cups, surpassing Neil Jenkins'



MARSEILLE: Scotland's number eight Jack Dempsey (center) is tackled by South Africa's flanker and captain Siya Kolisi (top) and South Africa's fly-half Manie Libbok (left) during the France 2023 Rugby World Cup Pool B match between South Africa and Scotland on Sept 10, 2023. — AFP

98-point record. "You can never write Fiji off. Right at the end they could have won the game," Adams told S4C after his side led by 18 points with less than a quarter of an hour to play. "We don't want another game like that," he added before next Saturday's match with Portugal.

Fiji, coached by ex-Newport lock Simon Raiwalui, had launched a late comeback thanks to tries from Josua Tui-

sova and Mesake Doge in the final seven minutes but they were unable to repeat their famous 2007 World Cup victory over Wales. The Pacific islanders had a lot of confidence before the game, especially after last month's first ever win over England, and they would have felt frustrated by referee Matthew Carley's reluctance to show yellow cards to ill-disciplined Wales. — AFP

Klinsmann under fire after 7 months and no wins with S Korea

HONG KONG: South Korea face Saudi Arabia in a friendly at Newcastle United's St James' Park on Tuesday with Jurgen Klinsmann under severe pressure after a wretched start as coach. The German legend was only appointed in February but his South Korea side have failed to win in the five games since, losing twice and drawing three times.

The latest disappointment was a drab 0-0 stalemate away at an equally off-color Wales last week, after which skipper Son Heung-min came to the defense of 59-year-old Klinsmann. "I understand where fans come from, as someone who's been on the national team for a long time," the Tottenham Hotspur forward told reporters in Cardiff. "I am not saying the coach is always right, but I also don't think fans are always right either." South Korea reached the last 16 of the Qatar World Cup before being outclassed 4-1 by Brazil, after which coach Paulo Bento said he would not carry on.

The Korea Football Association launched a protracted search for his successor before settling on Klinsmann, a World Cup winner as a player but whose coaching career has never hit the same heights. Many South Korean fans were underwhelmed by the appointment and performances since have only added to those misgivings. Klinsmann, whose previous coaching job was a short stint with Hertha Berlin more than three years ago, started with a 2-2 home draw with Colombia, before home defeats to Uruguay and Peru. — 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
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Change of Name

I, **Avith Lovel**, holder of Passport No. N1729719, do hereby change my name to Avith Lovel (as given name) Fernandes (as surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name Avith Lovel Fernandes and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. (#4226) 12/9/2023

I, **Abdul** (current name in passport), holder of Indian National Passport Number S3692812 having permanent address house no. 20 Tripoloya Gate Kotawala Bag Ratlam, Madhya Pradesh Pin code 457001 India, residing in Kuwait at present hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) Abdul Kadar and (surname) Alot Wala. (#4225) 12/9/2023

I **SHAIWI** holder of Indian Passport No. T8992352 having permanent address at: Sihora, Ward No. 3, Chandpur Road, Tah: Tumsar, State: Maharashtra, Country: India and Pin Code: 441915 residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) SHAIWI HEMCHAND and (surname) RAHANG-DALE (#4222) 11/9/2023

I, **Rizwan Muzhiml**, S/o Muzhiml holder of Indian Passport No. M8471852 issued at Chennai India on 27/04/2015 and Kuwait Civil ID No. 278020704941 have changed my name, Address from Rizwan S/o Muzhiml No. 8, Kottai Labbai Street, Thimiri Arcot, Vellore pin-632512, Tamil Nadu - India to as Aad-

har card No 732351842662 Riswan Shariff S/o Mujamal Shariff No: 23/15, Narasoji Street Walajapet Ranipet-632513 Tamil Nadu, India in all my dealings and documents. I will be known by name of Riswan Shariff (given name) and Mujamal Shariff (surname) (#4223) 11/9/2023

I, **Shanmuka Reddy Desu** s/o Desu Sudharsan Reddy holder of Indian Passport No. L4907324 having permanent address 9/2, Galivaripalli, Rajampeta, Utukur, Annamayya, Andhra Pradesh, 516126, India Residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: Given name **Shanmuka Reddy** and surname Devu. (#4224) 10/9/2023

Djokovic wins 4th US Open

NEW YORK: Novak Djokovic defeated Daniil Medvedev in straight sets on Sunday to win his fourth US Open and a record-equaling 24th Grand Slam singles title, cementing his claim as the greatest tennis player in history. The 36-year-old Djokovic won 6-3, 7-6 (7/5), 6-3 to become the oldest men's champion in New York in the Open era and match Margaret Court's all-time mark for most Grand Slam victories.

"I don't know where to start. It obviously means the world to me," said Djokovic, wearing a white jacket with the number 24 on his chest during the trophy presentation. "It's hard to describe. I'm really living my childhood dream to compete at the highest level in this sport. 'I never imagined I would be standing talking about 24 Grand Slams but the last couple of years I've felt I have a chance and I have a shot at history and why not grab it.'" The Serbian is the first man to win three Grand Slam events in the same season four times, crowning his impending return to world number one in the most fitting of ways inside Arthur Ashe Stadium.

The victory added to his wins at the Australian and French Opens earlier this year, with the only blemish his five-set defeat to Carlos Alcaraz in the final of Wimbledon in July. "You know, some people who are born, he's a genius. He's one of kind. Not too many people in this world like him in sport-wise," said Djokovic's coach, Goran Ivanisevic. "This is one of the biggest achievement in the sport history." Medvedev suffered his fourth loss in five Grand Slam finals, all of which were against Djokovic or Rafael Nadal.

"First of all I want to ask Novak: What are you still doing here? Come on!" quipped Medvedev. "I don't know when you are planning to slow down a little bit. 'I mean, 24. I feel like I have not a bad career and I have 20 titles. You have 24 Grand Slams. Wow.'" Medvedev defeated Djokovic in straight sets in the 2021 final to prevent the Serbian from becoming the first man to win all four Grand Slams in the same year since Rod Laver in 1969. Djokovic admitted to feeling overwhelmed on that occasion, but there was little evidence of nerves as he quickly took command of Sunday's championship match.

The second seed - who missed last year's US Open because of his refusal to be vaccinated against COVID-19 - burst out of the gate with a confident hold sealed by successive aces and struck at the first opportunity, punishing Medvedev for a double-fault to break for a 2-0 lead. A third ace consolidated his advantage

before Medvedev got on the board in the fourth game. The pair traded holds largely untroubled until Djokovic again put pressure on Medvedev as the third seed served down 2-5. Medvedev dug in to twice stave off set points, but Djokovic calmly made the set the following game.

Second set grind

Medvedev dethroned last year's champion Alcaraz with a "12 out of 10" performance in the semi-finals, but he struggled to replicate his very best consistently against an imperious Djokovic. Attempting to be the first player to beat the top two seeds en route to the title since 1975, Medvedev once more repeatedly found himself under the pump early in the second set. He was able to resist, hitting a sweeping volley to fight off break point as he secured a gutsy hold for 4-3 before finally asking questions of Djokovic, who was showing signs of fatigue.

A leaping overhead gave Medvedev his first break chance of the contest the very next game, but Djokovic responded with a brilliant scoop on the half-volley to save it. Djokovic wobbled serving at 5-6, double-faulting twice as Medvedev brought up set point. But Djokovic was waiting as Medvedev went cross-court, and put away the volley to force a tie-break. Medvedev seemed to have the momentum on his side after winning an astonishing rally to nose 5-4 ahead only for Djokovic to bag the next three points, snatching a marathon 104-minute second set and closing in on a historic triumph.

"Should have won it," Medvedev said of the second set. "Should have won it, but sometimes tennis is not that easy." Djokovic sportingly offered to help Medvedev to his feet after the Russian took an awkward tumble early in the third set, but there was no such goodwill when two break points came about soon after. Medvedev pumped a backhand long to hand Djokovic a 3-1 advantage. He gave the break straight back, but Medvedev faltered again and there was no mistake second time around as Djokovic wrapped up the title before the emotions streamed out. —AFP



NEW YORK: Serbia's Novak Djokovic celebrates with the trophy after defeating Russia's Daniil Medvedev during the US Open tennis tournament men's singles final match on Sept 10, 2023. — AFP

Spanish football president resigns over kiss scandal

BARCELONA: Spanish football federation president Luis Rubiales has resigned following fierce criticism for kissing Jenni Hermoso on the lips at the Women's World Cup victory ceremony. The already suspended Rubiales sent his resignation to the federation's interim president, he said in an open letter, and also explained his decision to eventually step down in a television interview. "I'm going to (resign), yes, because I cannot continue my work," the 46-year-old told television show "Piers Morgan Uncensored".

"(Family and friends) say to me, 'Luis, you need to focus on your dignity and continue your life. If not you are going to damage people you love and the sport you love.'" Rubiales sparked a worldwide backlash after forcibly kissing midfielder Hermoso during the medal ceremony following Spain's World Cup triumph in Sydney on August 20. After he refused to resign, FIFA provisionally suspended him for 90 days, while Spanish public prosecutors have filed a lawsuit against him for alleged sexual assault and coercion.

Hermoso, 33, had filed a complaint at the National Court on Tuesday, formally accusing Rubiales of sexual assault. In an open letter published by Rubiales on Sunday night, he said he had informed the federation he was also stepping down as a vice-president of European football governing body UEFA. "After the swift suspension carried out by FIFA, plus the rest of the procedures opened against me, it is evident that I will not be able to return to my position," said Rubiales in the letter. "Insisting on waiting and clinging to it is not going to contribute to anything positive, neither for the federation nor for Spanish football. 'Among other things, because there are powers that be that will prevent my return.'"

Rubiales, who insists the kiss was consensual, said he did not want Spanish football to be hurt by "such a disproportionate campaign" against him. "I have faith in the truth and I will do everything in my power so that it prevails," he wrote. Rubiales said his departure would contribute "stability" to the 2030 men's World Cup bid in which Spain are involved. As the pressure ramped up in recent weeks on him to quit, Rubiales' mother Angeles Bejar went on a hunger strike in protest, locking herself in a church.

Some Spanish politicians hailed Rubiales' downfall. "We are with you, Jenni, and with all women,"



SYDNEY: Spain's defender #20 Rocio Galvez is congratulated by President of the Royal Spanish Football Federation Luis Rubiales (right). — AFP

said second deputy prime minister Yolanda Diaz on social media platform X, formerly Twitter. Spain's equality minister Irene Montero wrote "It's Over" on X, a slogan used by Hermoso and her fellow players in protest against Rubiales. Over 80 players went on strike from the women's team in protest after Rubiales' fierce defensive speech following the incident, in which he had railed against "false feminism" and said he would not step down.

The players said they would not return until the leadership of the RFEF (Spanish football federation) was changed. Controversial women's coach Jorge Vilda was sacked on Tuesday in the fallout from the scandal. The RFEF, under interim president Pedro Rocha, also apologized for the "totally unacceptable behavior" of Rubiales. Vilda's former assistant Montserrat Tome is the new coach - it is the first time a woman has led the team. Spain's women's team are due to play Nations League matches against Sweden and Switzerland on September 22 and 26 respectively.

Spanish prosecutors' lawsuit against Rubiales will be analyzed by a National Court judge. If the judge accepts the request, a magistrate will be assigned to head an investigation which will end either with a recommendation for the case to go to trial or be dismissed. Australian police told AFP on Monday they were willing to help with an investigation, but that a report had not yet been referred to them. Hermoso, who plays for Mexican club Pachuca, has said the unwanted kiss left her feeling "vulnerable and like the victim of an assault", with a statement on social media describing it as "an impulsive, macho act, out of place and with no type of consent on my part". She has also accused Rubiales of pressuring her to speak out in his defense immediately after the furor over the kiss erupted, which prosecutors said could be considered a crime of coercion. — AFP

49ers crush Steelers; Cowboys embarrass New York Giants

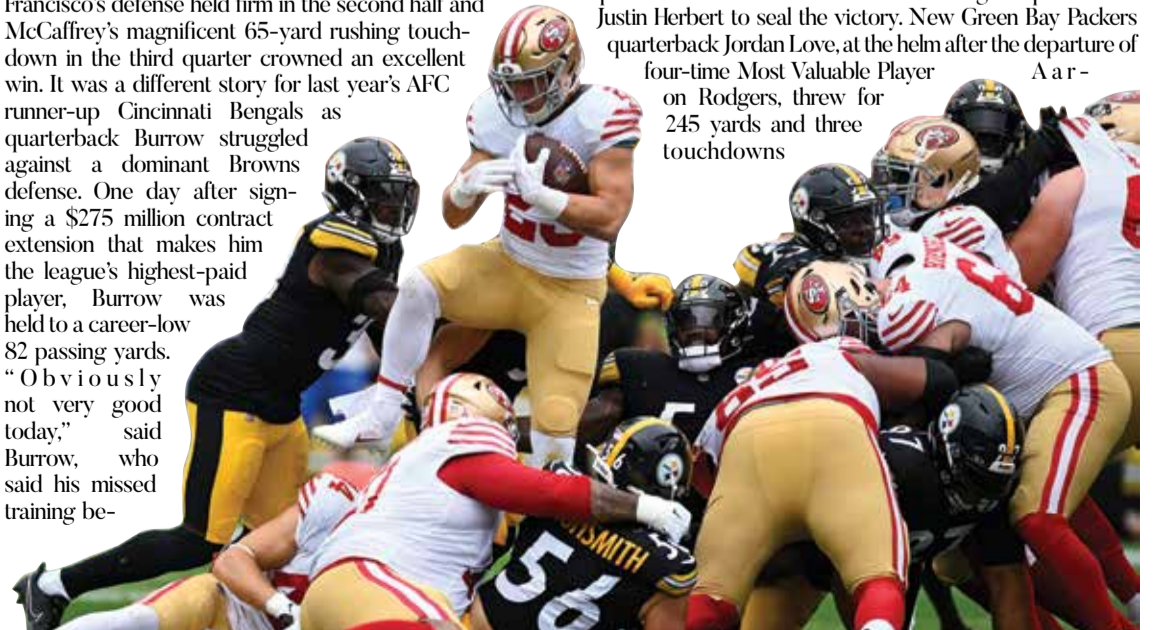
NEW YORK: The San Francisco 49ers dominated Pittsburgh 30-7 in just one of the big wins of an NFL opening Sunday that ended with the Cowboys' 40-0 dismantling of the New York Giants. The Cleveland Browns also made an opening statement, stifling Cincinnati quarterback Joe Burrow in a 24-3 victory over the Bengals. The 49ers, beaten in the NFC Championship game last season by the Eagles, got off to a perfect start in Pittsburgh, where quarterback Brock Purdy threw for 220 yards and two touchdowns.

After grabbing the starting role in his rookie season, San Francisco's Purdy underwent elbow surgery during the off-season but showed no signs of any lingering issues as he completed 19 of 29 passes. Running back Christian McCaffrey also enjoyed a dominant opening day as he rushed for 152 yards and a touchdown. "We're here to win. This is how we're going to play," said Purdy, who connected on two touchdown passes to Brandon Aiyuk in the first half. The Steelers trimmed the deficit late in the first half when Kenny Pickett capped a 12-play, 95-yard drive with a three-yard scoring pass to Pat Freiermuth. But San Francisco's defense held firm in the second half and McCaffrey's magnificent 65-yard rushing touchdown in the third quarter crowned an excellent win. It was a different story for last year's AFC runner-up Cincinnati Bengals as quarterback Burrow struggled against a dominant Browns defense. One day after signing a \$275 million contract extension that makes him the league's highest-paid player, Burrow was held to a career-low 82 passing yards. "Obviously not very good today," said Burrow, who said his missed training be-

cause of a pre-season calf injury was perhaps a reason, but no excuse, for the sputtering performance. Browns quarterback Deshaun Watson, who missed the first 11 games of last season after he was suspended following an investigation into sexual harassment allegations, threw one touchdown and ran for another as the Browns coped better with the rainy conditions.

It was also raining at the Meadowlands outside New York, where the Cowboys posted the most lopsided opening Sunday victory since the Steelers beat the Browns 43-0 in 1999. Dallas quarterback Dak Prescott completed only 13 of 24 passes for 143 yards, but with 11:19 left in the fourth quarter he was already watching from the sidelines. The Cowboys had a special teams touchdown, a defensive touchdown and three rushing touchdowns—including two by Tony Pollard.

The Dallas defense meanwhile held the Giants to 171 offensive yards, sacking Giants quarterback Daniel Jones seven times. They forced three turnovers - including Dal'Ron Bland's interception and 22-yard return for a touchdown. Prescott put the win down to "the discipline of our team - getting up early, staying committed to it, not getting ahead of ourselves." The Philadelphia Eagles - beaten in last season's Super Bowl by the Kansas City Chiefs - held off the Patriots 25-20 in New England and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers started life after Tom Brady with 20-17 victory at Minnesota. Miami Dolphins quarterback Tua Tagovailoa provided plenty of fireworks in a thrilling 36-34 win at the Los Angeles Chargers. Tagovailoa threw a go-ahead four-yard touchdown pass to Tyreek Hill with 1:45 to play. The Dolphins defense then came up with two of their three sacks of Chargers quarterback Justin Herbert to seal the victory. New Green Bay Packers quarterback Jordan Love, at the helm after the departure of four-time Most Valuable Player Aaron Rodgers, threw for 245 yards and three touchdowns.



PITTSBURGH: Christian McCaffrey #23 of the San Francisco 49ers leaps over a pile of players in the first quarter against the Pittsburgh Steelers at Acrisure Stadium on Sept 10, 2023. — AFP