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Kuwaitis will be issued 5-year multiple-entry Schengen visas

FM welcomes EU announcement • Russia proposes visa exemption for Kuwait

Amir back home after private visit to Italy

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah returned home on Tuesday after a private visit to Italy. HH the Amir was welcomed upon arrival by HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Acting Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah and Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, in addition to senior state officials. —KUNA



HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

BRUSSELS/MOSCOW: The European Commission adopted on Sept 8 specific rules on the issuing of multiple entry visas to Kuwaiti nationals, which are more favorable than the generic rules that applied to date. This new visa 'cascade' regime for Kuwaiti nationals applying for Schengen visas in Kuwait will see all eligible applicants, including first-time travelers, being issued with visas valid for 5 years, if the passport validity allows it.

According to the newly adopted visa 'cascade' regime for Kuwait, Kuwaiti nationals can now be issued with long-term, multiple-entry Schengen visas valid for five years. Where the validity of the visa would exceed that of the passport, a multiple-entry visa shall be issued with a period of validity ending three months before the expiry date of the passport. During the validity period of these visas, holders enjoy travel rights equivalent to visa-free nationals.

This decision is testament to the EU's strong belief that Kuwait is an important

partner for the EU. It also comes in the context of the EU's Joint Communication on a "Strategic Partnership with the Gulf", which also covers EU relations with Kuwait. One of the pillars of this EU Strategy is facilitating people-to-people contacts, and this new visa 'cascade' adaptation for Kuwait contributes to enhancing relations between Kuwaitis and Europeans.

The Schengen area consists of 27 European countries (of which 23 are EU states): Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland and Sweden, along with Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah welcomed the European Commission's announcement, saying this step reflects the high-level coordination and cooperation between Kuwait and the EU. Kuwait appreciates EU member states

for their efforts that led to this announcement, Sheikh Salem said, adding the foreign ministry will continue working until Kuwait is granted Schengen visa waiver for its citizens. The foreign ministry's efforts follow the political leadership's instructions to fulfill citizens' needs as a top priority in the government's work program, the minister indicated.

Separately, Russia's Minister of Economic Development Maxim Reshetnikov said on Tuesday that his country has suggested visa-exemption for several countries including Kuwait.

Russian News Agency (TASS) quoted Reshetnikov during the Eastern Economic Forum, held in Vladivostok, as saying that Russia was proposing the scheme for citizens of Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia. He added that Russia is looking to increase tourist exchange with these countries, as they are working towards establishing a visa-free tourism system with countries of the Middle East and Southeast Asia. — Agencies

NEWS IN BRIEF

Kuwait tweaks school hours

KUWAIT: The education ministry on Tuesday set new hours for school classes nationwide, saying the measure aims to ease traffic congestion ahead of the new academic year. As per the new schedule approved by Education Minister Dr Adel Al-Mane, kindergartens start at 7:15 am and end at 12:05 pm, while elementary schools will begin at the same but end at 1:15 pm. Middle schools classes will be from 7:30 am until 1:40 pm, while classes for high school students start at 7:45 am and end at 1:55 pm.

Restaurants must offer free water

KUWAIT: Restaurants and cafés in Kuwait are required to offer filtered water free of charge and must not oblige customers to purchase bottled water, the ministry of commerce and industry said Tuesday. Commerce Minister Mohammad Al-Aiban has issued a ministerial decision in this regard, the ministry noted in a post on X.

MPs slam Egypt map omission

KUWAIT: Two MPs on Tuesday called on the defense and interior ministries to protest after an Egyptian military lecturer showed the map of the Arab World without Kuwait. MPs Hamad Al-Matar and Saud Al-Asfour said the Egyptian military officer was giving the lecture to more than 500 officers from all Arab countries. They praised Kuwaiti officers who walked out of the lecture in protest.

Sick leave without doctor visit

KUWAIT: The Civil Service Commission approved a recommendation by Health Minister Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi allowing public sector employees to apply for sick leave online without the need for a doctor's visit.

UK govt, BA face claim over Kuwait hostage crisis

LONDON: Passengers and crew members of a British Airways flight who were taken hostage in Kuwait in 1990 are intending to take legal action against the British government and the airline, a law firm said Tuesday. Passengers on BA flight 149 were taken off the Kuala Lumpur-bound plane when it landed in Kuwait on Aug 2 that year, hours after Saddam Hussein's troops swept in.

Some of the 367 passengers and crew spent more than four months in captivity, including as human shields against Western attacks at the hands of the Iraqi dictator. Representing a group of former BA staff and

passengers who were aboard the flight, McCue Jury & Partners said "the victims are taking legal action to ensure the truth is fully disclosed, those responsible are held to account, and due compensation is paid".

The law firm said that "what the hostages now know is that evidence exists" that the UK government and the airline "knew the invasion had already begun" but allowed the flight to land anyway. And that they did so because "the flight was being used to insert a black ops team of former special forces and security services" into Kuwait, the firm added.

According to the law firm, the claim is currently at the pre-action stage and they expect to file the case early next year with the High Court in London. The firm is appealing for more passengers or crew of the BA flight to join the legal action. It said each of the hostages "may claim an estimated average of £170,000 (\$213,000) each in damages".

"We were not treated as citizens, but as expendable pawns for commercial and political gain," Barry

Manners, who was on the flight and is taking part in the claim, said. "A victory over years of cover up and bare-faced denial will help restore trust in our political and judicial process," he added. Files released in Nov 2021 revealed that the UK ambassador to Kuwait informed London about reports of an Iraqi incursion before the flight landed but the message was not circulated to BA.

There have also been claims, denied by the government, that London knowingly put passengers at risk by using the flight to deploy undercover operatives and delayed take-off to allow them to board. A UK government spokesperson said "responsibility for these events and the mistreatment of those passengers and crew lies entirely with the government of Iraq at the time". British Airways has always denied accusations of negligence, conspiracy and a cover-up. A BA spokesperson said the government records released in 2021 "confirmed British Airways was not warned about the invasion". — AFP

2,300 dead in Libya floods, scores missing

BENGAZI: At least 2,300 people were killed in Libya and thousands more were reported missing after catastrophic flash floods broke river dams and tore through an eastern coastal city, devastating entire neighborhoods. As global concern spread, multiple nations offered to urgently send aid and rescue teams to help the war-scarred country that has been overwhelmed by what one UN official labelled "a calamity of epic proportions".

Massive destruction shattered the Mediterranean coastal city of Derna, home to about 100,000 people, where multi-storey buildings on the riverbanks collapsed and houses and cars vanished in the raging waters. Emergency services reported an initial death toll of more than 2,300 in Derna alone and said over 5,000 people remained missing while about 7,000 were injured. "The situation in Derna is shocking and very dramatic," said Osama Ali of the Tripoli-based Rescue and Emergency Service. "We need more support to save lives because there are people still under the rubble and every minute counts."

The floods were caused by torrential rains from Storm Daniel, which made landfall in Libya on Sunday after earlier lashing Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey. Derna, 250 km east of Benghazi, is ringed by hills and bisected by what is normally a dry riverbed in summer, but which has turned into a raging torrent of mud-brown water that also swept away several major bridges.



DERNA, Libya: People look at the damage caused by flash floods on Sept 11, 2023. — AFP

The number of dead given by the Libyan emergency service roughly matched the grim estimates provided by the Red Cross and by authorities in the east, who have warned the death toll may yet rise further. "The death toll is huge and might reach thousands," said Tamer Ramadan of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, three of whose volunteers were also reported dead.

"We confirm from our independent sources of information that the number of missing people is hitting 10,000 persons so far," Ramadan added.

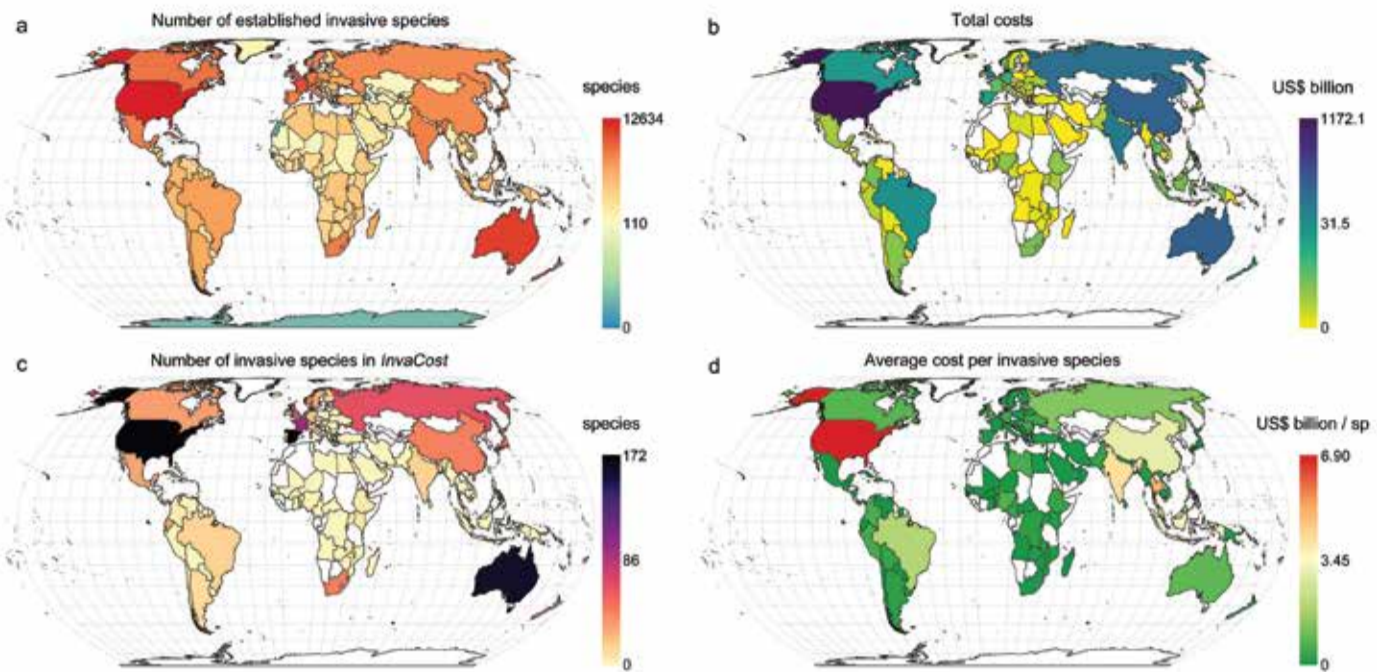
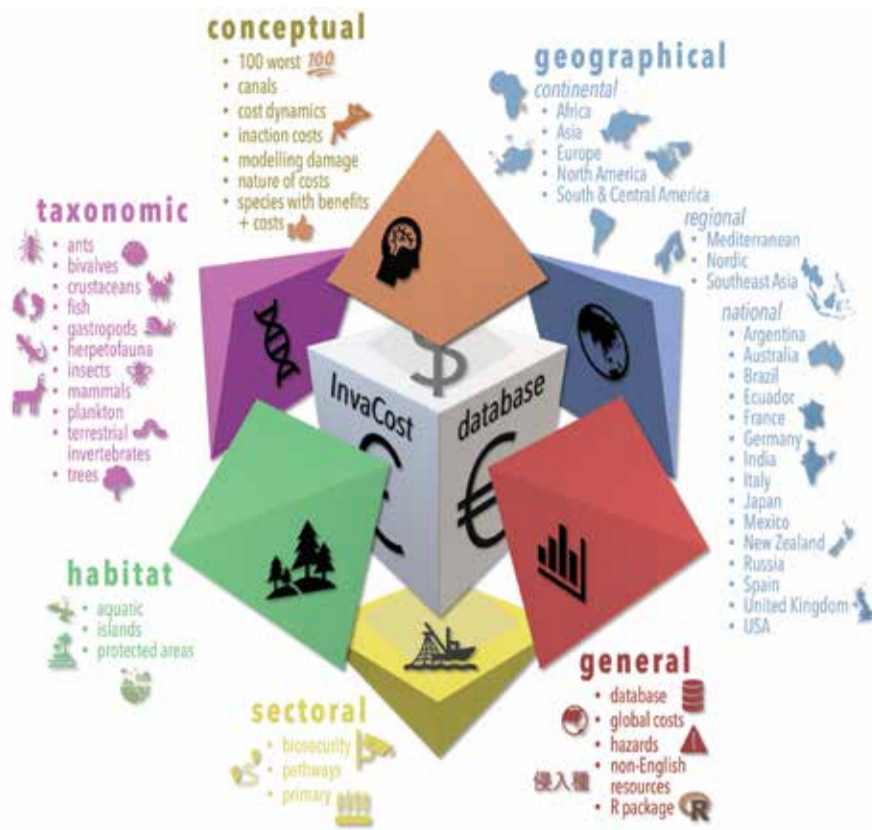
Elsewhere in Libya's east, aid group the Norwegian Refugee Council said "entire villages have been overwhelmed by the floods and the death toll continues to rise".

Continued on Page 6



Expert underlines impacts of invasive species in the region

Economic toll of biological invasions exceeds \$2 trillion worldwide



Global maps showing (a) number of established invasive species per country, (b) total costs of invasive species (US\$ billion, 2017 value; log₁₀ scale) per country, (c) number of invasive species reported in InvaCost per country, and (d) average cost (US\$ billion 2017 value) per invasive species reported in InvaCost in each country. The blank countries indicate an absence of data. Credit BioScience (2023).

News in Brief



Ministry employees protest

KUWAIT: A number of employees of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy organized a sit-in in front of the entrance to the ministry's main building, to demand the approval of some allowances and equality.

Doctor jailed, deported

KUWAIT: The misdemeanor court upheld the one-month prison sentence against the Egyptian (in absentia) and deportation after serving the sentence for presenting a false experience certificate. The doctor, who worked in a private hospital, submitted a CV and experience certificates to work in another Gulf country. The company that specialized in reviewing documents in the country wrote to the hospitals in Kuwait to verify the validity of the experience certificates, but it turned out that his experience certificates were forged.

Captagon pills, hashish seized

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Ministry of Interior (MoI) announced that 1 million Captagon pills, 400 kgs of hashish and 0.5 kgs of shabu were seized, as some persons attempted to smuggle them into the country. This is part of the efforts to arrest drug dealers and smugglers. The security officials in cooperation with the General Department of Coast Guard were able to thwart the attempt by two people to smuggle the drugs into the country. The smugglers and the seized items were sent to the concerned authorities.

Human Papillomavirus vaccine

KUWAIT: Health Minister Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi has issued a ministerial decree to give vaccination against Human Papillomavirus (HPV), targeting the age group from 9 to 45 years (males and females). Public health undersecretary will decide the targeted groups according to the age range and the modalities. Vaccine will be given to Kuwaitis free of charge, and for non-Kuwaitis, they can be vaccinated for a fee.

Kuwait Red Crescent ready to assist Libya hurricane victims

KUWAIT: Chairperson of Kuwait Red Crescent Society Dr Hilal Al-Sayer declared on Tuesday the society's readiness to send urgent aid to Libya to relieve victims of the floods caused by the hurricane "Daniel." Dr Al-Sayer said in a statement to KUNA that the society is coordinating with the Libyan Red Crescent to determine pending needs in the regions ravaged by the hurricane. He affirmed readiness to dispatch assistance to the victims in line with the State of Kuwait's policy to relieve the

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: A recent scientific paper published in the BioScience journal highlights breakthroughs in assessing the costs associated with biological invasions, which occur when species are intentionally or accidentally introduced to areas outside their natural habitats by humans. These invasive species, ranging from cats and weeds to crop pests and diseases, pose a significant global threat to ecosystems, biodiversity, and human well-being. The economic toll of biological invasions has exceeded \$2 trillion worldwide since the 1970s, encompassing damage to goods and services as well as the costs of managing them, and these economic burdens are steadily increasing.

Dr Danish Ali Ahmed, a leading researcher from Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST), Kuwait, emphasized the presence of numerous invasive species in the Arabian Gulf region. Examples include the red palm weevil, an insect pest that devastates date palm trees; the water hyacinth, an aggressive plant that obstructs waterways and harms aquatic ecosystems; and the house crow, which causes agricultural damage, competes with native birds and can transmit diseases.

"The total cost of damage and management efforts linked to invasive species in the Gulf region has exceeded \$1.5 billion since the 2000s. Moreover, this estimate is likely a significant underrepresentation, as many costs in this region go unreported," Dr Ahmed said. "To mitigate the adverse impacts of invasive species on Kuwait's environment, economy, and the broader Gulf region,

a combination of approaches is required.

These include stringent border controls and ongoing monitoring to detect invasive species early, implementing management strategies with risk assessment and control measures, and ensuring efficient allocation of resources. Additionally, engaging with the public to raise awareness and collaborating with neighboring countries to address cross-border incursions are crucial components of effective invasive species management," he added.

Dr Ahmed also highlighted the efforts of several researchers at local and regional universities, as well as institutions such as the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), who focus on the challenges posed by invasive species. These research endeavors have increased awareness and provided essential information to guide future policy and legislative decisions. For instance, the UAE ministry of climate change and environment recently developed a national strategic action plan to mitigate the impacts of invasive species.

In 2014, the InvaCost project was initiated due to the reliance on outdated, flawed and unsubstantiated sources for previous cost estimates of biological invasions. InvaCost aimed to compile, describe and standardize cost data from various sources on a global scale, with an initial focus on invasive insects, which are among the most destructive when they become invasive. The InvaCost database has since expanded to encompass all known invasive species with associated cost data and now involves 145 researchers from 44 countries. The current version of InvaCost contains 13,553 cost entries in 22 languages.

Researchers have utilized the InvaCost database to produce over 50 scientific publications, offering cost assessments across various geographical scales, species groups, habitats and economic sectors. These studies have highlighted the substantial economic costs of invasive species, running into tens of billions of US dollars, including expenses associated with disease-spreading mosquitoes, forest-destroying wood-boring insects, shellfish that clog water-intake pipes and plants causing severe allergies. These studies have proven instrumental in shaping policies for managing invasive species and raising awareness about the escalating economic burdens of biological invasions.

"Our study provides a comprehensive timeline of invasion costs, addressing past flaws and limitations in the scientific literature, the role of InvaCost in addressing these issues and the potential future directions for research and policy. It serves as an essential reference not only for researchers but also for policymakers and stakeholders interested in mitigating the economic impacts of invasive species. Periodic efforts to synthesize invasive species costs are essential to capture the latest information," explained Dr Ahmed.



Researcher Dr. Danish Ali Ahmed



Kuwait and China strengthening ties

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of Health Ahmad Al-Awadhi on Monday expressed aspiration to strengthen relations with China. During a celebration held by the Chinese Embassy marking the 47th anniversary for dispatching the first Chinese medical team to the country, Al-Awadhi said, "it is an example of cooperation in accordance with agreement signed between both countries in the health sector field."

Viewing the Chinese team as a model, especially in traditional medicine and rehabilitation, Minister Al-Awadhi voiced anticipation for an integrated team specialized in organ transplantation as well. On his part, Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait



Zhang Jianwei pointed out that more than 810,000 patients have been treated by the Chinese team in Kuwait since 1976.

In accordance with the agreement reached between the Kuwaiti and Chinese ministries of health, the minister of health praised the Chi-



Ahmad Al-Awadhi



Zhang Jianwei

nese medical team's exceptional efforts and the therapeutic services it offers to patients at the Natural Medicine and Health Rehabilitation Hospital. — KUNA

afflicted worldwide.

The flash floods in eastern Libya have killed more than 2,300 people in the Mediterranean coastal city of Derna alone, the emergency services of the Tripoli-based government said on Tuesday. More than 5,000 people remain missing while about 7,000 people were injured by the force of floodwaters that rushed down a normally dry river valley, said Osama Ali, spokesman for the Tripoli-based emergency services, which has had a team in Derna since Monday.

The death toll from freak floods in eastern Libya



Dr Hilal Al-Sayer

is expected to soar dramatically, with 10,000 people reported missing, the Red Cross warned on Tuesday. Officials in Libya have said at least 150 people were killed in the sudden flooding on Sunday afternoon after storm Daniel swept the Mediterranean, lashing Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey. But Tamer Ramadan of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) said the actual toll was likely to be many times higher.

"Our teams on the ground are still doing their assessment (but) from what we see and from the news coming to us, the death toll is huge," he told reporters in Geneva via video link from Tunis. "It might reach thousands," he said. "We don't have a definite number right now." Independent sources told the IFRC that the number of reported missing was "hitting 10,000 so far." "The humanitarian needs are much more beyond the abilities of the Libyan



DERNA, Libya: People look at the damage caused by freak floods in Derna, eastern Libya. — AFP

Red Crescent and even the abilities of the government," Ramadan said. "That's why the government in the east has issued an international appeal for support," he said, adding that IFRC was also preparing to launch an emergency appeal for funds towards the response. — Agencies

Firefighting: Risky profession, on the frontlines of danger

Firefighters put their lives on the line to save lives and properties



KUWAIT: Kuwait fire fighters gather at the scene of blaze as fire engulfs a medical center in this file photo. — Photo Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Khaled Al-Abdulhadi

KUWAIT: Firefighting is a profession that commands admiration from those outside of it, as firefighters consistently put their lives on the line to save lives and properties. They undergo daily equipment inspections, prepare for the most perilous situations and anxiously await the bell that signals the need to don their gear and confront potential death head-on. The indelible role of firefighters in extinguishing fires after Kuwait's liberation and their heroics during the Sept 11 attacks in the US are etched in our collective memories.

Omar Al-Mutairi, a firefighter at Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), vividly recalls his initiation into this noble profession. "I embarked on my career by successfully passing the demanding entrance tests of the KOC Fire Department, and then underwent rigorous training to ensure my physical and mental readiness for handling emergency situations," he said. "The daily routine at the fire station is ever-changing." Al-Mutairi said about the nature of their work. "Some days involve training or equipment maintenance, while on others, we respond to emergencies. The work demands physical exertion and psychological endurance."

Al-Mutairi emphasizes that, in preparation for

emergency situations, all firefighters must be ready for the most perilous scenarios. "We stay prepared through continuous training and by ensuring our equipment is in optimal condition. We practice various scenarios to stay vigilant and ready for any situation that may arise."

Al-Mutairi proudly reminisces about his participation in a KOC team that excelled in an international firefighter challenge in 2014, which was part of the 12th Firefighter Day Festival in Germany. "Our team participated in the international firefighter championship, and our performance was honorable. It was an incredible moment, and the sense of pride in representing my country was beyond words, especially when we were honored by the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, may Allah have mercy on his soul," he recalled.

However, as one might expect, this profession is not without its tragic moments. Al-Mutairi elucidates the harrowing experiences faced by oil firefighters. "The most challenging moments occur when we encounter accidents resulting in loss of life. These moments serve as stark reminders of how dangerous and crucial our profession is in saving human lives."

Joshua Plaxen, a lawyer who has defended firefighters in court, wrote in 2022 about the physical and mental hazards firefighters are exposed

to. "One of the most prevalent physical hazards faced by firefighters arises from scenarios created by fires. Firefighters are not only at risk of losing their lives and suffering severe burns but can also be seriously injured by flashovers or back drafts. Additionally, firefighters are susceptible to smoke inhalation and the risk of dying due to collapsing structures," he wrote.

"In addition to the physical hazards," he continued, "firefighters are also at risk of developing severe mental health conditions as a result of their line of work. The stress firefighters endure can lead to mental disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) and panic disorder." Plaxen also highlighted the common diseases that firefighters are prone to, including chronic respiratory diseases, cancer, hepatitis B and C, as well as heart diseases. "Medical News Today reports that approximately 45 percent of firefighter deaths on the job are attributed to cardiac events," he wrote.

Furthermore, a study published by Science Direct on occupational hazards in March found: "The studies provide data on mechanical, physical, chemical and psychosocial risks, workers' perceptions, resilience, and epidemiological data. They detail information related to firefighters' exposure



Omar Al-Mutairi

to falls and slips, noise, and high concentrations of carbon monoxide. Moreover, the study delves into the relationship between burnout, cognitive and physical fatigue, and their adverse effects on health and performance."



KUWAIT: The Ministry Undersecretary, Aseel Al-Munaifi and Deputy Secretary of State for Defense, Tamas Vargha pose for a photo. — KUNA photos



Speaker of the National Assembly Ahmad Al-Saadoun received visiting Hungarian Deputy Secretary of State for Defense Tamas Vargha.



Defense minister and China envoy discusses strategic cooperation

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Tuesday received the Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Zhang Jianwei, discussing strategic cooperation between the two countries. The Ministry of Defense said in a statement that Minister Sheikh Fahad hosted the Chinese envoy at Seif palace, adding that Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attended the session. The two sides discussed progress that had been made in the cooperation between the two countries at various levels and prospects of expanding the coordination. They also touched on various other issues of common concern. — KUNA

Kuwait, Hungary eye stronger ties

KUWAIT: Kuwait is keen on developing economic relations with Hungary, especially in the fields of information technology, agriculture, water treatment, renewable energy, and tourism, affirmed a Finance Ministry official on Tuesday. The Ministry Undersecretary, Aseel Al-Munaifi, mentioned this in a press statement following the fourth Kuwait-Hungary committee meeting with a visiting Hungarian delegation headed by Deputy Secretary of State for Defense, Tamas Vargha.

The meeting, attended by a number of high-ranking officials, handled various economic aspects,

clarified Al-Munaifi, saying that the two sides presented viable investment opportunities. A roadmap to achieve successful partnerships and exchanges of expertise was put forth during the meeting. On his part, the Hungarian official spoke of the diplomatic relations between the two countries, as the two are set to celebrate 60 years of relations next year.

Vargha dubbed this a cornerstone for strengthening bilateral relations. Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Sabah signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Hungary on touristic cooperation during his last visit to Budapest, the Hungarian capital. The MoU enables both countries to stimulate investments, tourism and related economic prospects.

Defense cooperation

In another development, Kuwait Deputy Prime

Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah held talks on Tuesday with Hungarian Deputy Secretary of State for Defense Tamas Vargha on means of enhancing cooperation. In a press release, the Kuwait Defense Ministry said that the Kuwaiti Minister received the Hungarian official and his accompanying delegation at Seif Palace. During the meeting, both sides discussed several topics and ways of boosting cooperation and relations between the two countries on all levels.

Also, Speaker of the National Assembly Ahmad Al-Saadoun received on Tuesday visiting Hungarian Deputy Secretary of State for Defense Tamas Vargha. The two officials discussed issues pertaining to developing relations between the two countries. Vargha is in Kuwait to partake in the Kuwaiti-Hungarian joint committee meeting. — KUNA

University organizes counseling program for new students



Makiya Al-Sayegh



Dr Jassim Al-Hamdan



parents) that one of the most important factors for success in university life is good manners, the exchange of respectful relations with the teaching staff, and academic discipline, in addition to complying with university regulations. The head of the counseling department at the academic counseling department, Makiya Al-Sayegh, congratulated the new students in a similar speech on their admission to the university. She urged them to follow the university.

Al-Sayegh added that one of the most important services provided by the university's departments to the students is the rare specialization program and the student employment program, which allow students to use their free time to sharpen their knowledge and skills. She explained that the program includes an indicative exhibition that includes several departments, scientific sections, and clubs. — KUNA

Indian ambassador praises humanitarian role of KRCS

KUWAIT: Indian Ambassador Dr Adarsh Swaika on Tuesday praised the role of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) in humanitarian and relief work around the world and its support for people who are affected by natural or man-made disasters. The ambassador said in a press statement during his meeting with the chairman of the board of directors of the Kuwait Red Crescent Dr Hilal Al-Sayer that his visit was aimed at strengthening the relationship between the two sides as

they discussed ways to cooperate and coordinate in humanitarian fields.

They discussed a number of topics related to humanitarian work, stressing India's strong ties with Kuwait, which manifested in close cooperation in political, economic, and commercial spheres. Al-Sayer welcomed the Indian ambassador's visit to the headquarters of the society to review the activities and achievements of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, expressing his aspiration to strengthen the partnership between the two sides in order to achieve the goals of the society. He stressed the society's keenness to participate in the humanitarian efforts on behalf of Kuwait by providing the necessary support and assistance to the people, reducing their suffering, and meeting their urgent need for medicine and food. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The chairman of the board of directors of the Kuwait Red Crescent, Dr Hilal Al-Sayer receives Indian Ambassador to Kuwait, Dr Adarsh Swaika.

KISR registers four new patents, 237 research projects

KUWAIT: Acting Director General of Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research Dr Mana Al-Sudairawi, announced on Monday the institute's achievements during 2022-2023, as it registered four new patents and 237 research projects for institutions and bodies from the public and private sectors. Sudairawi said that the four patents were registered at the United States Patent Office of the Water Research Center, Petroleum Research Center and Energy and Building Research Center, bringing the number of patents by the institute since 2010 until present to 54 patents. "The institute also provided 40 projects of consultations, studies and technical services during 2022-2023 in the context of strengthening cooperation and partnership with international institutions and universities, in addition to signing 18 memorandums of understanding and new agreements with local, regional and international bodies," he explained. Sudairawi added that the institute also presented 86 scientific papers in specialized conferences locally and internationally and published 158 scientific publications in scientific journals, which contributes to enhancing the presence of the institute's research results at the international level.

He stressed the institute continues its interest in developing the capabilities of its employees in order to maintain the scientific excellence of its research children through the scholarship system. "This year, 11 scholarship students completed their scientific studies, six of them obtained doctorate degrees and four obtained master's degrees, in addition to one scholarship student obtaining a bachelor's degree," he said.

Sudairawi praised the performance of research teams that worked on projects and studies through four specialized research centers, namely the Petroleum Research Center, Water Research Center, Energy and Building Research Center and the Environment and Life Sciences Research Center, expressing his thanks for the support provided by the institute's supporting sectors. He said KISR occupies an advanced scientific position and enjoys a good global reputation, as its research and studies related to development and addressing problems are widely appreciated thanks to its distinguished scientific capabilities in the fields of science, technology and innovation. — KUNA



Dr Mana Al-Sudairawi

Photo of the day



A picture shows the National Assembly (parliament) building in Kuwait City, on March 20, 2023. Kuwait's constitutional court on March 19 nullified last year's legislative elections and ruled to reinstate the previous parliament, state media said, as a political crisis roils the oil-rich Gulf state. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Meritorious student shares her time management techniques

'Identify your most important tasks and prioritize them accordingly'

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: With the new academic year approaching, Kuwait Times spoke to Al-Kawther Ghloom, a high-achieving student, for some tips related to time management that may help students in their study and enable them to succeed. These tips include making some time for rest and enjoyment and reducing the pressure associated with this period, especially for high school students.

Identify priorities

According to Ghloom, students should be aware of their priorities and then create a schedule accordingly. "Identify your most important tasks and prioritize them accordingly. Focus on completing your most important tasks first in order to ensure that you stay on track with your academic responsibilities, then create a daily or weekly schedule that includes

all your classwork tasks and homework tasks, and make sure to have a short break (15 to 25 minutes) between each assignment," she said.

One task at a time

Ghloom said that students might think that by multitasking they can achieve more in less time; however, this can be overwhelming, especially for high school students, because the subjects are no longer combined in one book. For instance, science is divided into four separate subjects such as chemistry, physics, biology and geology, and each has its own pile of requirements. Therefore, breaking them down into smaller, more manageable tasks can help students stay motivated and make progress consistently.

Meanwhile, attempting to multitask can often lead to decreased productivity and inefficiency. She also highlighted that to be able to give full attention to each task, students must set specific deadlines and stick to them. "Set specific deadlines for completing tasks and assignments because this will track your progress and keep you motivated," Ghloom said.

Take a break

"Because it is hard for students to eliminate all forms of distractions, especially their smartphones, for a long period of time, it would be helpful to take regular breaks to check on your phone. I suggest setting a timer of 45 minutes of consistent study, then taking a break for about 15 minutes. This will keep you motivated and focused during your study time, because you know that you will have a break soon," Ghloom said.

Inspired by the Pomodoro Technique, Ghloom suggests creating a balance between studying and



taking a break in short periods of time. She also emphasized on the importance of taking good care of one's health, as she said that students need to get enough sleep, eat well in the morning and at school, and try to exercise, or at least walk 30 minutes daily, since taking care of one's physical and mental well-being will boost students' productivity and ability to focus.



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Kuwait's NAMAA launches housing project in Marib

MARIB: Kuwait NAMAA Charity has started building a 50-unit housing project for the displaced in the Yemeni governorate of Marib as part of the Kuwait By Your Side campaign. NAMAA Director of the Relief Department Khaled Al-Shamri said the housing project includes, in addition to the 50 units, a health clinic, a school with all its

facilities, a mosque, an artesian well, and a public garden. He added that the project aims to shelter 50 displaced Yemeni families, improve and stabilize their living conditions, and provide education for their children.

NAMAA also launched its first medical and surgical camp in the area last week, where 500 patients were treated for several conditions, according to Al-Shamri. On his part, Deputy Director of the Executive Unit for Displaced Persons in Marib, Ali Abu Rakh, expressed his gratitude and appreciation towards Kuwait for providing humanitarian aid for Yemen in all different crises, affirming the deep brotherly feelings shared between the two countries. — KUNA



Cyprus migrants face wave of attacks as hostility brews

50 years later, wounds of Pinochet regime still raw

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RAFAH: This picture taken on August 27, 2023 shows a view of remaining structures at the destroyed and deserted terminal of the Gaza Strip's former "Yasser Arafat International Airport", in the southern city of Rafah. — AFP

Oslo promise now 'destroyed dreams' in Gaza

Palestinians should 'leave Oslo', forge new path: Former official

GAZA: Three decades after a historic handshake on the White House lawn that capped months of secret Zionist-Palestinian talks, disillusioned young Gazans face the consequences and failed promises of the once-celebrated Oslo Accords. The agreements inked in the early 1990s were meant to lead to an independent Palestinian state, but years of stalled negotiations and bloody violence have left any peaceful resolution of the ongoing conflict a distant dream.

In the blockaded Gaza Strip, "the Oslo Accords ... destroyed our dreams, future and ambitions," said 20-year-old student Iman Hassouna. She was not born when Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat returned to Gaza from exile months after the September 13, 1993 signing ceremony in Washington. The interim accords granted the nascent Palestinian Authority some level of self-government but never expanded into a lasting solution, which "has had a negative effect on the future of my generation", according to 22-year-old Adham Abdullah.

Fellow student Ahmed al-Abadila, 20, said what remains of the accords is "nothing but ink on paper". Mustafa al-Sununu arrived in Gaza alongside Arafat in July 1994 and was subsequently named captain of the Palestinian presidential guard. "We thought the country would become like Singapore: open roads, work opportunities for our children, a government, an airport, a port and a passport", Sununu, now 47, told AFP. "We thought the state was within reach."

Gaza, a narrow coastal enclave, is now home to some 2.3 million people, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Daily struggles in the impoverished territory have been exacerbated by a crippling Zionist-led blockade since Hamas Islamists took control in 2007, two years after Zionist withdrew troops and settlers.

Unemployment is rife with about 70 percent of young people without a job in Gaza, where residents regularly suffer power cuts and inadequate access to clean water. "All countries have airports, border posts, ports ... while our airport was destroyed and

our borders have been closed," said Israa Murad.

"We're in prison," according to the 21-year-old who studies journalism at Gaza City's Al-Aqsa University. Palestinians celebrated the opening of Gaza's first airport in late 1998, but it was destroyed by Zionist forces in 2001 during the second Palestinian uprising, or intifada. Since then, the Oslo Accords have become irrelevant for many. "I'm not interested in that," said the student Hassouna. "We young people are looking for work and a better future."

'No chance for peace'

Sununu, the former presidential guard chief, went into early retirement in 2008, like thousands of others employed by the security services of the Palestinian Authority (PA), based in the occupied West Bank. It was the result of persistent rivalry between Hamas and its rival, Fatah — the party of Arafat and his successor Mahmud Abbas, which dominates the PA. Two months ago, the retired officer opened a fast-food restaurant near the old presidential pal-

ace in Gaza City's Al-Rimal district. "We had high hopes," he recalled of the days of the Oslo Accords. But "the dream of a state has been broken."

Gaza has seen four major outbreaks of fighting between Zionist and Palestinian militants since 2008 which have left thousands dead, most of them Palestinians, and ravaged the territory's infrastructure. "We have lived through four wars and other tragedies and sorrows," said Murad. "How could we just forget all our past... How can we stand hand in hand with our occupiers and seek peace?"

To her, "there is no chance for peace between the Palestinians and Zionists. What has been taken by force can only be taken back by force." Former Palestinian negotiator Hassan Asfour, who now lives in Egypt, accused extremists "of conspiring to thwart the Oslo Accords", which many Palestinians and Zionists would agree has largely succeeded. Speaking to AFP by phone, he said Palestinians should "leave Oslo" and forge a new path towards the future. — AFP

Lead poisoning linked to 5m annual deaths

PARIS: Modelling research published on Tuesday indicates that lead poisoning has a more substantial impact on global health than previously believed. It potentially contributes to over five million deaths annually, making it a significant threat comparable to air pollution.

The study, described as "a wake-up call", also estimated that exposure to the potent neurotoxin via food, soil, cookware, fertilizers, cosmetics, lead-acid car batteries and other sources.

The two World Bank economists who

authored the study, published in the *Lancet Planetary Health* journal, said it was the first to assess the impact of lead exposure on heart disease deaths and child IQ loss in wealthy and developing nations. Lead author Bjorn Larsen told AFP that when the pair first saw the figure their model calculated, "we didn't even dare to whisper the number" because it was so "enormous".

For the analysis, the researchers used estimates of blood lead levels in 183 countries taken from the landmark 2019 Global Burden of Disease study. Their model estimates that 5.5 million adults died from heart disease in 2019 because of lead exposure, 90 percent of them in low- and middle-income countries. That is six times higher than the previous estimate and represents around 30 percent of all deaths from cardiovascular disease — the leading cause of death worldwide. It would mean that lead exposure is a bigger cause of heart disease than smoking or cholesterol, Larsen said. The World Bank researchers put the economic cost of lead exposure at \$6 trillion in 2019, equivalent to seven percent of global gross domestic product. — AFP

Morocco quake survivors suffer as aid trickles in

MOULAY BRAHIM: Homeless, traumatized and in some cases feeling abandoned by the authorities, many survivors of Morocco's powerful earthquake escaped death only to fear they are now on their own to stay alive. The deadly quake has put a heavy burden on the North African kingdom's emergency resources and some stranded in shattered communities were angry and shocked over what they say is a lack of a major influx of aid.

"We feel abandoned here, no one has come to help us," said 43-year-old Khadija Aitkyd among the ruins of her village of Missirat in a remote area high in the Atlas Mountains. "Our houses have collapsed ... where are we all going to live?" she asked in the rubble of the tiny, remote settlement where the smell of death hung in the air on Monday.

Residents of the village of under 100 people said bodies of the 16 locals killed in the quake have been recovered, but their dead livestock under the stones and timber was starting to decompose. The violent shaking that flattened whole villages has inflicted a toll that rose on Monday to over 2,800 dead and almost as many injured. Another survivor, Mohammed Bouaziz, saw his village of Moulay Brahim south of Marrakesh hard hit in Morocco's deadliest quake in over six decades — about 20 residents were killed. "We have received some help ... but it's not enough," said the 29-year-old who is part of a local group trying to meet the needs of over 600 residents left homeless.

With the help of local authorities and donors from the region, the group called Intikala has set up nine improvised camps crowded with women and children as men used



DOUZROU: Villagers walk through the rubble of destroyed houses in Douzrou on September 12, 2023, following a 6.8-magnitude earthquake. — AFP

their bare hands to clear rubble. The most risk-taking among the men venture inside what remains of the structures in the village to salvage belongings at the core of daily life: mattresses, blankets and cooking utensils.

In the village of Missirat, which is about 300-kilometre (185 miles) drive southwest of Marrakesh, Mohamed Aitkyd looked around and noted the absence of government aid workers or rescuers. "The only time we saw the authorities was to count the number of victims in the hours after this disaster," said the 28-year-old. "Since then, we haven't seen them once ... nobody is here with us."

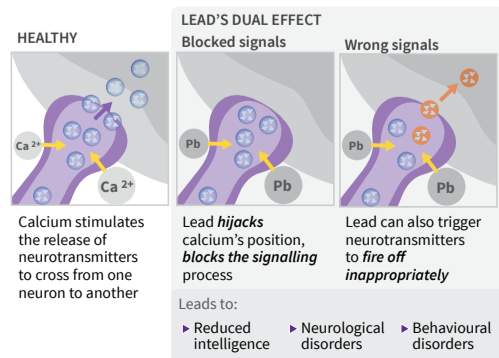
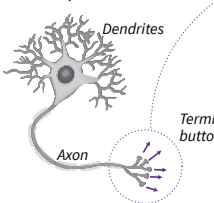
No government response was immediately forthcoming to the Missirat residents' complaints, but the Interior Ministry issued a statement Monday highlighting how the government was helping victims of the disaster. "Authorities are proceeding with their efforts to rescue, evacuate and care for the

injured and mobilise all necessary means," the ministry said. Parallel to official efforts, privately organized aid convoys of food, water and blankets were a frequent sight on the twisting and narrow mountain roads near Missirat and clusters of other rural villages.

"We're here to give a hand to our brothers. We need to help these people," Yahia Mansour, a small trader, said from behind the wheel of a truck loaded with dozens of foam beds. Yet in the face of such destruction in so many of the villages, which disintegrated under Friday's brutal shock, public and private aid efforts are likely to struggle to meet all needs. More than 48 hours after the quake hit, running water was restored in Moulay Brahim and families were sharing the bathrooms of the few homes still standing. As well as relishing these minuscule aspects of normality, survivors were grateful to be alive despite their current suffering. — AFP

How lead affects brain cells

- Neurons transmit brain signals to each other
- They rely on calcium (Ca²⁺) to trigger neurotransmitters
- Lead (Pb) mimics calcium and replaces it



- Leads to:
- Reduced intelligence
 - Neurological disorders
 - Behavioural disorders

International

50 years later, wounds of Pinochet regime still raw

Politically divided Chile marks coup anniversary

SANTIAGO: In the basement of the presidential palace in Chile's capital, Patricia Herrera was detained and tortured for months before being sent into exile. It was early in a military dictatorship that would kill or cause the disappearance of thousands of people. Fifty years after the US-backed coup that snuffed out Chile's democracy, the wounds from all that suffering are still raw.

Chile on Monday marked 50 years since the coup d'état with political divisions over the legacy of his brutal dictatorship on stark display. Commemorations of the violent ouster of Marxist leader Salvador Allende still evoke strong emotions, and police fired teargas and water cannons at protesters who vandalized the presidential palace on the anniversary's eve.

Leftist President Gabriel Boric led an event at the palace, known as La Moneda, to mark the historic date, and stressed the need to condemn those who violate human rights "without any nuance." "The coup cannot be separated from what came after," he said, referring to the 17-year Pinochet dictatorship under which more than 3,200 people were killed or "disappeared" and tens of thousands tortured.

Torture

As she returned from class at the university, Herrera was detained by officers in plain clothes because she was "a woman and a socialist." She was 19. Herrera was taken, blindfolded, to the basement of La Moneda, as the presidential palace is called. It was then also known as "El Hoyo," or the pit, as it was one of the first detention and torture centers set up by General Augusto Pinochet's new regime after the ouster of Socialist president Salvador Allende on September 11, 1973.

Allende committed suicide rather than be captured. "From the very first night we got there, there was sexual humiliation. At first, I thought it was just the guard who was overdoing it with me. I did not think it was an established thing that women had to suffer sexual, in addition to political, violence," said Herrera, now 68 and a historian.

Herrera was held for 14 months at the palace and in two other buildings in Santiago that were converted into torture centers by the Pinochet regime. She was then sent into an exile that would last 15 years, first in France and then in Cuba. Two commissions created to study the dictatorship concluded that at least 38,254 people were tortured under the Pinochet regime, which lasted until 1990.

The basement in the presidential palace where Herrera was held was also known as Cuartel, or barracks, N°1 and is now used as office space. People taken there blindfolded could identify it because of its curved wall. On August 30 of this year, the current president, Gabriel Boric, had a plaque installed in the basement space to mark the horrors endured by around 30 people who were held there. "We want to put up a marker for everyone to see," Herrera said, "that here, in the political heart of the nation, there was a torture center."

The dictatorship triggered the biggest migratory movement in Chilean history. Just over 200,000 people went into exile, according to the non-governmental Chilean Human Rights Commission. Employees of the Allende government, union leaders, workers, students and farmers left the country, taking their families with them. Sweden, Mexico, Argentina, France and Venezuela were the main



People observe a memorial with the names of the Chilean dictatorship victims during a ceremony to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Chilean dictatorship in front of La Moneda Presidential Palace in Santiago, on September 11, 2023. — AFP

recipient countries. Most of the exiles were able to return home starting September 1, 1988, when the regime issued a decree allowing them back, a year and a half before the dictatorship ended. A communist activist named Shaira Sepulveda was tortured in secret prisons called Villa Grimaldi and Cuatro Alamos. After her release she left in 1976 for France, along with her husband at that time. She left relatives and friends in Santiago. "My family was here, my sister, my parents. But what really hurt was having to go to a country where you are a nobody," Sepulveda recalls. She returned to Chile 17 years later with two children, but

again her family was broken apart. The eldest child could not adapt to life in Chile and returned to Europe. "I am an old woman, so my grandchildren there will barely know me," said Sepulveda, who is 74.

On Sunday, Boric became the first president since the end of the dictatorship in 1990 to attend a commemorative march through Santiago for Pinochet's victims. But the procession was marred by vandals causing damage to the exterior of La Moneda and the general cemetery that houses a victims' memorial. Six police officers were injured and at least 11 people were arrested, officials said. Boric blamed the acts on "ad-

versaries of democracy." On Sunday night, some 6,000 women dressed in black held a peaceful vigil in the capital under the slogan: "Never again will democracy be bombed," in reference to the 1973 air raids.

Led by Boric, Allende's leftist political heirs are in power in Chile today. But the far-right Republican Party — Pinochet apologists — emerged the strongest from elections in May for a body tasked with drafting a new constitution to replace the one that dates from the dictatorship era. Pinochet died of a heart attack on December 10, 2006, aged 91, without ever setting foot in a court. — AFP

Biden faces US political showdown after G20 trip

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden is counting his wins from a grueling trip to Asia, but at home he faces a string of political showdowns to keep his reelection bid on sure footing. The 80-year-old had 2024 in his sights when he said on his return from India and Vietnam on Monday that his travels had "strengthened America's leadership on the global stage."

With his Democratic Party reportedly alarmed by his poll ratings, Biden used his time at the G20 in Delhi and in Hanoi to talk up his credentials as US commander-in-chief and international statesman. But the situation on his return to Washington looks increasingly like an uphill battle.

Despite positive economic signs, America's old-

est-ever president is polling neck-and-neck in a likely rematch with Donald Trump, his 77-year-old Republican predecessor. A possible US government shutdown looms at the end of the month; a potentially disruptive strike of US automakers is also in the cards. And hard-line Republicans are even pushing for an impeachment inquiry over Biden's embattled son Hunter.

But the really bad news after an exhausting journey through all 24 time zones on Air Force One? Foreign policy is not top of mind for most US voters. "I don't think going to other countries for summit meetings is going to make a big difference to him in terms of poll numbers," David Karol, who teaches government and politics at the University of Maryland, told AFP. The issue in particular won't win over the small number of swing voters he needs to convince next year. "Most voters are not focused on foreign affairs unless there's a war with American troops in it."

Biden the statesman was on display even at home this weekend, in television campaign ads hailing his support for Ukraine against the Russian invasion. At the G20 summit in Delhi, Biden "stepped into the

void left by Xi (Jinping of China) and secured new infrastructure deals aimed at connecting India, the Middle East and Europe," said Josh Lipsky of the Atlantic Council, a think tank.

In Vietnam he won a major upgrade in ties to rein in rival Beijing. In Hanoi Biden ruffled — at considerable length — on a favorite story about a supposed quote from a movie starring legendary US actor John Wayne, describing climate change skeptics as "lying, dog-faced pony soldiers." But that, and a tired-seeming Biden's parting words that he was "going to bed" risked playing into the hands of his biggest electoral liability at home — his age.

Democrats are starting to panic about his low polling. The Wall Street Journal's editorial board said on Monday, especially over what it called his "age and decline." Back in Washington, a divided Congress is struggling to agree on a budget extension to avoid the first government shutdown since 2018-19, when Trump was in office. The White House has asked Congress to swiftly vote on a budget extension to avoid such a situation. Backed by Trump, far



ANCHORAGE: US President Joe Biden delivers remarks on the 22nd anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. — AFP

right Republicans are also pushing heavily for an impeachment inquiry, saying they won't vote to avoid a shutdown unless it goes ahead. They want to launch the probe over Hunter Biden's business dealings in Ukraine and unproven allegations about whether the president benefitted from them. — AFP

2,300 dead in Libya floods, scores...

Continued from Page 1

"Communities across Libya have endured years of conflict, poverty and displacement. The latest disaster will exacerbate the situation for these people. Hospitals and shelters will be overstretched."

Footage on Libyan TV showed dozens of bodies, wrapped in blankets or sheets, on Derna's main square awaiting identification and burial, and more bodies in Martouba village to the southeast. More than 300 victims were buried Monday — but vastly greater numbers were feared lost in the river that empties into the Mediterranean. The storm also hit Benghazi and the hill district of Jabal al-Akhdar. Flooding, mudslides and other major damage were reported from the wider region, with images showing overturned cars and trucks.

Libya's National Oil Corporation, which has its main fields and terminals in eastern Libya, declared "a state of maximum alert" and suspended flights between production sites where it said activity was drastically reduced. Oil-rich Libya is still recovering from the years of war and chaos that followed the 2011 NATO-backed popular uprising which toppled and killed longtime dictator Muammar Gaddafi.

The country is divided between two rival governments — the UN-brokered, internationally recognized administration based in Tripoli, and a separate administration in the disaster-hit east. Access to the east is limited. Phone and online links have been largely severed, but the administration's prime minister Oussama Hamad has reported "more than 2,000 dead and thousands missing" in Derna alone. A Derna city council official described the situation as "catastrophic" and asked for a "national and international intervention".

Libya's UN-backed government under Abdelhamid Dbeibah announced three days of national mourning on Monday and emphasized "the unity of all Libyans". Aid convoys from Tripoli were heading east and Dbeibah's government announced the dispatch of two ambulance planes and a helicopter, as well as rescue teams, canine search squads and 87 doctors, and technicians to restore power.

Rescue teams from Turkey have arrived in eastern Libya, according to authorities, and the United Nations and several countries offered to send aid. Egypt announced three days of mourning "in solidarity" with Libya and earthquake-hit Morocco and offered to send aid to both countries. Algeria said it was sending aid aboard eight military planes and Italy said it was "responding immediately to requests for support" with an assessment team on the way. The United States embassy said it had "issued an official declaration of humanitarian need in response to the devastating floods in Libya". — AFP



MERSIN, Turkey: US caver Mark Dickey is carried to an ambulance helicopter after a successful rescue operation near Anamur on Sept 12, 2023. — AFP

Ailing US explorer rescued after nine days in Turkey cave

ISTANBUL: An international team of rescuers on Tuesday pulled to safety a US explorer who spent nine days trapped deep in the narrow tunnels of a Turkish cave with internal bleeding. "Mark Dickey was removed from the last exit of the cave," the Turkish Caving Federation said, adding that the "cave rescue part of the operation has ended successfully."

The 40-year-old explorer developed stomach problems while examining the depths of the Morca Cave, a remote complex of twisting underground passageways in southern Turkey's Taurus Mountains. The cave, Turkey's third-deepest, reaches nearly 1.3 km below ground at its lowest point. Dickey fell ill at a depth of 1,120 m, sparking what organizers said was one of the largest and most complicated underground rescue operations ever mounted.

An international team of 200 rescuers, fellow explorers and medics began to cautiously pull Dickey to

safety after first giving him infusions of blood. They first strapped him to a stretcher, which sometimes needed to be lifted vertically by rope through particularly narrow passageways. The teams pulling the ropes would occasionally take breaks, climbing back up to the surface before returning underground. "We congratulate all those who contributed," the Turkish Caving Federation said.

Officials said Dickey's health has been steadily improving for a few days. "He is in good health in general. He continues to be fed with liquids," Cenk Yildiz, the head of the local branch of Turkey's emergency response service, told reporters late on Sunday. "We have resolved his stomach bleeding issues with plasma and serum support."

In a video recorded on Wednesday, Dickey thanked the Turkish government for its help. "The quick response of the Turkish government to get the medical supplies that I needed, in my opinion saved my life," Dickey said. The European Cave Rescue Association (ECRA) called Dickey an experienced explorer with a medical background. The New York state native is a "well-known figure in the international speleological community, a highly trained caver, and a cave rescuer himself," the ECRA said. "In addition to his activities as a speleologist, he is also the secretary of the ECRA medical committee and an instructor for cave rescue organizations in the USA." — AFP



DERNA, Libya: A boy pulls a suitcase past debris in a flash-flood damaged area on Sept 11, 2023. — AFP

International



LIMASSOL: Chu Thi Dao, the 35-year-old Vietnamese owner of a convenience shop that was attacked in an anti-migrant riot, stands by her merchandise. — AFP photos



This picture shows a view of a Syrian restaurant and cafe that was subject to an attack in the riot.

Cyprus migrants face wave of attacks as hostility brews

Disinformation, political hate speech blamed for rising xenophobia

LIMASSOL: Hours before the masked men came, brandishing Cypriot flags and molotov cocktails, hushed whispers of the imminent rampage travelled down the Limassol seafront strip home to many migrant-owned businesses. Egyptian restaurant owners rushed to bring their water pipes indoors, and a Vietnamese vendor quickly cleared their street displays of greens and sugar cane stalks.

But they couldn't hide the distinct cultural heritage each of them has proudly embraced as they have built their livelihoods on the Mediterranean island. Egyptian restaurateur Mohammed el-Basaraty, 38, recalled, "I was standing with a neighbor and she told me to leave ... 'because if they see you, a foreigner, they will beat you', she said."

He stowed away at the back of the restaurant as the men smashed the windows of the business he had built with his life savings. "We began to hear the sound of glass breaking ... After that I smelled the smell of smoke and fire." The attack early this month came amid a surge in violence against migrants in Cyprus, which last year recorded the European Union's highest

proportion of first-time asylum seekers relative to population.

Experts blame the increased mainstreaming of xenophobia in Cypriot politics and media, fueled by the spread of disinformation and the mismanagement of the large number of people trying to reach Europe. Just days earlier, locals near the western city of Paphos had launched a similar attack on migrants after years of friction with the hundreds of mostly Syrians living in a condemned apartment complex.

Men with crowbars and sticks could be seen in videos shared on social media, shouting "out, out" as they marched through the streets. Twenty-one people were arrested, including 12 Syrians. Police had earlier raided the building to clear it of its residents after allegations of electricity theft spread on social media.

Despite that precedent, as well as a heavy police presence ahead of the Limassol protest, residents say little was done to intervene. "They were more than 600 people," said Adel Hassan, 76, a local resident. "How many did the police arrest? Just 13?" Police did not immediately respond to an AFP request for comment,

but police chief Stelios Papatheodorou acknowledged before parliament that the response was "slow".

Normalized hate

Some observers have voiced suspicions that hidden under the black balaclavas were members of the extreme right-wing party Elam, a group initially formed out of Greece's now-outlawed neo-Nazi Golden Dawn. Elam did not respond to AFP's request for comment, but the group has repeatedly denied involvement in the violence.

Giorgos Charalambous, a professor focused on European party politics and mobilization at the University of Nicosia, says overall "hate speech" has become normalized across the political spectrum, creating an atmosphere conducive to the attacks that he described as "pogroms". "Individuals and politicians that spread fake news and racist rhetoric about immigration also come from more mainstream center-right parties," he told AFP.

Cyprus has been at the frontlines of large-scale migrant arrivals in recent years, which have seen the government take

harsher steps, including increased pushbacks, according to the Cyprus Refugee Council. The UN refugee agency last month expressed concern after more than 100 Syrians were deported to Lebanon without adequate screening of their asylum applications. Such steps, buffeted by the crack-down near Paphos, may have emboldened far-right activists to turn their long-standing grievances into action, observers said.

'Sense of safety'

The violence has "never escalated to this, although I can't say that we haven't seen it coming," said Corina Drousiou of the Cyprus Refugee Council. She largely blamed the growing anti-migrant sentiment on inadequate measures by the authorities, particularly the previous government, also pointing to "the language used in official statements ... which was quite evidently xenophobic".

Responding to a request for comment, the interior ministry spokesperson in the current government, which was formed in March, blamed the unrest on "accumulated problems that were exploited by anonymous accounts on so-

cial media platforms". "In no case did the official side express any racist rhetoric," Elena Fysentzou told AFP.

For many foreigners on the island, the damage is already done. "Things have changed. There isn't the sense of safety that we used to feel," Sayed Samir, the owner of Mr Habibi, one of the ransacked restaurants, told AFP. It took Chu Thi Dao years of hard work to scrape together enough money to open her convenience store overlooking the Limassol waterfront. "She wanted a better life for her children," her 17-year-old daughter, Flora, told AFP.

A video of the 35-year-old Vietnamese woman crying at her shop after the attack quickly went viral across the island, drawing solidarity and support from the community and government. Like the Vietnamese shop, the majority of the businesses that were attacked are owned by people who had fled either unrest or dire economic conditions to settle in Cyprus years ago. Towards the end of the conversation, Flora's eyes start to glaze over with tears. "I want to stay here and live with my mom and family," the teenager said, struggling with the notion that this dream may now be shattered. — AFP

Children of couple who fled Britain put into Pakistan custody

ISLAMABAD: Five British-Pakistani children brought to Pakistan by a fugitive couple wanted over the death of a 10-year-old girl in Britain were taken into the custody of state protective services on Tuesday, police said. Surrey Police in Britain said last week the welfare of the five children was "a priority" after Sara Sharif was found dead with multiple injuries in her family home in August.

They believe her father Urfan Sharif, aged 41, his partner Beinash Batool, 29, and his brother Faisal Malik, 28, fled to Pakistan with the children aged between one and 13 before Sara's body was found, sparking an international manhunt. The children were found at Sharif's father's house in Jhelum, around 120 kilometers (75 miles) east of the Pakistan capital, after police received information that the couple were hiding there. "We have been conducting investigations and raids for some time and were finally successful in recovering the children yesterday," Mudassar Khan, spokesman for the Jhelum police, told AFP.

Pakistan police are still investigating how long the children had been in the house as the search for Sharif and Batool continues. The house where the children were found was otherwise empty. After a court appearance on Tuesday "the area magistrate has ordered the children be handed over into the custody of the child protection bureau," Khan said.



Police personnel escort British-Pakistani children (right) and their grandfather Muhammad Sharif (third left) after appearing at a local court in Jhelum on September 12, 2023. — AFP

The fugitive couple said last week they were prepared to cooperate with UK authorities. "Sara's death was an incident. Our family in Pakistan are severely affected by all that is going on," Batool said in a video shared with AFP by her relatives. "My main concern is that Pakistani police will torture or kill us, that is why we have gone into

hiding." Surrey County Council in Britain, the local authority with responsibility for the welfare of children living in its area, said it was "monitoring developments" and "working with our partners to establish next steps". The British High Commission in Islamabad did not respond to requests for comment on Tuesday. — AFP

Canadian planned killing of Muslim family: Prosecution

WINDSOR: A Canadian man acted deliberately and with premeditation when he slammed his pick-up truck into a Muslim family, killing four people in an alleged terrorist rampage, the prosecutor said as his trial got underway Monday. Nathaniel Veltman, now 22, has pleaded not guilty to four counts of first-degree murder and one count of attempted murder in the killing of the Afzaal family in London, Ontario in June 2021. The case also marks the first-time arguments of a terrorism motive related to white supremacy will be heard in a Canadian court.

In opening remarks cited by local media, prosecutor Sara Shaikh said Veltman had gone out looking for Muslims to kill. When he passed the family out for an evening walk, he turned his pick-up truck around and accelerated, jumping the curb as he drove into them. Bod-

ies reportedly flew into the air. Pieces of clothing worn by one or more of the victims would later be found embedded in the truck's front grill and bumper. "He drove his truck directly at them ... I did it on purpose." As he was being handcuffed, he also told police he wanted to "send a strong message" against Muslim immigration, she said. Evidence collected by police included writings gushing about white nationalism and against mass immigration. Several knives and an air gun were also seized from his truck.

Three generations of the Afzaal family were killed in the attack: Salman Afzaal, 46, his wife Madiha Salmaan, 44, his mother Talat Afzaal, 74, and their daughter Yumnah, 15. A fifth victim, a boy, then 9, was seriously injured. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has said the killings were "a terrorist attack, motivated by hatred." — AFP

India cow vigilante arrested for inciting religious riots

NEW DELHI: Indian police arrested on Tuesday the leader of a vigilante group devoted to protecting cows who had been accused of inciting deadly religious riots near New Delhi in July. Monu Manesar leads a chapter of the radical Hindu right-wing group Bajrang Dal and is a suspect in the mob lynching in February of two Muslim men accused of cow smuggling.

Cows are considered sacred by Hindus and their slaughter is illegal in many Indian states. Manesar remained free and continued to post inflammatory anti-Muslim content regularly on Facebook and Instagram for months after authorities linked him to the murders.

He announced in July plans to attend a Hindu procession in Nuh, a largely Muslim district near the capital. At least six people were killed and dozens more injured in the resulting unrest, which con-

tinued for days and spilled over to Delhi's outskirts. Nuh district police officer Shubhjeet Singh confirmed Manesar's arrest on charges of spreading hateful content on social media.

Singh said Manesar would be handed over to police in Rajasthan state, where charges have been registered against him over the February double-murder. Manesar ultimately did not attend the July procession in Nuh, which saw cars set alight and stones hurled at participants. The violence soon spread to nearby Gurugram, a key business center and satellite of Delhi where Nokia, Samsung and other multinationals have their Indian headquarters.

In one neighborhood, a mob of around 200 people armed with sticks and stones looted several Muslim-owned meat shops and set fire to a restaurant while chanting Hindu religious slogans. Manesar regularly posted videos celebrating attacks on Muslims accused of transporting or killing cows.

India has seen numerous outbreaks of sectarian violence between majority Hindus and its 200-million-strong Muslim minority since Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi took office in 2014. — AFP

Philippine journalist Maria Ressa cleared of tax charge

MANILA: Philippine Nobel laureate Maria Ressa was acquitted Tuesday of her final tax evasion charge, in the latest legal victory for the veteran journalist as she battles to stay out of prison.

Ressa smiled as the judge delivered the verdict in the years-long case, an AFP journalist inside the courtroom said. The 59-year-old, who shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Russian journalist Dmitry Muratov in 2021, has been fighting multiple charges filed during the administration of former president Rodrigo Duterte.

Ressa, a vocal critic of Duterte and his deadly drug war, has long maintained that the cases against her and the news website Rappler, which she co-founded in 2012, were politically motivated. Ressa and Rappler had faced five government charges of tax evasion stemming from the 2015 sale of Philippine depository receipts, which is a way for companies to raise money from foreign investors.

A court acquitted them on four of the charges in January. The fifth charge was heard by a different court, which cleared her of wrongdoing on Tuesday. Despite the acquittals, Ressa and Rappler face an uncertain future as they battle another two court cases.

Ressa told AFP Tuesday that media freedom in the country has improved since former president Rodrigo Duterte left office, but there was still a "lot of work to do". She said the fear fostered by him had "largely lifted" since his successor Ferdinand Marcos took power in June 2022. "There's been a lot of problems in the Philippines because fear spreads. But it has improved," Ressa said. — AFP



MANILA: Philippine journalist and Nobel laureate Maria Ressa reacts outside court following her acquittal in a tax evasion case. — AFP

Business

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2023



Eaman Al-Roudhan delivers her speech.



Malek Hammoud, Fajer Saleh Alpachachi, Dakhil Al-Dakhil and Mohammed Al-Munifi during the panel discussion.

Zain hosts ZGI Demo Day, the most decisive phase of tech startup accelerator program

Al-Roudhan: Developing creative economy will be the focus of ZGI's next chapters

KUWAIT: Zain recently hosted its distinguished ZGI Demo Day ceremony, the most decisive phase of the company's award-winning Zain Great Idea tech start-up accelerator program. During the event, startup owners from the program's 7th season showcased their regional expansion plans and strategic roadmaps in front of venture capital firms and potential business partners from local and regional companies.

empower Kuwaiti entrepreneurs, accelerate hundreds of startups, and embrace thousands of aspiring minds for 13 years," the CEO continued.

Al-Roudhan further noted: "Today, Zain Great Idea is more than just a start-up accelerator. It has become a comprehensive ecosystem for entrepreneurs, idea owners, and investors, regardless of the size of their business. This ecosystem

The CEO concluded by saying: "At the end of every ZGI season, we take great care to review our latest experience and reevaluate our goals. Continuous growth is behind every successful project, and our gathering today gives us a platform to listen to what you have to say and help us learn and grow the outcomes of this program. ZGI's next chapter will focus on developing the creative economy, and we're excited for the road ahead."

The ZGI Demo Day is the program's most decisive phase, as it culminates the hard work, effort, and passion of 28 Kuwaiti entrepreneurs whose businesses excelled in the market's most vibrant industries during the program's 7th season. The ZGI members showcased their regional expansion plans and strategic roadmaps in front of venture capital firms and potential business partners from local and regional companies, giving them an invaluable opportunity to grow and expand their businesses.

During their journey, the entrepreneurs took part in three regional accelerator programs in Dubai, Riyadh, and Cairo, in which they were exposed to rich experiences that helped them expand their businesses and serve the needs of the market, not just locally, but regionally as well. At Demo Day, each entrepreneur had their own stall to showcase their business and outline their roadmap to potential partners. Zain learned a lot from previous seasons and heard what ZGI alumni had to say about how to further



Eaman Al-Roudhan, Malek Hammoud, Abdullah Al-Najran Al-Tuwaijri, and Mohammed Jaffar during the event.

entrepreneurs' participation in the upcoming third season of the show which will air in January 2024.

Through Beban, Zain and SACGC will offer 40 Kuwaiti entrepreneurs the opportunity to undergo an intensive 2-week training bootcamp at the Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC). During the bootcamp, entrepreneurs will be provided with insights to enhance their business plans and ensure their readiness to pitch their businesses to a panel of investors for strategic business development and equity investment on the TV show, where only 5 shortlisted Kuwaiti entrepreneurs will be accepted from the 40

programs for the participating startups. The destinations will give entrepreneurs an invaluable opportunity to take on the regional market experience, while also networking and exchanging ideas and expertise with other notable entrepreneurs and reaching out to investment funds and form relations with potential business partners.



Zain strongly believes in the crucial role played by private sector organizations in supporting social and economic sustainability projects. The company is committed to printing a positive impact through all its activities, and this has led it to embrace the most influential topics in the community, perhaps most importantly the support of youth, entrepreneurship, and innovation, not only in Kuwait, but across the entire region. ZGI offers a refreshed opportunity for local talents and the region's entrepreneurial community. Throughout seven successful editions, the program has empowered, trained, and invested in hundreds of creative and driven Kuwaiti and Arab youth, of which many now own thriving and active SMEs to this day in local and regional markets.

Zain is well aware of the crucial role played by private sector organizations in supporting social and economic sustainability projects. Springing from its growing commitment towards practicing its social responsibility, the company is committed to printing a positive impact through all its activities. This has led Zain to embrace the most influential issues in the community, including the support of youth, entrepreneurship and innovation.

- Being recognized as 'Ecosystem Enabler of the Year' attests to ZGI's leadership and success.
- Today, ZGI is more than a startup accelerator; it's a comprehensive ecosystem for entrepreneurs and aspiring business owners.

The ceremony was attended by Zain Kuwait CEO Eaman Al-Roudhan, Malek Hammoud, Zain Group's Chief Investment & Digital Officer, the company's executive management team, ambassadors and diplomats, ZGI alumni, representatives from the private and public sectors, and numerous guests from the local and regional business communities.

The event featured an insightful panel discussion titled Startup Funding Landscape in MENA: What Investors Are Look-

embraces a large family of inspirational minds who work as individuals or owners of profitable, sustainable businesses that employ hundreds and even thousands, with millions of dollars in funds."

Al-Roudhan shed light on the program's latest season: "With the 7th season that kicked off in September 2022, ZGI continued on its core mission, but grew in its vision, and expanded its programs to new horizons. With it, we opened a bridge to connect aspiring entrepreneurs to the big-

gest destinations that target business owners in the region, which witnesses accelerating changes and maturity."

"Our members gained rich experiences in these destinations, which included three of the biggest incubating ecosystems and leaders of creativity and innovation in the Arab World: Dubai, Riyadh, and Cairo. I'm sure that this experience added a huge value to their businesses and to them as people, while giving them countless opportunities to connect with those who share the same passion," Al-Roudhan added.

refine the program year after year. And so, this season, the company offered greater flexibility and more freedom for every participant to take part in the sessions and programs that best suited their schedule and unique business needs.

In preparation for the new ZGI chapter, Zain and Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity (a KFAS center) announced that they will be the official Kuwait Country Partners of Beban, the regional entrepreneur reality TV show, joining forces to include and enable Kuwaiti

participants.

Beban is a reality TV show aired on Shahid, the leading regional online streaming platform, along with a number of regional television channels. Through the program, entrepreneurs pitch to investors for immediate investment offers and strategic business opportunities. The program is a production of Hope Ventures, the investment arm of Hope Fund, established by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa of Bahrain. The next chapter of ZGI is also set to feature a number of key regional destinations, featuring comprehensive acceleration



Al-Roudhan with the entrepreneurs and guests.

ing For, joined by Malek Hammoud, Zain Group's Chief Investment & Digital Officer; Fajer Saleh Alpachachi, General Manager of Hope Ventures, the investment arm of Hope Fund; Dakhil Al-Dakhil, CEO of Rasameel Investment Company; and Mohammed Al-Munifi, Associate at Faith Capital Holding.

During her opening speech, Eaman Al-Roudhan said: "I welcome our esteemed guests from the local and regional entrepreneurial communities and representatives of capital investment funds and business partners. Hosting such an exceptional gathering of inspirational minds from across the Arab world is clear evidence of ZGI's leadership and maturity: it has truly become a force of attraction in the space of entrepreneurship."

Al-Roudhan added: "It gives me great pride that, for 13 years, our innovative program proved itself on the regional landscape as one of the top destinations that attract entrepreneurs to accelerate their startups and enter the highly competitive regional market." "Earlier this year, ZGI was named Ecosystem Enabler of the Year in the Region by the prestigious Entrepreneur Middle East magazine. This award recognized the program's leadership in promoting a vibrant tech startup acceleration ecosystem. It also attested to Zain's endless efforts to



Some of the entrepreneurs showcase their startups to investors.



Business



- NBK-Bahrain's profits demonstrate the soundness of the Group's diversification strategy in increasing profitability and reducing exposure to risk
- Our future strategy is to expand our operating markets while maintaining our digital competitive edge and improving service integration

Isam Al-Sager



- We are moving steadily towards strengthening our position in Bahrain and providing high-quality products to our customers
- The operating environment in Bahrain showed more signs of recovery, thanks to the unwavering efforts to support the economy

Ali Fardan

NBK-Bahrain reports net profit of KD 51.7 million in first half of 2023

Total assets stood at KD 5.51bn by June-end • Total shareholders' equity jumped by 15% y-o-y

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait-Bahrain (NBK Bahrain) reported net profits of BHD 63.38 million (KD 51.7 million) for 1H 2023 compared to BHD 54.84 million (KD 44.68 million) in the corresponding period of 2022.

As of end of June 2023, NBK-Bahrain's total assets stood at BHD 6.75 billion (KD 5.51 billion) compared to BHD 7.05 billion (KD 5.75 billion) in the corresponding period of 2022. Total shareholders' equity increased by 15 percent y-o-y to BHD 1.15 billion (KD 940 million), whereas customer deposits decreased by 4 percent y-o-y to BHD 2.95 billion (KD 2.405 billion) compared to BHD 3.080 billion (KD 2.51 billion) in the corresponding period.

Commenting on the bank's first half 2023 results, Isam Al-Sager, NBK Group Vice-Chairman and Chief Executive Officer said, "Despite the ongoing challenges posed by global economic challenges stemming from geopolitical instability and elevated inflation rates, NBK Bahrain has managed to achieve substantial profits during the first half of 2023. This growth in profitability underscores the bank's resilient business model and solid financial standing."

Al-Sager highlighted that the Group's strategic investments over the recent past years in key growth areas, with a strong focus on sustaining digital leadership and offering cutting-edge banking solutions across all sectors, in addition to the performance of international operations played a key role in supporting the Group's profitability and mitigating risk.

"NBK Group possesses a unique advantage as a result of its extensive geographical footprint. This, in turn, promotes the seamless integra-

tion of the Group's services, and the diversity it provides affords a high level of resilience to the Group's profits, giving its business a strong competitive edge," he noted.

Al-Sager emphasized that NBK-Bahrain continues to strengthen its position in the Bahraini market, which is one of the key growth markets for NBK Group, given the promising growth opportunities and positive prospects of this market.

Al-Sager also highlighted NBK Group's commitment to further growth in the markets it currently serves, with a clear aim to reinforce its prominent position in the region. This expansion aligns closely with the bank's strategic objectives of realizing sustainable future growth.

On his part, Ali Fardan, General Manager of NBK-Bahrain, said: "NBK-Bahrain delivered good results for the 1st half of 2023, despite the challenges facing the banking sector. This was achieved thanks to the Group's continuing clear strategy and sound vision focusing on core banking activities."

Fardan pointed out that the bank is moving steadily in strengthening its position in Bahrain by providing high-quality banking and financial services to its retail and corporate customers, noting that the bank has great potentials to achieve further growth in the Bahraini market in the future. "Over the first six months of the year, the operating environment in Bahrain showed more signs of recovery thanks to the unwavering efforts to support the economy, which would give more confidence to the business sector and stronger momentum to the economic performance," he noted.



Fardan praised the Central Bank of Bahrain's efforts, in particular, and all government agencies, in general, for their continued support extended to NBK-Bahrain and the entire Bahraini banking sectors. He also highlighted the great support extended by NBK Group through its vast regional and global

network of branches and subsidiaries, as it has been vitally important in strengthening the bank's activities in the Bahraini market, through capitalizing on its high credit ratings, broad relationship network, and leading reputation as one of the top banks in the Middle East and one of the safest banks in the world.

NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

Central banks hold rates steady as oil prices rebound

KUWAIT: Economic activity in the US services sector continued to expand in August, marking the eighth consecutive month of expansion. The ISM service PMI rose from 52.7 to 54.5, coming in above market expectations of 52.5 and reaching a 6-month high. The reading also signaled renewed inflationary pressures as input prices rose to a 4-month high following higher energy prices. The services sector has been vital in supporting a strong first half of the year for economic growth in the US.

Unemployment claims

Initial unemployment claims decreased to 216,000 from 229,000 previously, considerably lower than market expectations of 232,000. This comes on the back of a resilient year for the labor market, even with a gradual softening in recent readings due to an increase in labor force participation. Despite this, claims data can be choppy, with the last two readings being revised. The greenback has gained 1.39 percent over the week as other currencies weaken, last trading at 105.09.

Oil cut extensions

Saudi Arabia and Russia announced on Tuesday that they would voluntarily extend their oil production cuts of 1 million barrels per day and 300,000 barrels per day respectively until January 2024. Oil prices went up significantly marking \$90 a barrel for the first time since November 2022. In less than three months, oil prices have surged 31 percent. Despite the Chinese economic slump, the US announced a delay in refilling their SPR claiming "market conditions made it too expensive". Since then oil prices are up approximately 25 percent from their target to refill. Markets are worried with oil prices being on the rise, inflation is becoming even harder to tame. With that said economists are wondering what the long-term game plan is for the US.

The Bank of Canada kept rates unchanged at 5 percent but left the door open to further tightening saying the central bank is "prepared to raise rates again if needed". The Canadian central bank acknowledged the recent growth data stating that the economy has "entered a period of weaker growth" with easing excess demand, however cautioned this by saying such is "needed to relieve price pressures". They referenced the tight labor market but simultaneously flagged the strong 4-5 percent wage growth as a concern. Markets are pricing in an 82 percent probability of no change for their next monetary policy meeting. The USD/CAD currency pair is up on the week, closing at 1.3640. European Central Bank (ECB) president Christine Lagarde spoke on Monday regarding the economy and monetary policy. Lagarde warned that central banks will need to "rebuild confidence" by "conveying the uncertainty we face and the inherent challenge in conducting for-

ward-looking policymaking in this environment." This comes following inaccurate assessments and forecasts by major central banks in the coming of the current inflation crisis. Eurozone inflation surged to a high of 10.6 percent before gradually declining however core inflation of 5.3 percent remains extremely elevated above the ECB's target of 2 percent. Lagarde warned that in order to mitigate the erosion of public trust, the ECB needed to be "open about the limits of what we know, the areas where we have missed the mark, and what we are doing about it."

Eurozone PMI disappoints

The eurozone is struggling with weakening economic data, with the latest services PMI for August declining to a 30-month low of 47.9 from 50.9 previously. Furthermore, composite PMI, which includes both the manufacturing and services sector, dropped to its lowest level since November 2020, coming in at 46.7 from 48.6 previously. The fall in PMI data was marked by struggles to the eurozone's two largest economies, as Germany (44.6) and France (46.0), both recorded 39 month and 33-month lows respectively. The report also showed that input prices

inflationary pressures. Markets are pricing in a 25bps hike for the upcoming BoE meeting.

China slowdown

Services activity in China slowed down to an 8 month low in August, with the Caixin services PMI coming in at 51.8 from 54.1 previously, considerably lower than the forecasted figure of 53.6. Despite the figure still marking an expansion above the 50.0 mark, softening services comes in amid lethargic consumer demand and a real estate slump. Business confidence for the one-year outlook has also reached a 9-month low, as the People's Bank of China and the Chinese government initiated a series of measures in recent weeks in order to stimulate the economy and revive weakening consumer demand.

RBA holds cash rate

The Reserve Bank of Australia held interest rates steady for the third straight month at 4.10 percent, meeting market expectations. RBA governor Philip Lowe warned that "In making its decisions, the Board will continue to pay close attention to developments in the global economy, trends in household spending, and the outlook

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.0776	1.0685	1.0808	1.0699	1.0500	1.0900	1.0748
GBP	1.2584	1.2444	1.2642	1.2464	1.2200	1.2700	1.2472
JPY	146.18	146.00	147.87	147.81	146.00	149.00	145.68
CHF	0.8856	0.8831	0.8944	0.8932	0.8800	0.9000	0.8849

have accelerated, adding pressure to an already elevated inflation problem.

Business activity in the UK's services sector fell to a seven-month low, dropping to 49.5 from 51.5 previously and entering contraction territory. Economics director at S&P global Tim Moore stated, "Service providers saw customer spending reverse course during August as higher borrowing costs, subdued business confidence, and stretched household finances all acted to curtail sales opportunities."

BoE monetary policy

Bank of England governor Andrew Bailey announced that the central bank is "much nearer" to the end of its interest rate hike cycle, but kept the door open regarding the possibility of further tightening. Bailey said, "I think we are much nearer now to the top of the cycle. And I'm not therefore saying we're at the top of the cycle because we've got a meeting to come." Furthermore, the governor hinted that inflation is falling but is still wary of declaring victory. "Many of the indicators are now moving as we would expect them to move, and are signaling that the fall in inflation will continue," Bailey added. Despite this, he lamented the pace of wage growth, which recently set a record high, as a force that could add to

for inflation and the labor market." Furthermore, Lowe reiterated that recent data is consistent with inflation returning to the central bank's target of the 2-3 percent range. Despite this, he warned that further tightening may be warranted depending on upcoming data.

Australia GDP expands

Australia's economy expanded more than expected in the second quarter, as data revealed real gross domestic product rose 0.4 percent in the second quarter, slightly beating forecasts of 0.3 percent. The figure was driven mainly by exports and investment, while household consumption remained weak with just a 0.1 percent gain on the quarter. Annually, GDP was at 2.1 percent, above expectations for 1.8 percent. Consumers are saving less amid high costs of living and rising mortgage repayments which jumped by another 11 percent in the quarter. Their savings ratio dropped further to 3.2 percent, reaching its lowest level since 2008.

The Australian dollar is down on the week following the decision to hold rates steady, with the AUD/USD pair closing around 0.6375.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar
USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30845.



SINGAPORE: This picture shows a view on the Singapore facility of chipmaker GlobalFoundries during the Singapore Fab expansion's grand opening in Singapore on Sept 12, 2023. — AFP

GlobalFoundries opens \$4bn Singapore plant

SINGAPORE: The world's third-largest contract chipmaker GlobalFoundries opened a \$4 billion manufacturing plant in Singapore on Tuesday as part of a global expansion to help ease an industry supply crunch. The semiconductor sector is recovering from disruptions caused by the pandemic, high inflation and sluggish global economic growth caused in part by geopolitical tensions.

The facility will produce an additional 450,000 wafers annually at full capacity by 2025 to 2026, the US company's Singapore general manager Tan Yew Kong told reporters, raising the city-state's overall capacity to 1.5 million wafers each year. The chips, usually used in smartphones and other mobile devices, are also increasingly in demand by automakers, especially for electric vehicles, adding to the pressure to raise production. Shutdowns during the pandemic fuelled a chip shortage, which was exacerbated by rising prices and an economic slowdown.

However analysts and industry officials say a demand recovery is in sight. "The key megatrends of our industry—digitalisation, connectivity, cloud computing—are all driving acceleration to a more connected and data-centric world," GlobalFoundries president and chief executive Thomas Caulfield said at the launch. "It demonstrates how central and critical the industry is to the world economy and how pervasive semiconductors are in enabling and enhancing all aspects of human life."

Caulfield said despite current economic headwinds, the company estimates the industry will double in the next decade. "The catalyst for this growth will be AI (artificial intelligence)," he said.

The firm's 23,000-square meter (247,570 square foot) Singapore facility, which broke ground in 2021, will boost the global footprint of the company, which already has plants in the United States and Europe. Singapore's chip output currently makes up 11 percent of the global semiconductor market.

The global semiconductor market is predicted to experience a downturn of 10.3 percent this year but recover in 2024 and grow 11.8 percent, according to estimates by industry monitor World Semiconductor Trade Statistics. —AFP

Business

US govt shutdown threatens economic risk: Treasury official

Congress seeks swift vote on budget extension to avoid shutdown

WASHINGTON: A US government shutdown brings challenges to the world's biggest economy and could lead to dampened demand while authorities provide fewer resources to people, a top Treasury official warned Monday.

The comments, by Deputy Treasury Secretary Wally Adeyemo at the Economic Club of New York, come as a shutdown looms at the end of this month. The White House has asked Congress to swiftly vote on a budget extension to avoid such a situation, which could paralyze nearly the entire federal government. "We're doing far better than I think many people had expected because of what we've done in terms of targeted investment," said Adeyemo.

"The last thing we need is the headwind of a government shutdown," he said, although there are well-rehearsed plans for such a scenario. "But what they all lead to is less demand in the economy, an economy in which the government is providing fewer resources to the American people," he said. "Ultimately, that is not good for anyone," he added.

For now, a short-term so-called continuing resolution will be needed this month to avoid disruptions to government services in the new fiscal year starting October 1. But

control of the US Congress is split, with Democrats holding the majority in the Senate and Republicans in charge of the House of Representatives, adding uncertainty to any potential agreement.

This is the second time in recent months that the United States has faced serious financial uncertainty thanks to political conflict. While Congress already agreed to spending caps as part of a June debt ceiling bill, economists at Pantheon Macroeconomics said in a recent report that "the extreme right of the Republican party was never happy with that bill."

"They now see an opportunity both to force through deeper cuts and to pursue a host of other objectives, including impeaching President (Joe) Biden," added the report dated Monday.

Adeyemo also spoke on challenges that China is facing, including high youth unemployment rates and a struggling property sector. While the world's number two economy has resources and the ability to deal with issues in the short-term, "the bigger challenges that China has are structural ones" including demographic challenges, he said. — AFP



WILMINGTON: Deputy secretary of the Treasury nominee Adewale "Wally" Adeyemo speaks after US President-elect Joe Biden announced his economic team at The Queen Theatre in Wilmington, Delaware, on Dec 1, 2020. — AFP

WTO sees 'first signs' of trade de-globalization

GENEVA: The de-globalization of international trade is far from being a reality, but "the first signs of fragmentation" are appearing, the WTO warned Tuesday, concerned of the effects of the phenomenon on growth and development.

The idea of "de-globalization" has gained traction since the war in Ukraine and pandemic-related lockdowns in China prompted significant disruption to global supply chains.

In its annual report on international trade, economists with the World Trade Organization (WTO) argued in favor of "reglobalization" as "the first signs of trade fragmentation threaten to slow growth and development". For several decades, the expansion of global trade has surpassed global economic growth, but the trend "kind of stopped around the global financial crisis of 2008-2009, and since then, it's been kind of stagnating", WTO chief economist Ralph Ossa told AFP.

After this phase of slowing globalization, the question is "whether we are moving towards a phase of deglobalization", he said, as the report shows geopolitical tensions are beginning to have an impact on trade flows around the world.

"We're quite far away from deglobalizing, but at the same time, you start seeing... the first cracks in the system," said Ossa, pointing out trade fragmentation tends to follow geopolitical divisions, particularly since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The WTO calculated trade between two geopolitical blocs that were split according to how they vote at the UN General Assembly.

It did not identify countries by name but tensions have risen between the West and Russia and China in recent years. The report said the flow of goods between the two sides has grown between four and six percent slower than within each bloc.

"We're really at a crossroads here," said WTO research economist Victor Stolzenburg, who coordinated the report. "Either we try to reembrace globalization or we're going to continue to go down this path, this path towards fragmentation," Stolzenburg said. The WTO warned that a division of world trade into two distinct blocs would cost the world an estimated at five percent of real income, with some developing economies facing double-digit losses. — AFP

UK jobless rate rises amid soaring wage growth

LONDON: The UK unemployment rate edged higher to 4.3 percent in the three months to the end of July, as wage growth remained at a record high, official data showed Tuesday. Unemployment had been 4.2 percent in the quarter to the end of June, the Office for National Statistics added in a statement. Average regular earnings growth, excluding bonuses, stood at 7.8 percent in the three months to the end of July.

"Wage growth remains high, partly reflecting one-off payments to public sector workers, but for real wages to grow sustainably we must stick to our plan to halve inflation," finance minister Jeremy Hunt said in reaction. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak at the start of 2023 said he hoped to halve UK annual inflation when the level stood above 10 percent. But it remains at 6.8 percent, the highest among G7 nations.

"The tightness of the labor market continued to ease in July," noted Ashley Webb, UK economist at Capital Economics research group. "But the... wage growth will only add to the Bank of England's unease and supports our view that the Bank will raise interest rates once more, from 5.25 percent currently to a peak of 5.5 percent" at its regular policy meeting next week. — AFP

From chargers to children's data: EU reins in big tech

BRUSSELS: When Apple unveils its latest iPhone on Tuesday, the European Union will have left its mark on the US giant's flagship product.

Now the iPhone 15 is expected to have a USB-C charger, instead of Apple's usual Lightning charger, after the EU ordered manufacturers to adopt a common connection.

Brussels said this would make customers' lives easier and reduce waste. Apple vehemently opposed the 2022 law, arguing it would penalize innovation, but the EU's 27 countries form the world's largest single market and Brussels has big tech in its sights. The common charger is not the only bruising battle against big tech the EU has won, and Brussels believes it will win on more fronts in the weeks and months to come.

Here are some of the ways the EU has forced digital titans to play by new rules in Europe and beyond:

'Digital rulebook'

The groundbreaking Digital Services Act (DSA) and its sister law, the Digital Markets Act (DMA), are the biggest and most recent attempts to rein in tech companies. The DSA demands firms crack down on harmful and illegal content online as well as assess the risks their platforms pose to society.

Any company in violation of the DSA risks a fine of up to six percent of annual global turnover.

Under the rules, 19 "very large" online platforms—including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X (formerly known as Twitter) and YouTube—had to comply with the DSA by late August. All platforms will be forced to comply by February 2024.

The large platforms named have already made changes including a ban on targeted advertising to children as well as providing users with a non-personalized feed. The changes are not limited to the European Union. Snapchat said it would restrict personalized advertising to minors in Britain as well.

"There's a process of gradual change in the way these platforms do things that is going to be started, but it's not going to be an overnight

change," said Sally Broughton Micoiva of the Centre on Regulation in Europe think tank. The DMA is another thorn in the tech firms' side, especially for Apple. The law seeks to dilute the dominance of certain players and aims to make the market fairer.

The EU named six "gatekeepers": Google's Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, Facebook owner Meta, Microsoft and ByteDance's TikTok. The rules apply from March 2024.

For Apple, it perhaps brings one of the biggest changes in its ecosystem, dominated by its App Store. The DMA will force Apple to allow third-party app stores. "The DMA will really have an impact on how they design their structures," an EU official said.

Companies will also have to make it easier for users to send messages between apps. But the changes come with a price. Meta's new Twitter-like platform Threads has not been rolled out in the EU yet because of the bloc's rules.

Data protection

The mammoth General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force in 2018 and was the EU's toughest and most famous law on tech, en-

suring citizens give consent to the ways in which their data is used. There has been a wave of fines for violations.

In May, the Irish privacy watchdog handed the biggest ever individual fine of 1.2 billion euros (\$1.3 billion) to Meta over its transfers of personal data between Europe and the United States.

The GDPR's impact has also been felt beyond Europe. "Businesses hardly looked for EU-only solutions because if you are on the global market, you offer that immediately to all so consumers elsewhere can benefit from more privacy," the EU official said.

The future is AI

The EU's latest tech target is artificial intelligence after the chatbot ChatGPT showcased the technology's rapid developments last year. Brussels hopes to green light an all-encompassing law on AI by the end of 2023. "The AI act may be the even more daring thing to do," the EU official said, adding the challenge was even bigger for the EU than the DSA or DMA.

The official also pointed to the Data Act focused on sharing industrial data, which is expected to come into force in 2025. — AFP

Rice price spike offers preview of climate food disruption

BANGKOK: A 15-year high in rice prices, prompted by top exporter India's restrictions on overseas sales, should be a wake-up call on how climate change can disrupt food supplies, experts say.

Rice prices jumped 9.8 percent in August, bucking decreases in other staples, the Food and Agriculture Organization said last week. That followed the July decision by India, which accounts for 40 percent of global rice exports, to ban the overseas sale of non-basmati rice.

The government cited soaring domestic prices for the staple, caused by geopolitics, the El Nino weather pattern and "extreme climatic conditions." This year is expected to be the hottest in human history, and the impacts of the seasonal El Nino weather pattern could make conditions even harsher.

Despite severe flooding in parts of northern India, this August was the country's hottest and driest on record. The monsoon season that brings up to 80 percent of the country's annual rain has been far below normal levels.

India's July restrictions followed a decision last September to ban exports of another variety of rice that is a staple in parts of Africa. Up to eight percent of global rice exports for 2023/24 could now be taken out of the market, according to analysis by BMI, Fitch Group's research arm.

Drought fears

For now, the crisis offers an opportunity for India's rivals, including number two and three exporters,



BANGKOK: A 15-year high in rice prices, prompted by top exporter India's restrictions on overseas sales, should be a wake-up call on how climate change can disrupt food supplies, experts say. — AFP

Thailand and Vietnam. Both have increased exports this year, with Nguyen Nhu Cuong, an official with Vietnam's agriculture and rural development ministry, touting a "bumper crop" and plans to increase planting. But the dry conditions that tend to accompany El Nino mean smooth sailing ahead is unlikely, warned Elyssa Kaur Ludher, from the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute's Climate Change in Southeast Asia program. "My question is whether they can continue to do this once El Nino comes into force towards the end of this year, when water becomes more scarce," she told AFP.

"I think the end of this year and especially the begin-

ning of next year will be very, very tough," she added. A naturally occurring weather phenomenon, El Nino typically lasts nine to 12 months and is expected to strengthen late this year.

Even before India's latest restrictions, its effects were boosting rice export prices, according to BMI. And in Thailand, national rainfall levels are currently 18 percent lower than expected for the time of year, the Office of National Water Resources said this month. Late rains could still make up the difference, but the agency said it is "concerned about a drought caused by El Nino." —AFP

Work starts on key German wind power energy line

FRANKFURT: Construction work has started on the long-delayed 700-kilometre (430-mile) power line that will transfer wind-generated electricity from northern to southern Germany, the economy ministry said Monday, pushed by an energy crisis.

The underground line, SuedLink, is vital for the energy transition as northern Germany has more wind farms than the south, where officials have faced criticism for dragging their feet on building turbines.

In fact, the power line had been due to begin operation in 2022, but works had been held up because of strong opposition from the south, particular-

ly in Bavaria. An energy crisis sparked by Russia's war on Ukraine had finally forced southern states to relent. Construction of the 10-billion-euro (\$10.7 billion) project will finally begin with work on a tunnel under the River Elbe, in the northernmost state of Schleswig-Holstein, the ministry said in a statement.

The line will transfer power to the affluent, energy-hungry southern states of Bavaria and Baden-Wuerttemberg. Scheduled for completion in 2028, the line will have a total transmission capacity of four gigawatts—enough power for about 10 million households. —AFP



Business

Deeper oil production cuts could fuel price volatility, says expert

Demand levels could remain a source of risks as global economic conditions worsen

By Sajeev K Peter

KUWAIT: With OPEC+ countries extending their oil production cuts to the end of the year, the market could remain tight in terms of supplies and crude prices could continue trending higher under current conditions, said an oil market specialist on Tuesday. In an interview with Kuwait Times, George Khoury, global head of education and research at CFI, said demand levels, however, could remain a source of risks as economic conditions could deteriorate or remain below expectations in some parts of the world like in Europe or China.

Responding to questions related to oil production cuts from the OPEC+ to two-year low in July-August and the near-term and long-term outlooks for the oil market in view of the tightening supplies, he said some uncertainty remains around



George Khoury

monetary policies in Europe and the US, which could have an impact on the global economy and demand for oil. "A rapid rise in oil prices could affect central banks' efforts to fight inflation, creating incentives to keep interest rates at high levels for longer, in turn pressuring the demand side," Khoury pointed out.

He said oil markets have already priced in the voluntary production cuts and have continued to integrate the impact of their successive extension in anticipation of further tightening in the market. "Demand is expected

to continue to outpace supply, further expanding the deficit and pushing oil prices higher. However, unexpected developments like deeper production cuts or a deterioration in demand levels could have immediate effects on prices and could fuel price volatility," he added.

When asked about the possible impact of the production cuts on Kuwait's oil GDP, Khoury said a strong increase in oil prices could offset the reduction in production and exports. However, the impact of the production cuts is correlated to the strength of the demand for crude at a time when concerns about the health of the global economy remain important. "An insufficient rise in oil prices or a sustained weaker demand could have a negative impact on the economy of oil-exporting countries over the long run," he argued.

Kuwait has announced its plan to continue its

voluntary oil output reduction by 128,000 bpd until the end of 2024. This voluntary cut comes as a precautionary measure taken in coordination with the countries participating in the OPEC+ deal on the production cut which was announced last April. In May and June, Kuwait pumped 2.55 million bpd of crude oil, down from 2.65 million bpd in April.

According to Khoury, a strong increase in US oil production could affect the trajectory of oil prices and could dilute the impact of OPEC+ production cuts if new volumes are large enough to compensate for what the market lost. "However, the US ability to raise output levels could be limited and could leave oil prices on an uptrend overall. Moreover, under the current US administration, it is uncertain if further production will be enforced, especially considering the historically low levels of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR)," he said.



NAIROBI: Fatih Birol, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency (IEA), speaks during an interview with AFP at the Africa Climate Summit 2023 at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC) in Nairobi on September 4, 2023. — AFP

IEA sees 'beginning of the end' of fossil fuel era

PARIS: For the first time, world demand for oil, gas and coal is forecast to peak this decade due to the "spectacular" growth of cleaner energy technologies and electric cars, the International Energy Agency's chief said Tuesday. The IEA's annual World Energy Outlook, due out next month, will show that "the world is on the cusp of a historic turning point", executive director Fatih Birol wrote in a column in the Financial Times.

The shift will have implications for the battle against climate change as it will bring forward the peak in greenhouse gas emissions, Birol said. "Fossil fuels will be with us for many years to come — but looking at our numbers, we may be witnessing the beginning of the end of the fossil fuel era," Birol said in separate comments released by the IEA.

Birol said the change is mostly driven by the "spectacular growth" of clean energy technologies and electric vehicles, along with structural changes in the Chinese economy and the fallout from the energy crisis. Birol warned, however, that the projected declines in oil, gas and coal demand are "nowhere near steep enough to put the world on a path to limiting global warming" to 1.5 degrees Celsius — the preferred target under the Paris Agreement. Meeting this goal "will require significantly stronger and faster policy action by governments", he added.

UN warning

The fate of fossil fuels will be at the heart of the debates at the UN's COP28 climate summit in Dubai, a major oil producer, between November 30 and December 12. In a progress report on Friday, the United Nations warned that the world was "not on track" to meet the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement. Global greenhouse gas emissions must peak by 2025 and drop sharply thereafter to keep the 1.5C target in view, the report said.

Phasing out fossil fuels whose emissions cannot be captured or compensated is also required to achieve the goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, the UN said. The IEA already predicted in a report in June that a peak global oil demand was "in sight" before the end of the decade, but it is the first time that it makes such an assessment for coal and gas. "Our latest projections show that the growth of electric vehicles around the world, especially in China, means oil demand is on course to peak before 2030," Birol said Tuesday.

After staying "stubbornly high" for the past decade, coal demand is set to peak "in the next few years", he said. And the "Golden Age of Gas" — first called by the IEA in 2011 — "is now nearing an end", with demand set to fall in advanced economies later this decade, Birol added. "This is the result of renewables increasingly outmatching gas for producing electricity, the rise of heat pumps and Europe's accelerated shift away from gas following Russia's invasion of Ukraine," he said.

Transition 'firmly advancing'

Simone Tagliapietra, a climate expert and senior fellow at the Bruegel think tank in Brussels, said that the IEA's new projections "illustrate that while still to slow, the global energy transition is firmly advancing". "As technologies like wind and solar are now cost competitive, the transition moves from being policy-driven to being technology-driven," he said.

"This is a key feature, as it protects the process from political headwinds." Analysts at Royal Bank of Canada said in a note that the IEA's new projections highlight the "success in pro-renewables legislation". "Despite this, there is still scope for policymakers to do more to accelerate the energy transition and the phase-out of fossil fuels, with debates continuing across major economies in areas such as renewable returns and affordability," the RBC analysts said. —AFP

In Iran, hijab takes backseat to economic woes

TEHRAN: A year after the death of Mahsa Amini sparked unrest across Iran, the issue of the hijab remains a sore spot — but a crippling economic crisis has left many preoccupied with making ends meet.

"I believe economic issues are much more important than the topic of hijab," 41-year-old housewife Zahra told AFP. Nationwide protests under the popular slogan "woman, life, freedom" erupted after the death in custody of 22-year-old Iranian Kurd Mahsa Amini on September 16, 2022. Amini had been arrested days earlier for allegedly breaching the Islamic republic's strict dress code, requiring women to dress modestly and cover their head and neck.

"I, myself, have no problem with hijab but would be happier if the economic conditions get better," said Zahra. Like others interviewed by AFP, she declined to give her surname for fear of facing repercussions. Women in Iran, especially in Tehran, have increasingly been flouting the mandatory headscarf despite government efforts to tighten controls over the dress code.

But across the country, where inflation is hovering at 50 percent and the prices of commodities are skyrocketing, many believe the economy takes precedence. The hijab "is a completely secondary and personal issue," said Raha, a 34-year-old accountant.



TEHRAN: A woman browses a phone while standing along a street in Tehran on September 10, 2023. — AFP

"Our authorities should first provide good economic conditions," she said.

According to analysts, economic grievances have fuelled public discontent since last year's protests, which persisted for months. Last year's demonstrations — which saw hundreds of people killed, including security personnel, with thousands more arrested — posed a major challenge to the government of President Ebrahim Raisi. Raisi, who took office in August 2021, has since pledged to turn around the country's battered economy and "empower the poor". He reiterated his vows this year to "control inflation" and "improve livelihoods", blaming Iran's economic woes on the "enemy".

Iran has been reeling under crippling US sanctions since Washington's unilateral withdrawal in 2018 from a landmark nuclear deal. Since last year, the local cur-

rency has traded at around 500,000 rial to the dollar, having lost some 66 percent of its value.

Mahtab, a 41-year-old lawyer, blamed the grinding hardship on "wrong economic policies". "I can feel three to four times the economic pressure compared to last year," she said. In Tehran's bustling Grand Bazaar, shoppers, including women — some with head covers and others without — throng stores but many leave without buying anything. Shop owners have complained of a dwindling customer base amid weakening purchasing power.

"The economic situation is worse than last year, and it will get even worse than this," said Mohsen, a salesman at a menswear store. Prices go up on a daily basis," the 37-year-old added.

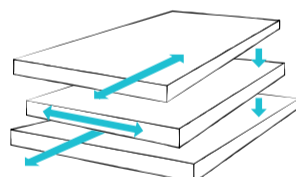
Mehdi, a 40-year-old homeware store owner, said "many people can't afford the goods they need", adding that "the market is now experiencing inflationary stagnation". Imported products have now become a luxury that few can afford. "Today, most of the items available at the bazaar, such as pots, spoons and forks, are domestically made," said Mohammad, 41, who also works at a homeware shop. But the headscarf remains a widely debated topic in Iran, where parliament has been discussing a bill imposing strict penalties on women flouting the hijab law.

"This bill is agreeable to some people but not for the general public," said 43-year-old housewife Fatemeh. The accountant Raha meanwhile believes the country's economic troubles should remain the priority. It's "getting worse by day, people are living hard lives," she said. "First, they need to address the economic problem, then they can gradually work on social problems." — AFP

Transforming the concrete jungle

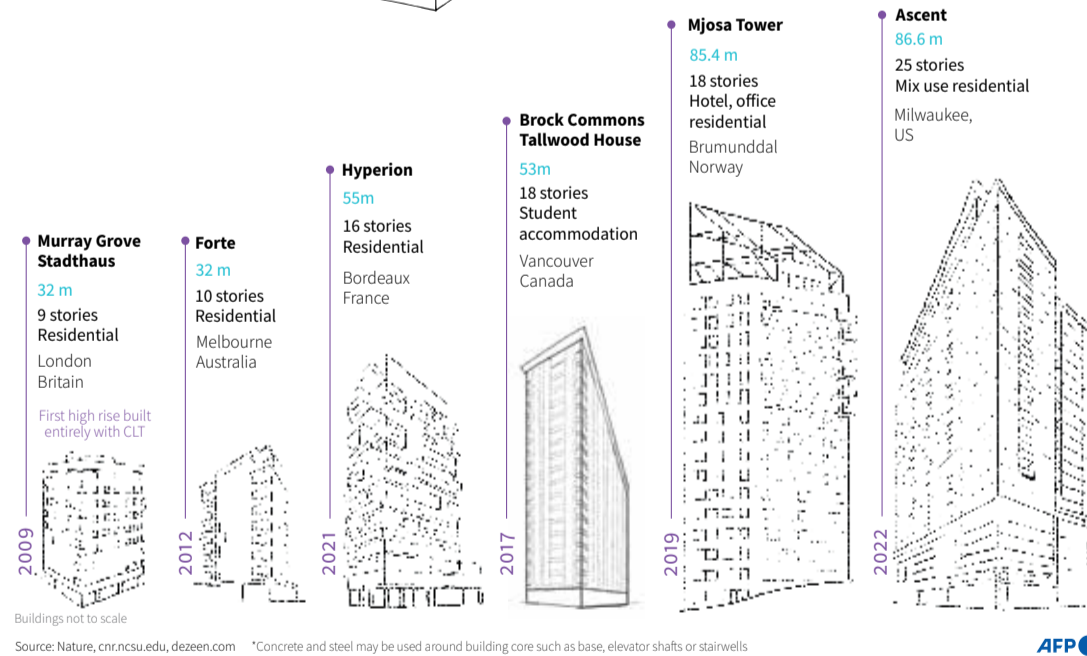
Architects are turning to engineered wood, with its high-strength and fire-resistant features, to reduce the use of concrete and steel and their high carbon emissions

Engineered wood: products such as Cross Laminated Timber (CLT) made of wood pieces glued into a cross-layered, fire-resistant product



Advantages of majority wooden buildings

- ▶ Less energy to make than steel or concrete and lower carbon emissions
- ▶ Can store carbon
- ▶ Prefabricated construction reduces build time



Construction sector must decarbonize: UN

PARIS: The construction sector — the most polluting and difficult to decarbonize — must build less, use more sustainable materials and clean up conventional ones to slash its emissions, the United Nations said on Tuesday. The industry is responsible for 37 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions and growing urbanization is spurring the construction of new buildings made from carbon-heavy materials, especially concrete and steel.

Mushrooming urban environments — which add new buildings in an area equivalent in size to Paris every five days — damage life-sustaining ecosystems and pose serious challenges to fighting climate change. A report published by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and Yale Center for Ecosystems and Architecture on Tuesday called on the sector to prioritize a "circular" approach that avoids waste.

Net zero by 2050 in construction is achievable if "governments put in place the right policy, incentives and regulation to bring a shift in the industry action", said Sheila Aggarwal-Khan, director of UNEP's industry and economy division.

Building less and repurposing existing structures generates 50-75 percent fewer emissions than new constructions, the report said. Switching to renewable bio-based materials such as timber and biomass could see emissions savings of up to 40 percent by 2050 in some regions, it added.

Conventional materials that cannot be replaced — concrete, steel, aluminium, glass and bricks — must find ways to decarbonize further, said the report. Electrifying production, scaling up innovative technologies, and using more recycled materials would accelerate efforts to clean up these especially carbon-intensive materials. Concrete, aluminium and steel alone account for 23 percent of overall global emissions. The share of concrete in world construction should be cut by half between 2020 and 2060 for an effective decarbonization of the sector, the report recommended.

Two-thirds should be "circular" — concrete that has been recycled, reused or created using low-carbon cement. The remainder would be new, low-emissions cement. Anna Dyson, a lead author of the report and a professor at the Yale Schools of Architecture in the United States, said the sector needed a "revolution", including a "dramatic reduction" in new concrete production. "But it's going to be gradual," she told AFP. Steel and concrete "often give only the illusion of durability, usually ending up in landfills and contributing to the growing climate crisis", said Aggarwal-Khan. —AFP

Putin downplays weakening of Russian ruble

MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday downplayed the weakening of the Russian ruble, as Moscow shoulders the economic fallout of its dragging offensive in Ukraine and rising inflation. "This issue requires its own painstaking research by the central bank and the Russian government and financial authorities," Putin said at Russia's Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok.

"But in general I do not think that there are any completely insurmountable problems or difficulties here," he added. Putin has sought to downplay the effects of unprecedented Western sanctions on Moscow's economy since deploying his army to Ukraine last year.

The ruble has shed around 30 percent of its value against the dollar since the start of the year, as Moscow grapples with falling export revenues and higher military spending. Russia has seen a considerable drop in revenues linked to smaller oil and gas sales — an effect of Western sanctions and EU goals to end its energy dependence on Moscow. — AFP

TSMC plans \$100m investment in Arm IPO: Board

TAIPEI: Taiwanese chip giant TSMC said Tuesday its board has approved an investment of up to \$100 million in British chipmaker Arm when it lists on New York's Nasdaq exchange this week. Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company controls more than half of the world's output of microchips, the lifeblood of the modern economy found in everything from smartphones to cars and missiles.

It said in a statement its board of directors "approved an investment in Arm Holdings in an amount not exceeding \$100 million based on Arm's share price at IPO (Initial Public Offering)".

Arm will be listed on the Nasdaq on Thursday in the biggest such offering in two years, a multi-billion-dollar wager by principal shareholder SoftBank Group in a still uncertain market. SoftBank hopes to raise between \$4.5 billion and \$5.2 billion through the offering of some 10 percent of the chip designer. That values the jewel of British technology, whose products are used in 99 percent of the world's smartphones, at up to \$52 billion. —AFP



Asian buffaloes roam on farmland during sunset in Soure, Marajo Island, Para State.

On Brazilian island, revered Asian buffalo claims its place



A Military Police from the 8th Battalion in Soure, Marajo Island, Para State, demonstrates how to ride an Asian water buffalo through water.



A man rides a buffalo cart through the town of Soure.



Military Police from the 8th Battalion patrol on Asian water buffaloes in Soure.



An incongruous sight meets visitors to the northern Brazilian island of Marajo: thousands and thousands of water buffalo, animals endemic to India and Southeast Asia that have found a new home in South America. Some say they arrived on the island from a ship that sank off the coast, others that prisoners who escaped from French Guiana used them to navigate the mangroves to get to Brazil.

While their origins remain a mystery, the Asian water buffalo have taken to Marajo's tropical climate, where they live in a happy symbiosis with humans on the island bathed by rivers on one side and the Atlantic Ocean on the other. They number about half-a-million today — more than the island's human population of 440,000.

Excellent swimmers, water buffalo can grow up to 1,200 kilograms and 2.5 meters (8.2 foot) nose to tail, and are a popular work animal on Marajo, dragging carriages through the streets of the town of Soure and helping farmers in the fields. The beast is revered in local culture, appearing with its curved horns on product logos and reproduced in sculptures and murals. Local festivals feature buffalo races. The animal is also ubiquitous on restaurant menus, where fat, juicy buffalo steaks are served topped with buffalo mozzarella.

'Buffalo soldiers'

Extraordinarily, the buffalo are also employed as patrol animals by the military police in Soure, where heavily-armed officers ride on their backs



Military Police from the 8th Battalion in Soure, Marajo Island, Para State, patrol on Asian water buffaloes.

in specially-adapted seats. The Soure military police unit's headquarters is adorned with a plaque made of bullet casings depicting a muscular buffalo holding a shotgun.

"The buffalo patrols arose from the need to send our officers into the flooded fields of Marajo. Thirty years ago that was the only way," battalion commander Leomar Aviz told AFP. Thus were born the so-called "Buffalo

Soldiers" of Marajo — a nod to the 19th century US army regiments composed mainly of people of African origins, and lionized by reggae star Bob Marley a century later.

Smell a criminal

The animals can easily cross the muddy mangroves of the island during the rainy season. Police claim they can reach speeds in these conditions that

horses or even motorcycles cannot match. But learning to control a buffalo is no easy feat, and officers require long months of training. "Some veteran police officers say that the buffaloes can smell a criminal from more than a kilometer (0.62 miles) away. But this is just to prank the newbies," Aviz told AFP. — AFP



A plaque with an emblem made with bullet casings adorns a wall at the 8th Battalion Headquarters in Soure, Marajo Island, Para State, Brazil. — AFP photos



Military Police from the 8th Battalion patrol on Asian water buffaloes in Soure, Marajo Island, Para State, Brazil.



Military Police demonstrate how to ride Asian water buffaloes through water.



Military Police from the 8th Battalion patrol on Asian water buffaloes in Soure, Marajo Island, Para State, Brazil.



A buffalo steak is served at a restaurant in Soure, Marajo Island, Para State, Brazil.

Lifestyle



Models walk the runway during the Spring Summer 2024 runway show for Tory Burch during New York Fashion Week at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. — AFP photos



New York Fashion Week

On holiday with Michael Kors, shivers from Altuzarra

A holiday air with Michael Kors, shivers from Altuzarra, and Tory Burch asserting herself in a spectacular setting: New York Fashion Week expressed its diversity on Monday, the fourth day of the spring-summer 2024 shows.

On vacation with Kors
American designer Michael Kors took the audience on vacation at his spring-summer show, with Brooklyn's Domino Park, along the East River, transformed into a seaside promenade



under the eyes of actresses Blake Lively and Halle Berry. "I can't take you all to Capri, so I can take you to Brooklyn," the 64-year-old Kors said smiling, referring to the Italian island.

Models showcased light outfits embroidered with lace, a mini-skirt and blouse set, short dresses and pants paired with small tops in the brand's first show since the announcement that its holding company Capri would be purchased by Coach parent company Tapestry.

A loose sweater in cashmere and cotton drops to just below the beltline, leaving the wearer's legs completely uncovered — a nod to the recent "no pants" trend, maybe, or perhaps something more practical: "You can wear it in the heat. You can wear it when it's cool... We all know that the world has gotten too warm," Kors said. "We are increasingly dealing with, 'How do we get dressed?' Particularly when it's too warm outside, and in (the) office, it's too cold and we're freezing."

Everything was in keeping with the vacation vibe, with flat sandals, and an artisanal, hand-woven wicker basket bag in a nod to the recently deceased singer and style icon Jane Birken. "A British woman living in France, who had this very casual, laid-back attitude," said Kors. "I actually think it was very American."

Shivers at Altuzarra

The atmosphere took a darker turn at the Altuzarra show, held in the Manhattan Central Library under a high dome with opaque windows. French-American designer Joseph Altuzarra drew on Roman Polanski's timeless horror classic "Rosemary's Baby" for inspiration,



creating a dark setting accompanied by ominous music.

The collection gives pride of place to slip dresses worn under long jackets, and matching sets were transformed with crinkled satin and undone seams.

Short tulle overlay dresses were covered with a transparent organza veil, reminiscent of a doll. With this collection, Altuzarra wrote in the show notes, he wanted to exude "a haunting, enigmatic allure, while anchored in everyday style and pragmatism."

Tory Burch asserts herself

"In a world of chaos, I wanted a little bit of calm. But I didn't want to be minimalist," Tory Burch said after her show, held in a grandiose setting under the roof and between the undulating granite facades of a new atrium at the American Museum of Natural History. She stepped up the experimentation: ultra-short skirts worn under a parka or a collarless blazer in futuristic shiny purple, with tinted glasses.

Among the most original pieces of the collection, there is a cape and dress set in knitted viscose which ends in rounded reliefs. The fabrics are light, but they create structure. Like her other dresses, they are cut diagonally above the knees and leave one shoulder uncovered. The American designer said she wanted to take items like corsets "that were restrictive to women in the past and reclaim them and make them part of beautiful femininity". — AFP



Model presents designs by US fashion designer Michael Kors during his New York Fashion Week runway show in the Brooklyn borough of New York City.

Alexander McQueen designer Sarah Burton quits after two decades

British fashion house Alexander McQueen is losing its artistic director Sarah Burton who has been in charge for more than 20 years, parent company Kering announced on Monday. The 49-year-old British designer took over the reins after the suicide of its founder, Lee Alexander McQueen, in 2010. She distinguished herself the following year by designing the wedding dress of Kate Middleton for marriage to Prince William.

Burton joined the label in 1996, just four years after it was founded, and became head of women's collections in 2000. She "kept and continued Lee's heritage, attention to detail and unique vision, while adding her own personal, highly creative touch," said Francois-Henri Pinault, CEO of Kering, which also includes flagship labels Gucci and Saint Laurent. Her last show will be the Spring-Summer collection at Paris Fashion Week later this month, Kering said, adding that "a new creative organization" will be announced "in due course".

The change comes amid a downturn for the luxury giant. It saw a 10 percent drop in net profits in the first half of the year, driven largely by a

decline in Gucci sales. Gucci's CEO since 2015, Marco Bizzarri, is leaving the group on September 23, almost a year after the announcement of the departure of the label's artistic director Alessandro Michele.

"I am so proud of everything I've done and of my incredible team," Burton said in the statement. "Above all I want to thank Lee Alexander McQueen. He taught me so much and I am eternally grateful to him. I am looking forward to the future and my next chapter," she added. — AFP



Sarah Burton

Canada fashion mogul in court for first of several sex assault trials

Fashion executive Peter Nygard on Monday made a brief appearance in a Toronto court for the first of several trials on charges for sexual assaults that spanned decades in Canada and the United States. Jury selection was set for next week, followed by the prosecution's presentation of evidence starting on September 26.

Held in prison since his arrest in December 2020, the 82-year-old Finnish-Canadian is being tried in Canada's largest city for alleged sexual assaults and forcible confinement involving several people between 1987 and 2006. He faces similar charges in Quebec and Manitoba, as well as extradition to the United States, where he has been accused of raping dozens of women and girls, racketeering and trafficking.

Through his lawyers, Nygard, known for his long, flowing gray hair and flamboyant dress sense, has denied all of the accusations. Reports from the Toronto courtroom described him arriving in a wheelchair, looking frail.

At the time the Toronto charges were laid in October 2021, Nygard was already fighting a US extradition request. Months later Quebec police would lay



Lawyer Brian Greenspan, representing fashion executive Peter Nygard, leaves the Toronto Courthouse in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. — AFP

charges too, followed by Manitoba in July. In the United States, dozens of women and girls from disadvantaged economic backgrounds or who had histories of abuse have accused him of grooming and luring them to his luxury estates on the pretense of lucrative modeling opportunities.

Those alleged crimes, according to the US indictment, took place between 1990 and 2020. Nygard and his accomplices, including employees of his group, "used force, fraud, and co-

ercion to cause women and minors to have sex" with them, it said. Nygard, the founder of women's clothing company Nygard International, has long boasted about his rise from humble beginnings, as a young immigrant who built a fashion empire with nearly 170 stores at its peak.

His company, however, filed for bankruptcy shortly after the FBI and police raided Nygard's Manhattan corporate headquarters in 2020. According to US court documents, company funds were said to have been used to host dinner parties, poker games and so-called "pamper parties" where minor girls were drugged and women assaulted if they did not comply with his sexual demands.

Partygoers were often photographed and their personal information, including weight and physical measurements, were kept in a registry. Nygard also paid for corporate accounts for victims' travel, living expenses, plastic surgery, abortions and child support, said American prosecutors. — AFP

Sports

Kohli, Rahul star as India crush Pakistan in rain-hit Asia Cup ODI

Kuldeep returned figures of 5-25 to hand India their biggest ODI win over Pakistan

COLOMBO: Virat Kohli and returning KL Rahul hit unbeaten centuries to lead India's 228-run thrashing of Pakistan in a rain-hit Super Four clash of the Asia Cup on Monday's reserve day. Kohli (122) and Rahul (111) put together 233 runs as India reached 356-2, a total defended after they bowled out Pakistan for 128 in the 50-over contest in Colombo.

Pakistan ended on 128-8 in 32 overs with injured bowlers Haris Rauf and Naseem Shah not turning out to bat. India spinner Kuldeep Yadav returned figures of 5-25 to hand India their biggest ODI win over Pakistan. India resumed on 147-2 after rain ended play early on Sunday and pushed the match into an additional day set aside by the tournament, which is a precursor to the ODI World Cup.

Rain again delayed the start but no overs were lost and then the Kohli-Rahul pair roused the Indian fans at a largely empty stadium. "KL and myself are both conventional players. And when you have him batting the way he was and me playing, its tough to break these partnerships because we don't play fancy shots," man of the match Kohli said on the marathon stand.

Kohli added, "It is one of the memorable partnerships we've had and for Indian cricket as well. He (Rahul) hit form for us straightaway, good for us." Rahul, who returned from an injury lay-off, raised his bat to celebrate his hundred and was hugged by Kohli, who soon brought up his own ton after surpassing 13,000

ODI runs. It was Kohli's 47th ODI ton and extended his century score to 77 in internationals.

Tireless groundstaff

Half-centuries from skipper Rohit Sharma and fellow opener Shubman Gill got India off to a good start on Sunday with a 121-run stand. Kohli and Rahul resumed cautiously on their overnight scores of eight and 17 before they took to the Pakistan attack with 100 runs in 102 balls.

Pakistan suffered a blow when officials said fast bowler Rauf had suffered a strain and would take no further part. Later fellow quick Naseem also walked off with some discomfort to his hand. Rahul smashed 12 fours and two sixes, including whipping Shadab Khan over mid-wicket, in his 106-ball knock.

Kohli finished the innings with a six down the ground against a bowling attack that lacked sting. Sloppy fielding added to Pakistan's woes. Pace spearhead Shaheen Shah Afridi and Shadab got a wicket each on Sunday.

Ground staff worked tirelessly to get the field ready after Monday's early rain and received "big thanks" from Rohit and Kohli. Pakistan were never in the chase after they lost two early wickets including skipper Babar Azam bowled for 10 off an impressive in-swing by Hardik Pandya.

Rain once again interrupted play but not the Indian momentum as the bowlers kept up their



COLOMBO: Indian players celebrate their victory at the end of the Asia Cup 2023 super four one-day international (ODI) cricket match between India and Pakistan at the R. Premadasa Stadium in Colombo. — AFP

charge after resumption and Kuldeep sent back Mohammad Rizwan with his left-arm wrist spin. Wickets kept tumbling and Kuldeep got three more to get into the Pakistan tail and then claimed his second ODI five-wicket haul.

Azam said, "we lost back-to-back wickets, couldn't build partnerships". The extra day was a last-minute

addition to the Super Four clash—the only game to get the advantage other than the final—after a previous group game between the two teams was washed out in Pallekele.

India will head into a third successive day of cricket when they meet Sri Lanka in the next Super Four clash on Tuesday at the same venue. — AFP



Kuwait win five medals in Beirut taekwondo tourney

BEIRUT: Kuwait's taekwondo team won five different medals in the fifth annual Beirut Taekwondo Qualifying Tournament. In remarks to KUNA, Kuwait's team coach, Waleed Al-Marshad said that the Kuwaiti taekwondo team won one gold, two silver and two bronze, adding that the Kuwaiti athletes performed very well. The Beirut championship is a "qualifying tournament" that allows players to collect the largest possible number of points, he added. On Monday, the Kuwaiti taekwondo team won four medals, two silver and two bronze. — KUNA



Abdullah Al-Saif wins bronze medal at FOX's Indonesia Badminton Tourney

KUALA LUMPUR: Kuwait's Abdullah Al-Saif won the bronze medal at FOX's Indonesia Para Badminton Tourney in the SH6 men's singles. In remarks to KUNA, Head of the Kuwaiti delegation Khaled Sultan said that the tournament was suc-

cessful especially with Al-Saif's achievement. Sultan also praised the tournament's organization and the reception of the delegations and participants by the organizers, adding that the Kuwaiti team benefited a lot from the participation. — KUNA

Crowley set fair to fulfil great O'Gara's hopes

PARIS: The task of succeeding Irish talisman Johnny Sexton has been beyond some but in Jack Crowley Ireland may have at last found their man. Joey Carbery and Billy Burns have in recent years been touted as potential successors, without managing to dislodge the 38-year-old from the No.10 jersey.

With 23-year-old Crowley, things could be different. Even Ireland great Ronan O'Gara, who is not renowned for doling out compliments, has long tipped him to shine. "Jesus, what a hope for Irish rugby," O'Gara told Irish website 42.ie three years ago after watching Crowley score an astonishing individual try against Scotland Under 20s.

Crowley has yet to produce such a moment at senior level but his glorious dink kick that set up Ireland's 12th try in the dying moments of their 82-8 mauling of Romania in their World Cup opener was an indication of his vision.

That is what sets him apart from the steady but unspectacular Ross Byrne, the other pretender to Sexton's throne once the 38-year-old departs the scene at the end of Ireland's campaign. That Crowley got the nod from head coach Andy Farrell as understudy for Sexton against Romania — with Byrne left to kick his heels in the stands — said much about the confidence the coaching team have in the Munster man.

He stands a good chance of Farrell naming him in the starting role for a tough clash with Tonga in Nantes next Saturday. Crowley has certainly been ruthless in his surge to the top, with Carbery the principal victim. Having left Sexton's province Leinster in a bid to

secure more first team rugby, Carbery's Munster hopes were dashed by Crowley's prodigious talent. Former Australia fly-half Stephen Larkham, who was Munster's head coach in 2020, recognised his potential. "I think to prove you are a great player you need to do that over time and all the markings are there that he is going to do that," said Larkham at the time.

'You need game time'

He has been proved right, for it was Crowley and not Carbery who started and starred in Munster's 19-14 United Rugby Championship final victory over South Africans Stormers in May. A few months later and Crowley was named in Farrell's World Cup squad ahead of New Zealand-born Carbery, who had looked set to be the long term successor to Sexton from even before the 2019 edition.

Crowley said the faith that has been placed in him has had a huge impact on his progress. "Game time is massive for anybody's development and particularly as a 10," said Crowley after Saturday's victory over Romania.

"You need a game feel and build your game management, build everything you know, playing in pressure situations and being able to deliver in those situations. "So being exposed to that for the first time was huge for me and I'm very fortunate that I got the opportunities to be exposed to those situations to learn.

"I know myself I've got a lot to do, and to get to those levels, you need game time." With just seven caps, Crowley is far from the finished article but he has absorbed much from training with the arch-perfectionist Sexton. Competition for the starting jersey has not stopped the three fly-halves from being friends. Crowley described it as "a special, special relationship." Crowley is a huge admirer of 2018 World Player of the Year Sexton, who scored 24 points in the win over Romania in what was his first competitive match in almost six months. — AFP

Archer attends training for World Cup role

LONDON: Jofra Archer attended England's training session at The Oval on Tuesday to spark hopes he could yet feature at next month's World Cup in India. Fast bowler Archer delivered the Super Over as England defeated New Zealand in a dramatic 2019 final at Lord's to become 50-over world champions.

But the 28-year-old's career has since been blighted by injuries and Archer has yet to feature in a competitive match this season following a stress fracture in his right elbow. As a result, he was left out of England's provisional 15-man squad for the World Cup but, should he prove his fitness, there is still time for him to be chosen as a travelling reserve.

He could then feature in India should a fellow England bowler be struck down by injury. Archer came off his long run for a significant spell during a net session as England trained ahead of Wednesday's third one-day international against New Zealand. "He looks in a good place. I don't know where he's at fitness wise but he's bowling good wheels (pace) out there today (Tuesday)," David Willey, dropped from England's squad in 2019 to make way for Archer, said.

"Everyone knows how good he is, what he's capable of and how he can impact games. So to have him close or not far away from being fit is obviously fantastic news." Andrew Flintoff was also at The Oval as the former England captain continued his role as a mentor to the squad.

Flintoff had been largely absent from public view since being involved in a major car accident while filming the BBC television motoring programme Top Gear. But the 45-year-old was encouraged to become involved with the England set-up again by friend and former team-mate Rob Key, now the managing director of men's cricket at the England and Wales Cricket Board. — AFP



Jofra Archer



COLOMBO: Pakistan's Agha Salman fields the ball during the Asia Cup 2023 super four one-day international (ODI) cricket match between India and Pakistan at the R. Premadasa Stadium in Colombo. — AFP

Pakistan 'grateful' for India wake-up call ahead of WCup

COLOMBO: Pakistan's heavy defeat to India in the Asia Cup was a "timely reminder" for the team to get their act together before next month's World Cup, head coach Grant Bradburn said. Babar Azam's men suffered a crushing 228-run loss to India on Monday in a rain-hit Super Four clash of the 50-over tournament, a prelude to next month's World Cup in India.

India posted 356-2 in Colombo after rain forced the match into a reserve day and then bowled out Pakistan for 128 in 32 overs to register their biggest ODI victory over their arch-rivals. "My gut feeling is that we are grateful for the gift that has been this last two days," Bradburn told reporters after the drubbing.

"We don't get to play some of the best players in the world very often," he added. "We haven't lost a game of cricket for the last three months, so it's a timely reminder that we need to turn up every day, put in our best on the park, and it's actually a gift in the last two days we haven't done that."

Pakistan elected to bowl after Azam won the toss but the team soon lost their grip after a 121-run opening stand between skipper Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill. Virat Kohli and KL Rahul hit 122 and 111 respectively to extend India's domination in an unbeaten stand of 233. — AFP

Sports

Those times are over': Voeller honest about scope of Germany rebuild

Voeller's first point of call to inject some pride and stability into the team

BERLIN: Nine months before Euro 2024 kicks off in Germany, the hosts have turned to Rudi Voeller to get the team back on track before Tuesday's friendly against France after coach Hansi Flick was sacked. Flick became the first Germany coach in history to be relieved of his duties after his side slumped to a 4-1 loss to Japan in Wolfsburg on Saturday, the latest in a run of poor results which included a group-stage exit at the World Cup in Qatar last year.

The German Football Association (DFB) have turned to 1990 World Cup winner Voeller to take over on an interim basis for the friendly against 2022 World Cup finalists France in Dortmund. While Voeller's first point of call will be to inject some pride and stability into the struggling team, his broader task is to right the ship before next year's European Championship on home soil.

Voeller was asked in Dortmund on Monday about whether the well-known statement, commonly attributed to England's Gary Lineker, that 'football is a simple game with 11 v 11, and Germany wins at the end' still rang true. "Those times are over" Voeller said, "we've been booted out at the group stage in the World Cup twice in a row." "In the meantime other countries and associations have caught up."

'Urgent task'

Voeller, who was part of the Flick set-up as the DFB's sporting director, was also appointed on an interim basis after Germany's disastrous group stage exit at Euro 2000. He took the side all the way to the final at the 2002 World Cup, before losing 2-0 Brazil, but 63-year-old Voeller said on Sunday this time he will not be in the hot seat for long.

Speaking on Monday, Voeller said his appointment was a "one-time thing" and he would not stay on, regardless of the result against France. "The most urgent task is to hire a national coach who will quickly get the team back on track and prepare us for the big European Championships next year," Voeller said on Sunday.

He said the sacking was "not an easy moment for me... I joined in February to support Hansi Flick so that he could be successful." "I firmly believed that as a national coach he could manage to get our team back on track."

Germany captain Ilkay Gundogan said on Monday the players were feeling "a mixture of disappointment, sadness and frustration" that their performances cost the coach his job. "I feel like I let Hansi down and the other players feel that way also."

Voeller will be assisted by Germany Under-20s manager Hannes Wolf and former Bayern striker Sandro Wagner. Several candidates have been mentioned to take the position on a permanent basis, with Julian Nagelsmann, who replaced Flick at Bayern Munich only to be sacked in March, believed to be the frontrunner.

Oliver Glasner, who took Eintracht Frankfurt to the Europa League title in 2022 -- their first European trophy in 40 years—and Matthias Sammer, who won the Bundesliga as Borussia Dortmund coach in 2002, have also been mentioned.

Voeller will need to start by giving the struggling side some defensive stability. Germany are winless in five matches, having conceded 13 goals in that time. Led by a front-line which could include the attacking firepower of Kylian Mbappe, Antoine Griezmann, Randal Kolo Muani, Marcus Thuram and Kingsley Coman, Tuesday's oppo-



DORTMUND: Rudi Voeller (L), director of the Germany national team and Germany's midfielder Ilkay Gundogan attend a press conference on the eve of the friendly football match between Germany and France in Dortmund, western Germany. — AFP

nents France will be salivating at the space Germany afforded Japan on Saturday.

Unlike Germany, Didier Deschamps men are in blistering form, having won their past five Euro 2024 qualifying matches without conceding a goal. Deschamps played alongside Voeller in the

Marseille side which won the 1993 Champions League title. On Monday, Deschamps praised his one-time teammate's "dynamism and determination which he still has." "I value him very much. It's a great pleasure for me that I will meet him again on Tuesday." — AFP

Rubiales summoned to appear in court over forced kiss

MADRID: Former Spanish football federation president Luis Rubiales must appear in court on Friday in connection with the investigation into his forcible kiss on Jenni Hermoso's lips after the Women's World Cup final. Rubiales has been summoned to appear at 1200 local time (1000 GMT) before an examining magistrate "to be heard as an accused" and to respond to accusations of "sexual assault", a Madrid court said in a statement Tuesday.

The 46-year-old kissed Hermoso following Spain's triumph in Sydney on August 20, which she says was not consensual, while Rubiales insists it was. Judge Francisco de Jorge of the National Court admitted a complaint against Rubiales on Monday filed by Spanish prosecutors last week re-

garding alleged "crimes of sexual assault and "coercion".

Under a recent reform of the Spanish penal code, a non-consensual kiss can be considered sexual assault, a criminal category that groups together all types of sexual violence. The penalties for a forced kiss can range from a fine to four years in prison, according to sources from the public prosecutors' office.

Rubiales stepped down as the Spanish football federation's president on Sunday but continued to defend himself over the kiss. "I have faith in the truth and I will do everything in my power so that it prevails," Rubiales wrote in an open letter.

Hermoso, 33, who plays for Mexican club Pachuca, has said the unwanted kiss left her feeling "vulnerable and



Luis Rubiales

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 also accused Rubiales

of pressuring her to speak out in his defence immediately after the furore over the kiss erupted, which prosecutors said could be considered a crime of coercion. — AFP

NFL star Rodgers exits early with serious injury in Jets win

NEW YORK: NFL superstar Aaron Rodgers managed only four plays in his much-anticipated New York Jets debut on Monday before suffering what could be a season-ending injury, but the Jets rallied for an emotional 22-16 home victory over Buffalo.

Four-time NFL Most Valuable Player Rodgers suffered a left ankle injury early in the first quarter after being sacked. An X-ray showed no broken bones but he wore a walking boot on his left foot into the locker room.

Jets coach Robert Saleh and the team fear an MRI exam on Tuesday will confirm that the 39-year-old has a torn Achilles tendon that would end his NFL season. "Concerned with his Achilles," Saleh said. "MRI is probably going to confirm what we think is already going to happen. So prayers tonight, but it's not good."

Saleh said the Jets are resilient and tried despite losing Rodgers to enjoy the victory, which came on a 65-yard overtime punt return by Xavier Gipson. "I'm going to enjoy this win," Saleh said. "I don't hurt for me. I don't hurt for our locker room. I hurt for Aaron and how much he has invested in all of this."

More than 83,000 spectators watched Rodgers, who spent 18 years with Green Bay before being traded to the Jets in April, leave after just over three minutes. After a run play, Rodgers threw an incompletion. Another incomplete pass was wiped out by a Buffalo holding penalty.

On the next play, Rodgers was sacked by Buffalo's Leonard Floyd for a 10-yard loss and his left leg twisted awkwardly on the play. After spending a minute on the ground in pain, he was helped off the field, examined and carted to the locker room. Gipson's dramatic punt return rescued a victory for the Jets in the same clutch fashion Rodgers had taken so many Packers' triumphs.

"I seen the ball in the air and I seen I had a shot," Gipson said of his remarkable runback. "I had an opportunity and I just took it." Rodgers made an impact on a Jets team that trailed 13-3 at halftime. "The energy got low," Gipson said. "In the locker room, he didn't show no signs of disappointment. He encouraged me. I looked in his eyes. He gave me a look."

"I was thinking, 'Let's win this game for A-Rod.'" And they did, the Jets defensive unit forcing four turnovers from Buffalo quarterback Josh Allen and getting a touchdown pass from reserve quarterback Zach Wilson to Garrett Wilson in the fourth quarter.

"There's no recovering from something like that, with a guy who has an impact like he does in our locker room," Garrett Wilson said. "Seeing him go

down and then going in and seeing him at halftime, it's tough and it's something you hate to see. I'm praying for Aaron and his recovery. "Zach rallied the troops, did what he had to do and we rallied in the second half. Zach brought us together and that was everything we needed."

'Hurts us as a team'

Zach Wilson was hopeful the man he replaced, Rodgers, might yet recover. "I have so much love for him. My heart goes out to him," Zach Wilson said. "I have no idea what has happened. I know he'll find a way to get back. It's tough. It hurts us as a team."

Rodgers, the 2011 Super Bowl MVP when he led the Packers to a title, is among the NFL's all-time passing leaders and hoped to revive a New York squad that won its only Super Bowl in 1969 and hasn't reached the NFL playoffs since 2010.

That made his early setback all the more emotional for long-suffering Jets supporters and players. The Bills took a 13-3 half-time lead on Allen's five-yard touchdown pass to Stefan Diggs and field goals of 34 and 40 yards by Tyler Bass.

New York's Greg Zuerlein kicked a 26-yard field goal in the second quarter and a 43-yarder in the third. The three-yard Wilson to Wilson touchdown lifted the Jets level and the teams traded late field goals to force overtime, Zuerlein hitting a 30-yarder and Bass banking in a 50-yarder off the left upright. — AFP

Southgate reveals Scotland soft spot as rivalry turns 150

GLASGOW: England manager Gareth Southgate revealed on Monday he once supported Scotland at the 1978 World Cup as the old rivals prepare to do battle in a friendly to mark the 150th anniversary of their first meeting. Scotland have not beaten the Three Lions since 1999, but go into Tuesday's clash in front of a home crowd at Glasgow's Hampden Park full of confidence as they close in on qualification for next year's European Championship.

Steve Clarke's men have won all five of their Euro 2024 qualifiers, including at home to Spain and away to Erling Haaland's Norway. Clarke believes the test of facing England is a "benchmark" of how far his side have progressed.

And Southgate is looking forward to savouring the hostile atmosphere at Hampden, despite having once had a soft spot for Scotland himself. "This is horrendous, what I'm going to say here ahead of tomorrow, but I was supporting Scotland in 1978 because we hadn't qualified," said the England boss. "Then we were back in in 1982 and all of a sudden for me then onwards it was all about England."

He added: "Great fixtures, I've met so many of the former players over the years, worked with some of them, played with some of them. It's a fabulous game. I know it's a rivalry and people will be wary of it crossing a boundary, but it's a brilliant sporting rivalry and a great game to be involved in." — AFP



Gareth Southgate

Classifieds

Clinics & Hospitals

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752

Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

Hospitals

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

Change of Name

I, Dhawani Hiteshkumar holder of Indian Passport No. M5455684 having permanent address - Gujarat, India Pin 392001, residing in Kuwait at present hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) Dhawani Hiteshkumar and (surname) Talati. (#4227) 13/9/2023

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, 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 SHAIVI 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) SHAIVI HEMCHAND and (surname) RAHANGDALE (#4222) 11/9/2023

I, Abdul (current name in passport), holder of Indian National Passport Number S3692812 having

Fernandes shines as Portugal lash Luxembourg in record 9-0 win

‘We are still at the beginning of a new era with a new coach’



ALMANCIL: Luxembourg's midfielder #21 Sebastien Thill fights for the ball with Portugal's midfielder #8 Bruno Fernandes during the EURO 2024 first round group J qualifying football match between Portugal and Luxembourg at the Algarve stadium in Alcantaral, Faro district. — AFP

BARCELONA: Bruno Fernandes ran the show for Portugal as they romped to a record 9-0 win over Luxembourg on Monday without suspended talisman and all-time top goalscorer Cristiano Ronaldo. Roberto Martinez's side have now won all six of their qualifying games, without conceding a single goal and scoring 24 themselves, with this the country's largest ever victory. Portugal lead the Group J standings, five points clear of Slovakia in second place, whom they beat in Bratislava on Friday. Luxembourg are third, three points behind Slovakia. Manchester United playmaker Fernandes, who scored Portugal's winner against Slovakia, laid on three goals as the Selecao filled their boots and scored one himself.

Goncalo Ramos, Diogo Jota and Goncalo Inacio struck two goals each, while Ricardo Horta and Joao Felix also scored. Martinez, who replaced Fernando Santos after the Qatar World Cup, has a 100 percent record at the helm to date.

“We are still at the beginning of a new era with a new coach and we are still taking on board the coach's ideas,” said Jota. “Today we set a reference point match (to look at in) the future.” Sporting Lisbon defender Inacio sent the hosts ahead in the 12th minute with a header from Fernandes' exquisite cross with the outside of his foot.

Paris Saint-Germain striker Ramos drilled home the second five minutes later after Fernandes pressed

high to win the ball back. The 22-year-old striker then grabbed another goal in the 33rd minute with a clever turn and clinical finish for his sixth goal in eight appearances for his country.

Liverpool striker Jota hit the crossbar as Portugal dominated at the Algarve stadium near the country's south coast. Inacio headed home his second goal from another Fernandes cross on the stroke of half-time and Jota struck early in the second half for the fifth, set up by the Red Devils midfielder again.

Portugal thrashed Luxembourg 6-0 in their first clash in the Grand Duchy and Horta rifled home from the edge of the box for their sixth of the night to match the haul. Jota, who set up Horta, walloped

home the seventh as Portugal continued pushing on without remorse, and Fernandes capped his virtuoso display by netting the eighth. That matched their previous best win, 8-0 on three occasions, but substitute Felix struck a superb ninth from the edge of the box to set Portugal's new record. “We have a great group of players, we take every game very seriously,” said Horta.

“We're on the right track, but we have things to improve. Against Slovakia we played a game that was not at the level this team (can offer).” Martinez's side can qualify for Euro 2024 on October 13 if they beat Slovakia and Luxembourg fail to beat Iceland. — AFP

Murray confident as Davis Cup gears up for last 16

PARIS: With the US Open, the last of this year's majors out of the way, the stage is cleared for the Davis Cup which enters its 16-team Finals group stage across four locations on Tuesday. The top two from each group round-robin—they will be hosted in Bologna, Manchester, Valencia and Split—will move into the knockout phase in Spain in November.

It is still not certain whether the newly-crowned US Open champion Novak Djokovic will play for Serbia this week - although he is slated to appear in Valencia - but there will be some big names on show, notably former world number one Andy Murray who is in the Great Britain team that hosts a group in Manchester.

World number two Carlos Alcaraz, however, was ruled out of the Spanish team after his semi-final exit at Flushing Meadows. “I talked to him and his team throughout the US Open,” said Spain captain David Ferrer.

“I was there and watched most of his games, but it is true that he ended up very tired, with some physical problems.” With no Rafael Nadal either, Spain will instead be led by Alejandro Davidovich, currently ranked 25th in the world. It is Canada, however, drawing on the ex-

perience of Denis Shapovalov and Vasek Pospisil, who are ranked at number one in Davis Cup, having won their first-ever title last year. Canada are one of four teams to qualify automatically, along with last year's runners-up Australia and wildcards Spain and Italy, who will meet the Canadians in a crunch match on Wednesday.

They have been joined by 12 qualifiers—Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Great Britain, Netherlands, Serbia, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland and United States.

Eleven of the 16 contenders have already won the Davis Cup including Britain who claimed their tenth title with a Murray-inspired victory over Belgium in the 2015 final. Now ranked 41 in singles after some serious career-threatening injuries and struggling to make an impact in Grand Slam tournaments, 36-year-old Murray is craving one last tilt at a major title. “I do genuinely believe the team can win the event,” he said at the team press conference on Monday. “That's huge motivation to be a part of it. I want to help the team in any way I can, whether that's on the court or off. We'll see what happens.” — AFP

Troubled Pogba sinks to new low after doping revelation

MILAN: Once the most expensive footballer in the world, France star Paul Pogba has sunk to a new low after being provisionally suspended for a doping violation. Injuries and a bizarre blackmail plot involving his own brother have dominated his second spell at Juventus, and the latest revelations came just as the midfielder looked ready to get back to his best.

Italy's anti-doping authority NADO revealed on Monday that Pogba, who is still only 30, showed elevated levels of testosterone in a test taken after Juve's season-opening win at Udinese, a match in which he did not even play. Pogba has since been a substitute in Juve's other two Serie A matches and despite picking up a thigh knock against Empoli earlier this month could well have featured in Saturday's home fixture against Lazio had he not been dealt the latest of a series of blows to his career.

The test result came soon after the release of an interview with Al Jazeera in which he said he wanted to make his critics “eat their words”. “I want to show them I'm not weak. They can talk bad about me. I will never give up,” he said.

He has only started one match since returning to Juve as a free agent from Manchester United in July last year, six years after leaving the Turin gi-

ants for a then world record 105 million euros with four Italian league titles to his name. It was a move which was supposed to regenerate his career which had gone stale in England, but he almost immediately suffered a serious knee injury in pre-season.

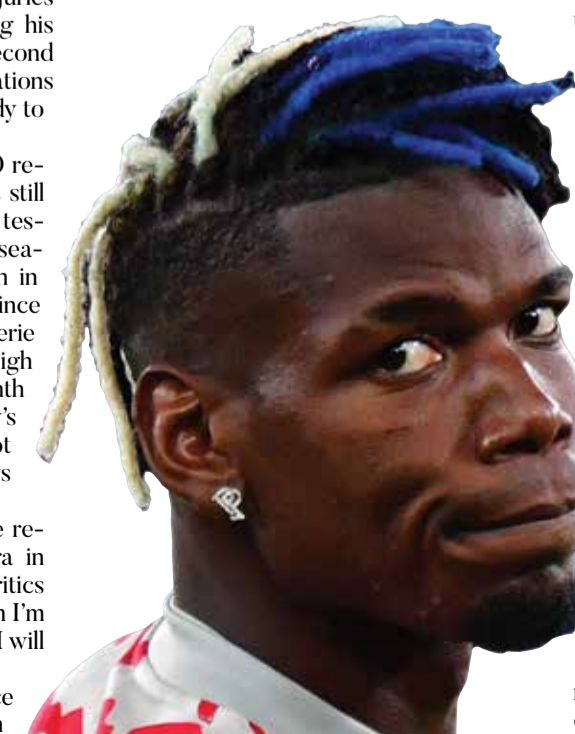
And his initial decision to not undergo surgery in a bid to make the Qatar World Cup eventually back-fired, ending his chances of helping France defend their world title and further complicating his club campaign.

Pogba was a key figure in the 2018 triumph in Russia and scored one of France's goals in their 4-2 win over Croatia in that year's final, but he has not featured for his country since a friendly win for Les Bleus over South Africa in March last year. From being on top of the world Pogba has slowly slipped down to the depths, ravaged by injuries and a difficult personal life which he admits has been adversely affected by the vast sums of money earned by football's top players.

“Money changes people. It can break up a family. It can create a war,” he said. “Sometimes I was just by myself thinking. ‘I don't want to have money anymore. I just don't want to play anymore. I just want to be with normal people, so they will love me for me—not for the fame, not for the money.’” Pogba speaks from bitter experience, as a month after tearing knee ligaments his brother Mathias released a video in which he threatened to reveal secrets about his superstar sibling. French investigators were later told of how he was held at gun point by childhood friends and two hooded men armed with assault rifles, who lambasted him for not helping them out financially and demanded 13 million euros.

Pogba ended up paying 100,000 euros of the sum and the affair taught him that “the only people who can hurt are the people who are close to you”. “They're the ones who can destroy you,” he told Al Jazeera.

Pogba faces an anxious wait for the result of his ‘B’ sample, with the spectre of a potential four-year ban hanging over a player whose life has turned into something of a nightmare. — AFP



Paul Pogba