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Crown Prince receives Saudi FM



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Al-Saud. — KUNA

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Monday received Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud and his accompanying delegation on occasion of his official visit to the country. His

Highness the Crown Prince relayed the greeting of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the King of Saudi Arabia, Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, and the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, Mohammad bin Salman Al-Saud. — KUNA

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Forty-eight MPs on Monday filed a motion calling to hold a special session on November 1 to express Kuwait's National Assembly's support and solidarity with the Palestinians against Zionist aggression on Gaza Strip. MP Hamad Al-Mudlej said he collected signatures of the lawmakers and submitted the motion to the National Assembly which is scheduled to open its new term on October 31. The lawmakers said in the motion, they are calling for the special session as they represent the will of the Kuwaiti people who have strongly rejected the Zionist aggression against innocent Palestinians in Gaza.

But MP Marzouq Al-Ghanem separately called for convening an emergency session of the Assembly to discuss the war on Gaza, the dispute over Khor Abdullah waterway with Iraq and the Dorrah gas field row with Iran. Ghanem said that a special parliamentary session cannot be held before the start of the Assembly's new term on October 31 and the issues should not wait for two weeks to be debated. The Assembly is now in summer recess.

The lawmaker said he supports the motions by lawmakers but as a result of fast-paced developments in Gaza while Zionist sea, air and land bombardment is still ongoing amid reports of an imminent genocide land war on Gaza, it is better to hold an emergency session immediately. He said he has submitted a request to convene the emergency session to the National Assembly secretariat and urged other MPs to sign it. Holding an emergency

session required the approval of 33 lawmakers.

Ghanem said that he also submitted another motion to hold an emergency session of the Assembly to discuss "dangerous events around us" starting with the genocide in Gaza, the dispute over Khor Abdullah with Iraq and the row over Dorrah field after an Iranian minister flew over the field. He said that these developments constitute direct challenges to Kuwait national security and the government must have a clear and decisive position towards them.

Kuwait has expressed strong solidarity and support to the Palestinian people against the barbaric aggression against Gaza which has so far killed over 2,700 Palestinians, mostly civilians. Kuwaitis staged several protests in which they condemned the carnage and also collected millions of dinars in material support to Gaza. Acting prime minister and interior minister Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Sabah said on Sunday that Kuwait remains at war with the Zionist gangs in accordance with an Amiri decree issued in 1967, which is still effective. In the meantime, 42 lawmakers on Monday signed a motion calling on the government to complete the amnesty for Kuwaitis imprisoned on freedom of speeches cases. Dozens of prisoners have been pardoned by the Amir on two occasions but dozens others are either still in jail or have fled the country to escape serving the jail sentence. Those already pardoned include several prominent opposition leaders and former MPs. The lawmakers want to close this issue before the Assembly opens its new term on October 31.



WASHINGTON: People rally in support of Palestinians at Farragut Square in Washington, DC on October 16, 2023. — AFP

Kuwaitis in US urged to keep low profile; Muslim boy killed

WASHINGTON: Kuwait Embassy in Washington on Monday urged its nationals to be cautious, follow local authorities' guidelines and steer clear of any random gatherings to ensure their own safety following sporadic demonstrations in some US cities. In a press release, obtained by Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), the Embassy asked Kuwaitis to contact it or any of its consulates in the US in case of emergency.

Meanwhile, US President Joe Biden condemned the killing of a six-year-old Muslim boy as a "horrific act of hate" on Sunday, after authorities charged the assailant with murder and hate crimes for an attack allegedly linked to the war between Zionist and Hamas. The child was stabbed 26 times by his landlord on Saturday and later died at hospital, while his 32-year-old mother was also wounded but expected to survive, the Will County sheriff's office in Illinois said in a statement. "Detectives were able to determine that both victims in this brutal attack were targeted by the suspect due to them being Muslim and the on-going Middle Eastern conflict involving Hamas and Zionists," the sheriff's office said, adding the killing took place about 40 miles west of Chicago.

Biden, in a statement late Sunday, confirmed that the woman was the boy's mother and said their "Palestinian Muslim family came to America seeking what we all seek - a refuge to live, learn, and pray in peace." "This horrific act of hate has no place in America, and stands against our fundamental values," added Biden, calling for Americans to "come together and reject Islamophobia and all forms of bigotry and hatred."

Continued on Page 6

Beyond rulers: US policy must echo Arab populace

By Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri

The narrative of US foreign policy is rife with paradoxes, none more glaring than its stance on the Zionist-Palestinian conflict. The US champions democratic values globally, vehemently advocating for peaceful protests and freedom of speech in nations like Russia, China, and Iran. Yet, this fervor wanes dramatically with pro-Palestinian demonstrations, revealing a policy that values voices only when they echo the official narrative. Labeling Hamas' retaliation as "unprovoked" while turning a blind eye to the provocations — aggressive settlement expansions and human rights violations by some of Zionist most "extreme" Cabinet members, as acknowledged by US officials themselves — is a stark manifestation of America's selective memory. This practice is not new: it's a continuation of previous policies that disregarded the displacement and suffering of Palestinians, ensuing decades of occupation and oppression.

The normalization agreements inked between Zionist entity and several Arab states have been touted as monumental successes. However, a critical facet is glaringly absent in this diplomatic fanfare: The voices of the people. Streets across these nations tell a different story, one of widespread protests and palpable dissent.

The populace in Morocco and Jordan, for instance, has been vociferous in its support for Palestine, underscoring a stark disconnect between the inked statecraft and the heartbeat of the Arab street. These widespread pro-Palestinian sentiments are significant indicators that diplomatic accords, often brokered with -none democratic- regimes with scant regard for public opinion, hardly reflect the will of the people. They lay bare a fundamental flaw in the US' approach to the region: Mistaking the silence of oppression, for peace, and equating signed documents with genuine reconciliation.

Consider the US Secretary of State's poignant empathy for the Rohingya a few years ago, which stands in stark

contrast to the noticeable absence of similar sentiments for Palestinians in Gaza. This comparison is a crucial point of discourse. It begs the question: If the US takes a stand against segregation and dehumanization globally, why then is its stance different when it comes to Gaza? This is not a dialogue about Hamas. This is about civilians, about children, mothers, and fathers subjected to unimaginable suffering while the world, including the US, continues its geopolitical chess game.

Reflect on the consistent efforts by Europe and the US to urge nations like Russia, China, and Iran toward tolerance, championing the right of citizens to peacefully protest and express views that defy a state's official doctrine. Yet, an apparent discrepancy emerges when these same Western powers attempt to limit peaceful pro-Palestinian demonstrations within their own borders, simply because these protests challenge the official government narrative. Why is there such a blatant difference in responses, seemingly based on the message being conveyed, rather than the right to convey it?

The words of the late Sir Gerald Kaufman, a Jewish-British MP, resonate powerfully in this context. He boldly denounced Zionist policies, drawing a line between criticism of a state's policies and anti-Semitism, a line too often blurred to silence dissenting voices. The recent surge in Arab unity stands as a beacon of hope, yet it teeters perilously close to extinguishment by the very leaders meant to be its guardians. These leaders, swayed by narrow geopolitical interests, often ignore the visceral cries of their people — cries for the basic human dignities denied to Palestinians.

The credibility of US foreign policy diminishes with each instance of selective outrage and conditional advocacy for human rights. The facade of being an objective defender of human rights has crumbled, exposing a stance marred by double standards and stark hypocrisy. A recalibration of US policy towards Palestine is not merely advisable; it's a moral imperative, an opportunity to reconcile professed American values with its actions on the international stage. The path to peace requires the US to stand unequivocally for justice — even when inconvenient, even when it means standing with Palestine.

Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri is the founder and CEO, Reconnaissance Research and a member of the National Press Club in Washington.



Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri



Local

In my view

Fraud in the era of artificial intelligence

By Azzah Al-Ghamdi

The technological progress that the world has witnessed must be dealt with caution. The world today must be dealt with caution. The world is happy in the era of artificial intelligence, where there is ease, speed, and accuracy in completing transactions and carrying out tasks that require physical and intellectual effort through machines and with more precision than dealing.

So that accuracy achieved through artificial intelligence exceeds human intelligence, meaning that if there is a group of humans who are distinguished in mastering something, it has become possible today for everyone to implement the same accuracy through machines, so humanity does not fear the death of competent people, as machines have contributed to dealing with that matter.

However, the problem today faces security, judicial authorities, and lawyers around the world. This is because there are aspects of artificial intelligence that are the source of forgery. For example, in designing images and programming voice tones, all of these are disasters facing lawyers around the world. Everyone is discussing the negatives of artificial intelligence in the field of robotics and weapons, but in the field of intellectual property rights, artificial intelligence is the enemy of intellectual property law.

How are intellectual property rights preserved in the era of artificial intelligence? Therefore, just as those responsible for developing software and technology have done so, it must be stopped until new legislation is reached to preserve intellectual property as well as design software in return to detect counterfeiters. This is a disaster. The expansion in the fields of artificial intelligence must be confronted with technical bodies capable of detecting forgery because it is a disaster that threatens the loss of rights, thus putting the judiciary in danger.

Innocent people may be put in prison, and innocent people may also be executed because, just as the voices of singers are copied and songs are made with their voices, these songs in return are forged. This is a problem that some people face when filing forgery lawsuits. But what if a crime charge, such as murder, for example, was fabricated such that an innocent's voice was programmed and a murder charge was placed on him, and the investigation was based on the fact that this innocent person had an audio recording that he was the killer, and in fact he was innocent?

Therefore, the companies developing artificial intelligence mechanisms are in fact serving humanity, but in return, they must preserve rights and have accurate devices that detect forgery. Some call artificial intelligence systems the forgery industry's systems. Some may find these to be positive aspects, but among the security and judicial agencies, there is an alert against artificial intelligence systems because they threaten freedoms, lead to imprisonment, and lead to the gallows.

In the media, our role is to reveal the facts and warn because it is a disaster for the security services in the entire world because these systems primarily please criminals around the world. There are criminals who are not stupid but are even smarter than those designing artificial intelligence systems. These criminals find that fate has given them an opportunity to expand into crimes such as theft, accusations, and theft of property. Not the entire world has good intentions, as are the intentions of those in charge of software development.

There are technological scientists whose goal is development. These people developed the technology because their intentions were good. They want to help doctors and the military, but there are criminals who have found that these artificial intelligence systems are a gift from fate for them to achieve wealth and commit grave crimes while escaping punishment.

Just as there are smart programmers, there are criminals who are more intelligent than them, and this must be taken into consideration by the security authorities. By confronting these foreign companies, it is not permissible to begin expanding the application of artificial intelligence systems without having, in return, devices capable of detecting forgery.

We are fully aware that there are those who warned in the media about the danger of artificial intelligence, and the first aspect of the warning was a danger to human resources, meaning that employees will be laid off. Everyone fears that jobs will be lost, but it is easy to fabricate charges and thefts, and it may reach the point where artificial intelligence leads innocent people to the gallows.

In these cases, the highest court in the world must assume responsibility for confronting these companies so that the International Court of Justice sends an official letter to the US so that a protest note is filed because the judicial authorities in various countries of the world will not be able to act, and this is the responsibility of the International Court of Justice, which is able to confront American companies developing artificial intelligence.

We are fully aware that the scientific and technological passion pushes many more innovations, and this is a good thing, but the judiciary must be mobilized because, on the other hand, these investigation agencies and judges are legal, and their speciality is not technology. Even technology experts around the world are not as intelligent as these scientists who developed artificial intelligence systems.

For these people, the security and judicial authorities must be mobilized to stand up to this scientific passion. Whoever wants to innovate, this is an excellent thing to serve humanity, but the world has evil people and criminals. All security precautions must be taken to ensure that innocent people are not thrown into prison or executed.

We should ask the International Court of Justice to act quickly, as they are the highest judicial body in the world and they represent all the courts. Not every single country will address the United States of America, and this role must be played urgently by the International Court of Justice so that we confront the most dangerous criminals in the world and protect the innocent. This is a great responsibility, and we hope that the International Court of Justice succeeds.

Symposium highlights 'Belt and Road' initiative, widens horizons

Kuwait, China promote advancement of Chinese-Arab relations

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The Embassy of China to Kuwait held a symposium on Sunday entitled "High-quality joint construction of the 'Belt and Road' initiative between China and Kuwait." In his remarks, Liu Xiang, the Chinese Embassy's Charge d'Affaires, said the joint building of the "Belt and Road" initiative is a major pillar of a community with a shared future for mankind, adding that "over the past decade, China has signed Belt and Road initiative cooperative documents with more than 150 countries and more than 30 international organizations. A multi-level infrastructure network is being formed based on the "six corridors, six roads, multiple countries, and multiple ports framework."

He indicated that the joint construction of the initiative promotes the advancement of Chinese-Arab and Chinese-Kuwaiti relations to further horizons, noting that the initiative received a warm welcome and a positive response from the Arab countries immediately after its launch, as Kuwait was the first Arab country to sign a cooperation document with China.

"China and Kuwait have established a strategic partnership, and my country has been Kuwait's largest trading partner for seven consecutive years, with bilateral trade reaching a record level of \$31.48 billion in 2022. In addition, Kuwait has become the seventh largest source of crude oil imports to China, while China is the second largest source of foreign investment in Kuwait."

Xiang welcomed Dr Khaled Mahdi, Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Planning & Development of Kuwait, to attend the third "Belt and Road" Forum for International Cooperation which will be held in Beijing soon. He pointed out that the symposium is a step to implement the outcomes of the meeting between the Chinese President and the Kuwait's Crown Prince, where the two sides must make joint efforts in strengthen policy coordina-



Liu Xiang, Charge d'Affaires of the Chinese Embassy to Kuwait, speaks during the symposium.

tion, improving infrastructure connectivity, deepen business communication, accelerate money circulation, and promoting peoples' understanding, affirming that his country is willing to work with the Kuwaiti side to advance the joint construction of the "Belt and Road" in the long term, and create a better future for both countries.

On his part, Mahdi confirmed that Chinese-Kuwaiti relations are distinguished, adding, "Kuwait was the first country to respond to the Belt and Road initiative, after which it signed many agreements, especially during the recent visit of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Regarding the seriousness of the Kuwaiti side on the initiative, he stressed that the recent agreements related to the important vital sectors, which are part of Kuwait Vision 2035, which were signed, made Kuwait serious about the implementation of

these projects, and this is what Kuwait will move towards. Kuwait will focus on executing the agreements and implementing the agreed-upon projects and programs.

He noted that cultural diplomacy is a big topic for the Chinese and Kuwaiti sides, adding, "Cultural exchange is part of the Belt and Road initiative, and it enhances interconnection based on the existing idea of the initiative. I found that the initiative is based on a mutual benefit, a win-win strategy, which has had successive successes in the 10 years since its launch. The foundation of the initiative is that there should be a benefit for both parties, and today's symposium shows and refers to the philosophy on which the initiative was based." "At the beginning, I thought that the issue of the initiative was only logistical, but it turned out that there are other parts that are related to the interconnection in this global project," Mahdi concluded.

Cooking, house chores! Not only for women, girls

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: Society has largely assigned domestic responsibilities, such as cooking and house chores, to women. Due to the inheritance of this assignment to women from one generation to another, it has become a tradition that society, including women themselves, consider such a woman's normal duty. However, as we progress towards a more inclusive and fair society, it is crucial to acknowledge that these tasks should not fall on women's shoulders alone.

Cooking and doing house chores are not exclusive to women but rather should be seen as an optional favor for any member of the household to undertake willingly. This is what Reem Fares, a working mother and

wife, highlighted during her interview with the Kuwait Times. Fares said that household responsibilities should not be tied exclusively to females because men and women are equally capable of managing domestic tasks effectively, just as men and women can both leave their houses to look after their careers and become the breadwinners.

Assigning cooking and house chores as a woman's responsibility disregards her freedom of choice, content and personal interests. Today, women have evolved in various aspects of professional life; on the other hand, there are many men who have an interest in culinary arts and other household tasks. Hence, it is necessary to recognize that individuals differ in their abilities and preferences.

This encourages and necessitates developing a culture where the choice to contribute to domestic duties is based on personal choice rather than exclusively imposing it on women and expecting every woman to master cooking and cleaning regardless of her interest in such duties. Moreover, Fares emphasized the significance of shared



responsibility and partnership.

She said that when cooking and doing house chores are shared between both couples or among all members of the family, this will consequently lead to a healthier and happier life. Whether it was a big family or just two couples, each had to contribute. Children see through the media that women are responsible for house chores, in addition to seeing their own mother at home, not to mention the domestic helpers in countries like Kuwait, where domestic helpers are only women. Therefore, there must be a change in

terms of what they see through the media, schools, and most importantly, within their home.

Men in our society need to start collaborating with their wives in performing house chores in order to initiate the change. This will also allow for adaptability to varying circumstances, such as career demands or personal commitments that may require different individuals to take on different responsibilities at different times. Embracing this shift will reflect mutual respect, cooperation and fairness among family members.

Kuwait wins presidency of ASBU's committee

TUNIS: Kuwait won on Monday the Presidency of the Permanent Committee for New Media in the Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU) for a second session in Tunisia. The Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information for Media Services and New Media Sector, Saad Nafel Al-Azmi, represented Kuwait in the meeting. Al-Azmi received the recommendation of members of Arab bodies for the position of Chairman of the Permanent Committee for New Media in the ASBU for a period of two years, which reflects Arab appreciation for the pioneering role of the Kuwaiti media in this field.

He expressed his appreciation to the representatives of the bodies of the Arab member states of the Union for the great confidence they placed in Kuwait in chairing this important committee, which is concerned with keeping up with modern and digital media with its unprecedented tools and techniques, which pose a major challenge to ASBU.

He added that the next stage will witness a qualitative expansion in media content on the Union's



TUNIS: Officials take a group photo after Kuwait won the Presidency of the Permanent Committee for New Media in the Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU) for a second session in Tunisia. — KUNA

cloud network by increasing the exchange of visual news via mobile phones and special programs for new media without limitations, which will also include national social, cultural, creative, sports, tourism, environmental events and other aspects. He stressed the importance of supporting the ASBU to

exchange expertise and modern experiences in the fields of digital media and content creation, improving mobile journalism, exploiting new media tools, software, and platforms in radio and television, and preparing television content to be posted on social media platforms. — KUNA

Authority launches 'greenery project'

KUWAIT: The Deputy Director General of the Educational and Rehabilitation Services Sector at the Public Authority for People with Disabilities and its official spokesman, Mubarak Al-Baddah, confirmed that the Authority is proceeding with the implementation of the development plan within the Authority's policy on community participation for its employees.

Al-Baddah said on Monday, after the celebration of World Greening Day, which was held at the Vocational

Rehabilitation Department under the slogan, "Our Kuwait, we want it green," he underlined the participation of children with disabilities in all activities and events held in the country. "This celebration comes under the directives of the Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood Affairs, Sheikh Firas Saud Al-Malik Al-Sabah, and the Acting Director General of the Authority, Al-Humaidi Al-Mutairi," he added. He praised the efforts of the employees and supervisors of the administration. — KUNA



Local

Kuwait's Speaker urges pan-Islamic cooperation to halt Gaza 'genocide'

Arab Social Affairs ministers express solidarity with Palestinians



CAIRO: Executive Council of the Arab Ministers of Social Affairs meet on Monday. — KUNA photos



GAZA: Smoke billows after Zionist airstrikes in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on October 16, 2023.

KUWAIT: Kuwait's top lawmaker, Ahmad Al-Saadoun, called on parliaments across the Islamic region to ramp up pressure on the international community in a bid to stop the perpetual violence in the Gaza Strip, saying Gazans are the victims of "genocide." He lamented the ongoing violence in the enclave, saying the people of the Gaza Strip now lack the "basic necessities of life," calling on the international community to ensure that the Palestinians' statehood aspirations come to fruition.

Kuwait's speaker lashed out at Zionist forces for their "grave infractions" of international laws and conventions, holding them responsible for committing the "biggest act of genocide" in human history — one that has claimed the lives of innocent women and children. He went on to emphasize the "humanitarian obligation" that

Arab lawmakers shoulder to intervene and put an end to the acts of violence perpetrated by Zionists against Palestinians.

Solidarity with Palestine

Meanwhile, the Executive Council of the Arab Ministers of Social Affairs affirmed on Monday their firm and unequivocal stand towards supporting the Palestinians' right to security and peace. During their 79th meeting, Arab League Assistant Undersecretary for the Social Affairs Sector Haifa Abu-Ghazaleh said that the current dire situation of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and elsewhere required a strong stance, especially in providing humanitarian and social assistance to those affected by the full-out brutal assault of the occupation forces. She affirmed that the Palestinian delegation's participation in the current meeting was important to

put into action plans to support Palestinians in their current predicament.

Meanwhile, she stressed the importance of partaking in the Arab civil society summit on October 24-25, which will coincide with the youth summit on food security. The agenda of the meeting would also include discussing preparations for the 33rd Arab Summit to be held in Bahrain and the fifth Arab Economic and Social Development Summit to be held in Mauritania. Abu-Ghazaleh also noted that the meeting prepared a series of proposals and drafts pertaining to the five-year plan of the Arab Social Affairs Ministers' Executive Council.

Saudi Minister of Human Resources and Social Development Ahmad Al-Rajhi said that the recent alarming developments in the Arab region required reconfiguration in terms of attending to the ur-

gent social needs of the people. Al-Rajhi welcomed the participation of the Palestinian delegation in the meeting, saying their presence was important to their just cause. Meanwhile, the Saudi Minister discussed the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs), stressing the importance of realizing these goals.

Humanitarian passage

A safe humanitarian passage and the immediate halt of all acts of barbaric aggression against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and elsewhere are a must to safeguard the sanctity of human lives, said Secretary General Ahmad Abul Gheit on Monday. Addressing the 39th meeting of the Arab Justice Ministers Council, Abul-Gheit said that what the Palestinian people were experiencing in the Gaza Strip was an act of collective punishment that

extended the 17 years of apartheid policies carried out by the Zionist aggressors against two million innocent civilians in Gaza, mostly children.

This vengeful and outrageous act of violence occurring under the watch of the international community was a shame, he added, calling for the immediate halt of violence to save lives. He indicated that the occupation force had declared clearly that they would cut off power, water, and supplies from the Gaza Strip, an act considered genocide in all international laws and norms. The green light given by some in the western world to the occupiers also went against all principles of international human rights, said the Secretary General, who urged the current meeting of the Justice Ministers to issue a final communiqué to express firm solidarity with their brethren in Palestine. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait ministers hold a Cabinet meeting on Monday. Kuwait Cabinet condemned the brutal Zionist military action against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. — KUNA photos

Kuwait ministers stand against Zionist brutality

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti government expressed on Monday its unequivocal stance towards the Palestinian people, condemning with strong words the brutal Zionist military action against the people of the Gaza Strip. During its weekly meeting chaired by Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Cabinet reviewed the lat-

est developments in the besieged Gaza Strip, which is under continuous assault by the Zionist regime, expressing utter detest towards the latter party's attempts to forcefully displace Palestinians via violence and total destruction.

The Cabinet called on the international community and the UNSC to swiftly intervene and halt the dangerous escalation in the region that led to the loss of lives and the targeting of civilians. The siege on Gaza must cease to enable humanitarian aid, food, water, and other necessities to enter and save lives through various UN agencies, government, and non-government entities, it reiterated. Following the Cabinet meeting, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, and Acting Minister of State for

National Assembly Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah revealed that the Cabinet had congratulated the leadership on Kuwait attaining a seat as a member of the UN Human Rights Council (OHCHR) starting January 2024 for three years.

The Cabinet had commended the win, which reflected Kuwait's status amongst its global peers, he indicated. Meanwhile, Sheikh Salem indicated that Minister of Information and Minister of Awqaf (Endowment) and Islamic Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi informed the meeting on Kuwait's selection as the 2025 Arab cultural capital. The Cabinet had assigned Minister Al-Mutairi and concerned authorities to take the necessary measures to make this year-long event a success. — KUNA

Kuwait reaffirms solid faith in human rights

GENEVA: Kuwait on Monday affirmed its deep-rooted faith in positively addressing human rights issues since decades ago. Ambassador Nasser Al-Hain, Kuwait Permanent Delegate at the UN and International Organizations in Geneva, made the statement while addressing a session on the fourth report of the international conventions for civil rights.

Kuwait had joined the international convention on civil rights and endorsed it according to constitutional procedures, emanating from its deep conviction of its significance, except for reservations on some terms that contradicted the Kuwait Constitution and Kuwaiti legislation based on the Islamic Sharia as a main source for legislation, he said.

He added that Kuwait had faced, along with states around the globe, challenges that required unprecedented constraints amid the coronavirus outbreak, but it had managed to hold parliamentary elections. The pandemic created new realities globally where the bulk of nations had to heavily use digital means amid emerging challenges such as privacy protection, thus scrambling to take special measures such as establishing the national center for cyber security, according to Amiri Decree 37/2022, Al-Hain said.

Moreover, Kuwait was in solidarity with states around the globe in supporting the efforts to fight the pandemic, contributing \$327 million to relevant international agencies. Furthermore, in this vein, Kuwait also set up the national diwan for human rights. The State of Kuwait, he continued, would consider any remarks and examine top international practices at this level "as it is aware that it is part of the international community and our lives are connected."

Elaborating, he noted that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in 2019, established the Bureau for Human Rights for liaison with international organizations and state departments and to follow up on national efforts related to human rights. Kuwait spares no effort in promoting human rights at the national level, regularly holding educational courses and workshops in addition to including human rights principles in the teaching curricula.

In 2018, the Ministry of Justice established the permanent national commission for international humanitarian law. At the judicial level, the authority had held courses for educating personnel on human rights. Al-Hain noted that Kuwait devotes special care to family rights and protects them in accordance with Islam. In this respect, the national committee for domestic violence has been established. In line with the special care for children, an office of UNICEF was opened in Kuwait in November 2020, he said.

A workshop was held in coordination with the office in July 2022 to discuss means of boosting child protection. Kuwait has been providing financial contributions to UNICEF, the last batch of which was in February 2023, when the organization was given 17 million dollars. At the level of women empowerment, Kuwait joined the 1994 international convention to erase all forms of discrimination against women and set May 15 as Kuwaiti Women's Day. — KUNA

Egypt leader invites Amir for a summit

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Monday received a handwritten letter from Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi addressed to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The letter is an invitation to His Highness the Amir to attend the international-regional summit aimed at addressing the recent developments relating to the Palestinian issue, to be held in Cairo on October 21st. The letter was handed over to Kuwait Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah during a meeting on Monday with Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait Osama Shaltout. — KUNA



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Kuwait to join the green corridor line

KUWAIT: Kuwait will join the green corridor line that was approved at the G20 meeting in India some weeks ago. The corridor line will link India with the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and then Europe through economic integration. It will also link Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and accelerate the establishment of the railway plan between the two countries.

The sources indicated that this line is different from the railway line that will connect Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and then extends to Bahrain, Qatar, the UAE, and Oman, as this project is undertaken by each country to establish the part located in its territory. "The meetings between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are aimed at finding economic integration between the two countries and to develop the economies and development programs, which started with the Durra gas projects, as well as other projects, including linking Mubarak Port.

The line will connect Kuwait to the points and locations of the Green Line in Saudi territory, which is the line coming from India and the Emirates, and then to Jordan and Europe. "The transfer of Kuwaiti goods to Europe will be by land through Saudi territory first. Kuwait also wants to transport goods through Iraq, Turkey, and Europe. However, Iraq, so far, has not decided to approve the establishment of a railway line between Kuwait and Iraq," the sources said, pointing out that Kuwait and Saudi Arabia will meet very soon to activate customs transport regulations.

Summit examines technology and its effect on families

KUWAIT: The 44th conference on Gulf and Arab family issues in light of digital transformation kicked off on Monday, aiming to examine the interaction between human behavior and technology and their effect on families. Head of the conference, Dr. Yaqoub Al-Kandari, said in the opening ceremony at the Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jaber Theatre at Kuwait University (KU) that the conference is held in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Center at KU, and the International Organization for Women's Empowerment and Capacity-Building (Tamkeen).

Fresh graduates share experiences, feelings

Journey into the unknown

By Passant Hisham

KUWAIT: You start feeling your heart beat racing out of excitement as you walk towards the stage to shake the chancellor's hand and receive your graduation certificate in pride. You close your eyes for a few seconds to vividly grasp the moment where your family and friends are loudly clapping for you and cheering your success. But by the time you open your eyes, the applause gradually fades away. And that's when you realize that the pride inside you is suddenly replaced by different emotions that you are not yet ready to confront. The feelings of loss and fear which are the common emotions usually dominate graduates at this phase in their life.

A number of fresh graduates shared their greatest fears after graduating with Kuwait Times. Rodayna Ihab noted that what scared her the most was having no predictions of how her life would unfold. While Mohamed Alaa mentioned that he felt really intimidated by having no choice now but to face the tough real life outside the college boundaries. Similarly, Karim Mahmoud expressed his fears through the following words, "It's my first time to feel that lost, as I was used for all my life to follow a standard plan during my school and college years."

Although the end of an almost 16 years of education journey should feel more liberating, but according to them, it's very overwhelming to suddenly find yourself the only one who's in charge of planning the rest of your life for yourself, as you are now the leader of your own choices.

No reassurance, no guarantees, no guidance, and no shortcuts. It's just you, your graduation certificate, cap, and gown, who no longer work as celebration of your success anymore, but a reminder that your journey to the unknown has just started.

For a purely fresh start you must understand that oversteering to immediately find a full-time job might keep you distracted from what matters the most, which is the present moment. Because focusing too much on what you want keeps you away from knowing what you are doing, so you end up just

Al-Kandari added that the conference deals with the most prominent social issues that affect Arab and international families, namely the use of technology and digital transformation. He also said that technology plays an interactive role in affecting families in various social and psychological aspects, including the family's relationship with one another. Secretary-General of the International Organization for Women's Empowerment and Capacity Building, Dr. Taghreed Al-Hijli, said in her speech that the conference discusses multiple issues, including digital transformation, family challenges, and other social issues.

Al-Hijli stressed the need to pay attention to the Arab family's cultural identity amid this digital transformation and find appropriate solutions for such issues. The three-day conference includes six main sessions addressing the digital transformation issue in family relations, as well as 21 workshops. — KUNA



Ahmed El-Malky and Karim Mahmoud during their graduation ceremony in College of Engineering and Technology.



Mohamed Alaa

dreaming, and not taking any steps toward achieving these dreams. Farah El-Feky who just graduated one year ago shared her advice for this year's graduates as she said, "Eventually, you're going to get hired, but while you are still applying for jobs, it's crucial to invest in yourself until your time comes."

Obviously, it's best to make use of your free time by working on setting your career values, exploring new things, developing your passions, learning, making mistakes, trying, failing, and then trying again. Nothing is going to shape your future for you other than those small decisions that you make every day. Do your best now, and later, you'll reap the fruits of your hard work. Ahmed El-Malky, a recent engineering graduate, said, "I take measured steps, because I am alert to the idea that each and every life decision from now on will count."

Most importantly, remember that no matter how much you over plan, life is never mapped out in a linear fashion. It's great to try to have a clear vision of what your next step will be, but while staying fairly

flexible and open to any possible opportunities that might arise along the way and make you unlock new goals, ambitions, or interests.

While working on collecting your pieces together, you shouldn't fall into the trap of looking around and comparing yourself to others. Because everyone is qualified, and everyone has his/her own unique skills and potential that cannot be replicated, but everyone is in his own race, facing struggles that you might have no idea about. So, instead of building false scenarios about how others are more successful than you, focus on becoming a better version of yourself each passing day.

Lastly, have faith in the journey, and in God's plan. You're going to face many ups and downs after the first year of graduation, and it's completely fine as that's what will turn your journey into a remarkable story to tell. It's only when you stop worrying about how everything should be, only then you'll be able to unlock more opportunities to create the life you've always wished for.



Dr. Yaqoub Al-Kandari visits the exhibition of the 44th conference on Gulf, Arab family issues. — KUNA

Photographic Society organizes exhibition

KUWAIT: Kuwait Photographic Society organized the "Noor-5" exhibition at Al-Assimah Mall, displaying 74 photos by 51 photographers. The three-day exhibition that kicked off on Sunday attracted visitors interested in the art of photography. The Public Welfare Society was established in 2017. Photographers exchanged expertise through the exhibitions organized by the society. — KUNA



Artist Bassem Al-Darweesh



Artist Mohammad Awadh gives a briefing about one of the photos.



Photographer Jassem Al-Ajmi shows Dr. Suad Al-Homor one of the photos.



Chairperson of the Society Dr. Suad Al-Homor



KUWAIT: Group photo of the participants and organizers. — KUNA photos



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Macron urges 'ruthless' response after school 'Islamist' attack

Ecuador's youngest president promises to 'restore peace'

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RAFAH: A Palestinian man looks on amid the rubble of buildings destroyed during Zionist airstrikes in the Rafah refugee camp in the southern Gaza Strip, on Oct 16, 2023.

Gazans in despair as water supplies dwindle

People question occupation's humanity as they struggle to ration water

RAFAH: In the southern Gaza Strip, scores of people line up at bathrooms, many of them not having showered for days after the Zionist entity cut off water, electricity and food following Hamas's deadly assault. Ahmed Hamid, 43, fled Gaza City with his wife and seven children, heading to Rafah after the Zionist army on Friday warned residents of the north of the enclave to head south "for their own safety".

"We haven't showered in days. Even going to the toilet requires waiting your turn in a line," Hamid told AFP. "There is no food. All goods are not available and the costs of what is available have surged. The only foods we find are tuna cans and cheese. I feel like a burden, unable to do anything."

The UN estimates that about one million people have been displaced since the Zionist occupation began a ruthless aerial bombardment of Gaza in retaliation for Hamas's deadly assault on Oct 7. The Hamas attack left more than 1,400 people dead on the occupation's side.

On the Gazan side, at least 2,670 have died in the relentless bombing, the majority of them ordinary Palestinian civilians. The occupation also cut off all water, electricity and food supplies to the densely-populated coastal enclave. Mona Abdel Hamid, 55, left her home in Gaza City, heading for her relatives' house in Rafah.

Instead, she found herself in the home of people she did not know. "I feel humiliation and embarrassment. I'm looking for refuge. We don't have a lot of clothes and most of them are dirty now, with no water to wash

them," she said. "No electricity, no water, no internet. I feel like I'm losing my humanity."

'Lives in displacement'

Since Friday, Sabah Masbah, 50, has lived with her husband, daughter and 21 other relatives at a friend's home in Rafah. "The worst and most dangerous thing is that we can't find water. None of us bathe now because the water is so scarce," she told AFP.

At his home in Khan Yunis, near a school run by the UN agency supporting Palestinian refugees, Esam said: "We received guests who were displaced from the Gaza City area, the Al-Rimal neighborhood and Tal al-Hawa." But "water is a problem", said the 23-year-old who did not wish to give his full name. "Every day we think of how to get water ... If we bathe, we won't drink." Those who have sought refuge at the UNRWA schools also desperately seek food and water. The UN agency's director of communications, Juliette Touma, told AFP more people are likely to become displaced "as people continue to leave their homes". The occupation is massing forces and weapons at the border with Gaza ahead of an expected ground offensive.

Despite the Zionist evacuation order, there were air strikes in the south, including in Rafah, where one resident said a doctor's house was targeted. "All the family was wiped out," said Khamis Abu Hilal. Alaa al-Hams pointed to the fresh signs of shelling on a neighborhood in Rafah. "I look at the massive destruction. They say there is terrorism here. Where is

she said. "But the Palestinians are our people. I don't know how to identify myself." As an Arab citizen of the Zionist entity, Ahlam said she feels she cannot speak freely. "A Jew can express himself as he wants. But, if I do, I will face a big campaign of harassment and people will distort my words."

Traumatic memories

For older members of the community, the trauma of past suffering runs deep. Wissam Ali, a 54-year-old bus driver, said he has not forgotten the sad memories of October 2000, the time of the second Palestinian intifada, or uprising. Anger and violence raged in the West Bank and Gaza, which was then also occupied by Zionist ground troops, but also in Jerusalem and nationwide. When Arab citizens of the Zionist entity rallied in support of the intifada, 13 of them were killed. "The state turned against us at the time, so to-



GAZA: Palestinians fill their jerry cans with water from a public water collection point in Gaza City on Oct 12, 2023. — AFP photos

day we no longer want to get involved in all that," Ali told AFP. "We want peace for everyone, we hope that neither the Arabs nor the Jews will suffer."

The painful history goes back even further in Kafr Qasim, a town that became infamous for a Zionist massacre on October 29, 1956. In the early hours of the Suez Canal crisis, Zionist border guards shot dead 49 civilians in the town. They were found guilty and sentenced, but the scars remain raw.

So far, the war has not brought repercussions for Arab citizens of the Zionist entity, community volunteer Saed Issa said. "There were a lot of positive reactions" and only "a few right-wing extremists reacted badly", he said. When Hamas launched its rocket barrage, the Kafr Qasim municipality spread the message on social networks and in the media that it was ready to take in people fleeing southern towns, both Arabs and Jews. —AFP

and there is nothing left," she said. "We are isolated. My daughter has cancer and I can't take her to the hospital. I myself suffer from hypertension and diabetes." But she defiantly raised the victory sign with her hand. Surrounded by her grandchildren she said: "I won't leave no matter what, even if I die. We beg for bread from our neighbors, but we will not part with a grain of sand." —AFP

Zionist entity's Arab citizens fear reprisal as violence spirals

KAFR QASIM: As Zionist entity's war with Hamas rages in the Gaza Strip, the streets are eerily quiet in Kafr Qasim, a mostly Arab small town east of Tel Aviv. Set on a hilltop near the Zionist security barrier with the occupied West Bank, it is home to about 25,000 members of the Zionist entity's mostly Muslim minority. "We are very, very scared," said one 38-year-old local woman, who asked to use the pseudonym Ahlam. At times of crisis, she said, hostility tends to rise against the Arab citizens of the Zionist entity — and this crisis has been deadlier than any in recent memory, leaving thousands dead in its first six days. "We are very, very worried because things that we don't even imagine could happen," said Ahlam, 38. "We are caught between a rock and a hard place. We are not protected from either side — neither from Palestinian rockets nor from (the occupation), which does not treat us like real citizens and does not respect us."

'Campaign of harassment'

Arab citizens of the Zionist entity are descendants of Palestinians who remained on the land occupied by Zionists. Unemployment, poverty and crime rates are higher than for the rest of the country, where they make up 21 percent of the population.

During past flare-ups in the decades-old Zionist occupation of Palestine, violence has erupted between the Arabs and the Jewish majority. During the latest conflict, most families have stayed at home and watched the rolling TV coverage, in the town where few shops are open. Ahlam is a social worker and wants to help her community. But, she said, "when I leave the house, I worry about my children". Times of crisis bring to the fore a deep identity crisis for many here, she said. "We live in a state to which we are linked by everything: education, health, work,"



ABU GHOSH: Zionist security forces inspect damage on a building in the Arab town of Abu Ghosh near Jerusalem, after a rocket attack from Gaza on Oct 9, 2023. -- AFP

Putin warns on Gaza toll after Mideast talks

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin said the civilian toll in Gaza could see a "catastrophic increase" and warned of the risk of a regional war, after talking to Iranian and Arab leaders on Monday. Russia has repeatedly called for talks on ending the conflict, which has strained relations with the Zionists, their long-time partners.

The Kremlin said Putin had spoken to his Syrian, Egyptian and Iranian counterparts as well as Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas. Kremlin foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov said Putin would also speak to Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The Kremlin statement said Putin had voiced concern in his calls about "a catastrophic increase in the number of civilian victims and the aggravation of a humanitarian crisis in Gaza".

All the leaders called for "an immediate ceasefire and the establishment of a humanitarian truce to provide urgent assistance to those in need," it said. Putin said he was ready to "coordinate efforts with all constructive partners to put an end to hostilities and stabilize the situation as quickly as possible".

The Russian leader repeated his call for the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state as the only way for lasting peace. Fears for Palestinians trapped in the heavily bombarded Gaza enclave have grown since the occupation prepared to launch a ground offensive, which it claimed aimed at eliminating Hamas leaders. Moscow, which has for almost 20 months been battling its own offensive in Ukraine, has repeatedly called for a ceasefire and offered itself as a mediator. —AFP

International

Ecuador's youngest president promises to 'restore peace'

Without parliamentary majority, Noboa to struggle with enacting reforms: Analysts

QUITO: Car horns in Quito blared in celebration Sunday as banana empire heir Daniel Noboa, 35, became Ecuador's youngest-ever president-elect, vowing to "restore peace" to a country ravaged by a bloody drug gang war.

After the electoral authority declared him the victor and socialist rival Luisa Gonzalez conceded defeat, Noboa vowed that "tomorrow we begin work to rebuild a country that has been severely hit by violence, corruption and hatred."

Long a peaceful haven between major cocaine exporters Colombia and Peru, Ecuador has seen violence explode in recent years as enemy gangs with links to Mexican and Colombian cartels vie for control. The fighting has seen at least 460 inmates massacred in prisons since February 2021 - many beheaded or burned alive in mass riots.

The bloodbath has spilled into the streets, with gangs dangling headless corpses from city bridges and detonating car bombs outside police stations in a show of force. In August, the violence claimed the life of anti-graft and anti-cartel presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio, mowed down in a barrage of submachine-gun fire after a campaign speech. He had been polling in second place.

A state of emergency was declared after former journalist Villavicencio's assassination, and Noboa and Gonzalez both campaigned, and voted, in bullet-proof vests and with heavy security details. On Sunday, Noboa told supporters in his home town of Olon in the southwest his goal was "to restore peace ... to bring back education to the youth" and create jobs.

'Destroyed' country

Ecuadorians voted for 10 hours Sunday with no reports of violence, watched over by some 100,000 police and soldiers. "May we elect the best president because (he or she) will govern a country that is destroyed ... to address all these problems such as insecurity," Indigenous voter Ramiro Duchitanga told AFP in Cuenca in Ecuador's south.

"It is a critical election," added Freddy Escobar,



OLON, Ecuador: Daniel Noboa, wearing a bullet-proof vest, shows his ballot while voting at a polling station.

a popular 49-year-old singer in Quito, citing crime as his main worry. "I am voting in fear, not knowing what will happen." The main concerns of Ecuadorians, according to opinion polls, are crime and violence in a country where the murder rate quadrupled in the four years to 2022.

Noboa, who obtained some 52 percent of the vote according to a near-complete count, was elected to only 16 months in office to complete the term of incumbent Guillermo Lasso, who called a snap vote to avoid possible impeachment for alleged embezzlement. Under the law, Noboa can run again for the 2025-29 presidential term, and the one after that. Both runoff candidates were relative unknowns in politics.

Noboa is the son of one of Ecuador's richest men, who himself has five failed presidential bids to his name. The president-elect, whose only political experience is two years as a lawmaker, calls himself "center-left" but embraces neoliberal economic thinking. He ran on the ticket of the brand-new National Democratic Action alliance, which incorporates parties from the center and left of the political spectrum. Ecuador has a poverty rate of 27 percent, with a quarter of the population unemployed or

helped lead Kosovo down the path toward independence, even though his intense efforts failed to clinch an agreement with Serbia before Pristina unilaterally declared independence in 2008.

Wartime childhood

Martti Oiva Kalevi Ahtisaari was born on June 23, 1937 in Viipuri — now Vyborg — in Finland's eastern Karelia province, which his family was forced to flee at the end of World War II after it was annexed by the Soviet Union. He said his childhood experience of war and being a refugee "gave me sensitivity ... Perhaps that made me a peace negotiator."

An academic career led him to a teaching post in Pakistan in the early 1960s, before entering the diplomatic service. Ahtisaari was appointed ambassador to Tanzania in 1973 at the age of 36. Transferring to the UN, he was a special envoy to Namibia, where he helped lead the country towards independence from South Africa in 1990.

"Perhaps the most traumatic experience was on April 1, 1989 when SWAPO (rebel) troops came from Angola and more than 300 people were killed," he recalled. "If I could manage to sort out that, I have the feeling there is no problem I can't solve," he said.



QUITO: Supporters of Ecuador's presidential candidate for the National Democratic Action Party, Daniel Noboa, celebrate the results of the runoff election on Oct 15, 2023. — AFP photos

holding down an informal job. Opinion polls list unemployment as voters' second concern.

Noboa reiterated Sunday that he intends to "give progress to a country ... that has all the elements to be a global example." Gonzalez was the handpicked candidate of socialist ex-president Rafael Correa, who governed from 2007 to 2017 and lives in exile in Belgium to avoid serving an eight-year prison term for graft — another major concern in the country. From eight candidates, Gonzalez took the most votes in the first round in August with 34 percent, followed by Noboa with 23 percent.

On Sunday, she offered her "profound congratulations" to Noboa, "because this is democ-

racy." Addressing supporters in Quito, Gonzales also said she would not be claiming fraud. With 13 lawmakers in his corner out of 137 in parliament, Noboa will not have an absolute majority backing his legislative projects, and with only 16 months in office, will face an uphill battle to push through any reforms, analysts say.

Voting is compulsory for 13.4 million eligible voters in the country of about 18 million, and the election authority said turnout was above 82 percent. After images on social media showed a person appearing to fill out multiple ballots in favor of Noboa, the head of the National Electoral Commission, Diana Atamaint, promised an "immediate" investigation. — AFP

Finland's former president, Nobel winner Ahtisaari dies

HELSINKI: Former Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari, who died Monday aged 86, was a mediator who brokered peace around the globe, winning a Nobel Peace Prize for a formidable career spanning over 40 years. Ahtisaari had battled Alzheimer's disease, which forced him to retire from public life in September 2021.

The former UN diplomat was credited with overseeing the 2005 talks between the Indonesian government and Free Aceh Movement (GAM) rebels, which brought an end to a three-decade conflict in which some 15,000 people were killed. Both sides described Ahtisaari, who was president of his native Finland between 1994 and 2000, as steely but with a sense of humor and warmth.

"I have enormous amounts of patience. I don't usually get angry, but I can be tough," he said later, adding that he felt the key to his success was an ability to understand people. Ahtisaari also



HELSINKI: Former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari attends a luncheon of political journalists on Feb 16, 2016. — AFP

Fling with politics

In 1994, Finland's Social Democratic Party nominated him to run for the presidency and Ahtisaari became the country's first directly-elected president. "He was a transitional president who guided Finland into the global EU era," current President Sauli Niinisto said after Ahtisaari's passing.

Yet the man of action, who limped as a result of rheumatism, found himself ill at ease with the largely ceremonial role. His true passion remained

foreign affairs and Ahtisaari later likened his six-year diversion into domestic politics to "an extramarital affair". In 2000 Ahtisaari got involved in the Northern Ireland peace process, inspecting the IRA's arms dumps with current South African President Cyril Ramaphosa. He was appointed the UN special envoy for talks on the status of Kosovo in 2005 and recommended independence for the breakaway province, only to be repeatedly accused of bias by the Serbs. His inability to persuade the two sides to agree before Kosovo unilaterally declared independence rankled with him.

In 2008, aged 71, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts "on several continents and over more than three decades, to resolve international conflicts." Old age did little to dampen Ahtisaari's drive. He insisted retirement was "not yet on the cards" as he continued to travel the world promoting peace as part of a group known as the "Elders", including former US president Jimmy Carter, former UN chief Kofi Annan and South African archbishop Desmond Tutu.

After turning 80, Ahtisaari stepped down as chairman of the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) peace institute he founded 17 years earlier, but continued to be involved in their mediation work. — AFP



GAZA: Palestinians look for survivors trapped under the rubble of a building destroyed in a Zionist airstrike in Khan Yunis in the southern of Gaza Strip on October 16, 2023. — AFP

Kuwaitis in US urged to keep low profile...

Continued from Page 1

Authorities said the woman managed to call 911 as she fought off the landlord, named by the sheriff's office as 71-year-old Joseph Czuba. "Deputies located two victims inside the residence in a bedroom. Both victims had multiple stab wounds to their chest, torso, and upper extremities," the sheriff's statement said. A serrated military-style knife with a seven-inch blade was pulled from the boy's abdomen during the autopsy, the statement said.

When police arrived they found Czuba sitting on the ground near the driveway of the residence with

a laceration on his forehead. He was taken to hospital for treatment before being charged with murder, attempted murder, and two counts of hate crimes. "He knocked on the door and attempted to choke her, and said, 'you Muslims' must die,'" Ahmed Rehab, head of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) Chicago office, told reporters, citing text messages sent by the woman to the murdered boy's father from her hospital bed.

The attack was "our worst nightmare," CAIR said in a statement. Zionists declared war on Hamas last Sunday, a day after waves of the militant group's fighters broke through the heavily fortified border and shot, stabbed and burned to death more than 1,400 people, most of them civilians. The subsequent relentless bombing has flattened neighborhoods and left at least 2,670 people dead in the Gaza Strip, the majority ordinary Palestinians. — Agencies

Gazan dual nationals mass at shuttered Egypt border

GAZA: Hundreds of Palestinians with dual nationality waited Monday at Gaza's shuttered Rafah crossing with Egypt, hoping to leave the blockaded enclave where war between Zionists and Hamas militants has raged for days. Both warring parties denied earlier Monday any talks of a humanitarian truce or of opening the border at Rafah, Gaza's only crossing point which Zionist entity does not control.

"We have been at the border for three days," Palestinian-German national Ahmad al-Qassas told AFP. Others said they had waited at the crossing for at least a week. "More and more people are coming here for safety, but... nowhere is really safe," Qassas said. In front of the crossing's gates, an AFP correspondent saw hundreds of Palestinians including families with children. "We hope the international community, embassies and our Egyptian brothers would let us enter" neighboring Egypt, said Qassas.

Following a Hamas attack on Zionist communities and army bases near the Gaza border on October 7,

Zionists have suspended water, electricity and fuel supply into the Strip, and forces have pummeled the narrow enclave with air strikes and artillery. Water supply resumed Sunday, but harsh conditions persist in the impoverished Gaza Strip where more than one million people have been displaced within a week, according to the United Nations.

The Rafah crossing shut since October 10, after three airstrikes on the Palestinian border post within 24 hours. Gaza, controlled by Hamas, has been under an air, land and sea blockade since 2006. Palestinian-Danish woman Etaf al-Rai told AFP that European nations "should raise the voice for human rights". "I want to cross," she said. "I don't even have clothes with me. I just left with a bag in order to be safe."

Gaza residents normally require special permits and a hefty fee to be able to cross from Rafah into Egypt. "We have been at the border for seven or eight days," said Osama Abu Samhadana, an Egyptian national. "We have been sleeping at the border... without any help." At least 1,400 have been killed in Zionist entity since Hamas fighters last week broke through the militarized border barrier and shot, stabbed and burned to death mostly civilians, as well as security forces. Zionists have responded with relentless bombing on Gaza, killing around 2,750 people, the majority ordinary Palestinians. — AFP

Kuwait eyes raising national labor ratios in private sector

KUWAIT: The government is reportedly preparing a special decision, to be issued before the end of this year, which aims at increasing the percentage of Kuwaitis working in the private sector. Sources in the Manpower Authority pointed to an increase in the appointment of Kuwaiti workers in the private sector in both major institutions and smaller new establishments, where young Kuwaitis are already gaining a foothold. If issued, the new decision will see more Kuwaiti youth appointed to senior positions, sources said. There will also be a focus on providing training

and education to help youth attain these positions.

The government is purportedly cooperating with private sector establishments to attract more Kuwaiti national labor. Sources have also pointed to the work being done by non-government organizations to sway Kuwaiti laborers towards the private sector. The decision, if issued, is expected to increase the rate of national employment to 90 percent in banks and telecommunication companies, sources said. The decision will also target the insurance sector, which offers a plethora of job opportunities.

The Public Authority for Manpower has also reportedly finished working on a proposal to increase fines for private sector establishments found in violation of a previous decision which outlines specific ratios for Kuwaiti laborers in non-government entities. According to sources, the authority has recently submitted its proposal to the Civil Service Council for review and discussion by member ministers. It will then be presented to the Council of Ministers for a final decision.

International



ARRAS: People lay a bunch of flowers as they gather with local officials to pay tribute at Heroes square in Arras, northeastern France on Oct 15, 2023. — AFP photos



People gather to pay tribute two days after a teacher was killed and two other people were severely wounded.

Macron urges 'ruthless' response after school 'Islamist' attack

Killer was under French intelligence's surveillance before committing crime

PARIS: French schools on Monday held a minute's silence for a teacher killed last week in what the government called an Islamist terror attack, with the president urging a "ruthless" response to extremists. The knife assault on Friday in the northern city of Arras, almost three years to the day after a similar killing of a teacher near Paris, has shocked the public and triggered a massive security response.

Adding to the tension, the same Arras school was evacuated Monday over a bomb threat, although officials later said the alert had been lifted. French President Emmanuel Macron has told ministers to "embody a state that is ruthless towards all those who harbor hate and terrorist ideologies", a senior aide told reporters. The president later wrote that schools would remain a "bulwark" against extremism and "a sanctuary for our pupils and everyone who works there" in a post on X (formerly Twitter).

Moment of silence

The killing of the teacher by a former pupil has sharpened nervousness in France, which has large Muslim and Jewish populations and has been on the alert for violence since Hamas's attack on the Zionist occupation. According to the BBC, police have said there is nothing to indicate a link with the Middle East.

Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said Monday that 102 people had been arrested for anti-Semitic acts or expressing support for terrorism since the October 7 assault. Classes paused for the minute of silence at 2:00 pm (12:00 pm GMT) to remember French teacher Dominique Bernard, 57. He was stabbed to death at the school in Arras in an attack that also wounded three other adults. Early lessons were cancelled in middle and high schools on Monday to allow teachers to discuss the attack and how to deal with it in front of pupils.

'Special approach'

Police have named Friday's suspected perpetrator as Mohammed Moguchkov, 20. He was born in the predominantly Muslim republic of Ingushetia and reportedly arrived in France aged five. The suspect, who reportedly cried "Allahu akbar!" (God is greatest) during the attack, has been detained but has not yet spoken, according to a police source.

He was already on a French national register as a potential security threat and under surveillance by France's domestic intelligence agency, the DGSI. His father, who was also on the list, was deported in 2018. Macron has called on police to comb through their files of radicalized people who could be deported. Darmanin said 193 such cases would be reexamined. Macron has told Darmanin to focus especially on "young men between the ages of 16 and 25 from the Caucasus", his aide said. Friday's killing has led to calls for tighter se-

curity at schools. The government has already put the country on high alert and deployed 7,000 troops.

Political fight

More than 260 people have been killed in France since 2012 in assaults blamed on, or claimed by, Islamist radicals — from mass killings in Paris and Nice in 2015 and 2016, to individual murders of teachers, police officers or a priest. The string of violent incidents has kept security and immigration issues at the forefront of political debate. On Monday, National Assembly (lower house) speaker Yael Braun-Pivet, who belongs to Macron's Renaissance party, said a draft immigration law should be voted through by the end of the year. The bill provides that "people who are not integrated, who are radicalized, who swear ferocious hatred against the (French) republic ... must indeed be able to be removed", she told broadcaster France 2. —AFP

Postponement of awarding Palestinian author draws ire

FRANKFURT: The postponement of a Palestinian author's award ceremony at the Frankfurt Book Fair due to Hamas' attack on the Zionist occupation and the ensuing deadly Zionist retaliation triggered condemnation Monday from high-profile authors, while several Arab publishing groups withdrew.

The annual fair is the world's biggest publishing trade event, bringing together thousands of book industry players and authors. After the Hamas' unprecedented assault on Oct 7, organizers condemned the "barbaric" attack and said Zionist voices would be given prominence at the book fair.

But it was also announced that Palestinian author Adania Shibli would not be honored with the LiBeraturpreis, a German award, at the fair, as had been originally planned. She was due to receive the honor for her book "A Minor Detail," a work based on the real events of a 1949 rape and murder by Zionist soldiers.

It is organized by the group Litprom, which awards it each year at the book fair. But the group said they had decided not to go ahead with the ceremony "due to the war started by Hamas". It said in a statement that it was looking for a "suitable format and setting for the event at a later point," adding that: "Awarding the prize to Adania Shibli was never in question."

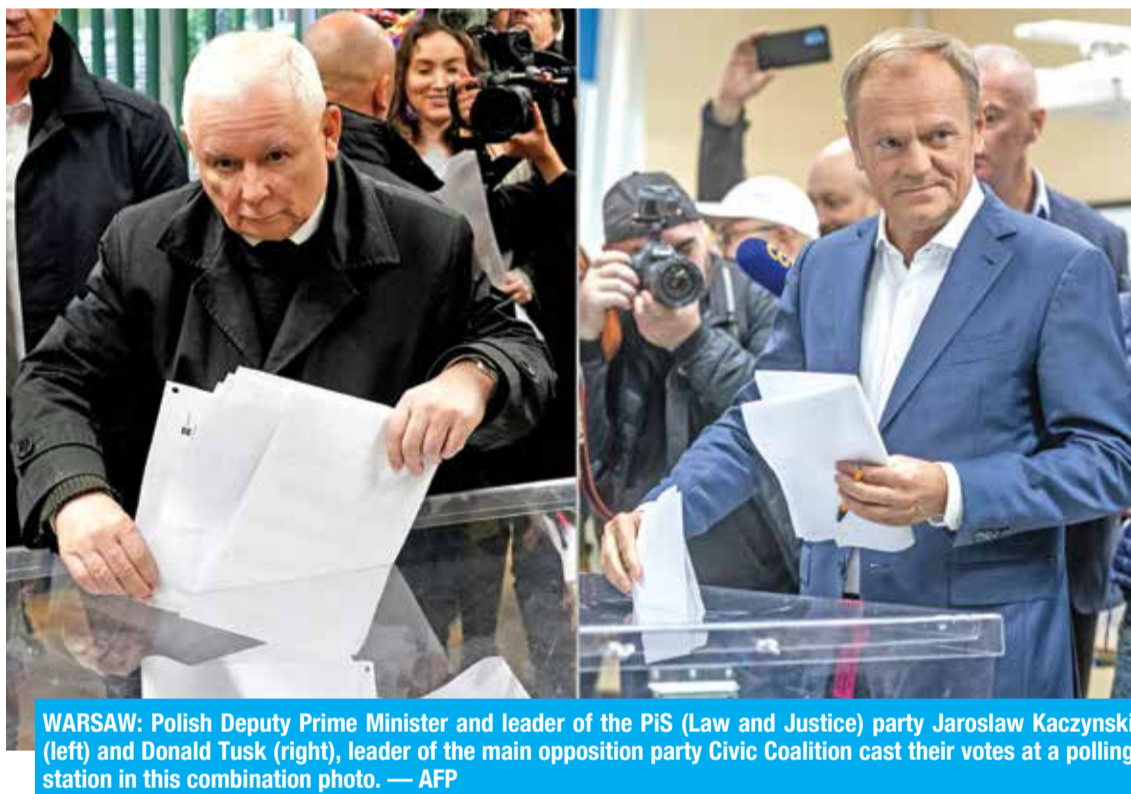
But the decision was condemned in an open letter with over 600 signatories, including Abdulrazak Gurnah and Olga Tokarczuk, both winners of the Nobel Prize for Literature, and other writers including Pankaj Mishra, William Dalrymple and Colm Toibin.

The organizers were "closing out the space for a Palestinian voice", said the letter, published on Monday. "The Frankfurt Book Fair has a responsibility, as a major international book fair, to be creating spaces for Palestinian writers to share their thoughts, feelings, reflections on literature through these terrible, cruel times, not shutting them down," it added.

As well as authors, it was signed by publishers and literary agents. Some Arab publishing industry groups announced at the weekend they were pulling out of the fair, which runs from Wednesday to Sunday. Announcing their withdrawal, Sharjah Book Authority, in the United Arab Emirates, said in a statement that "we champion the role of culture and books to encourage dialogue and understanding between people."

"We believe that this role is more important than ever." The Emirates Publishers Association released a similar statement, while the UAE-based National newspaper reported the Arab Publishers' Association in Egypt had also pulled out.

Book fair director Juergen Boos declined to comment on the decision of individual exhibitors, but stressed that "our platform is always open to authors, publishers, translators and literature fans from all over the world. Of course, the Frankfurt Book Fair is a platform for both (Zionist) and Palestinian voices," he said in a statement to AFP. He also stressed the postponement of the LiBeraturpreis ceremony was made by Litprom, and not the book fair. — AFP



WARSAW: Polish Deputy Prime Minister and leader of the PiS (Law and Justice) party Jaroslaw Kaczynski (left) and Donald Tusk (right), leader of the main opposition party Civic Coalition cast their votes at a polling station in this combination photo. — AFP

Poland's pro-EU opposition tipped to win election

WARSAW: Poland's liberal opposition on Monday celebrated exit polls showing it had won a parliamentary majority in elections on Sunday which saw the highest turnout since the fall of Communism. The surprise result would put an end to eight years of rule by the populist Law and Justice (PiS) party during which relations with the European Union and neighboring Ukraine have fallen to new lows.

The opposition, led by former EU chief Donald Tusk, had billed the parliamentary elections as the "last chance" to save democracy. "Democracy has won," he declared late on Sunday, saying a "grim" era had ended. For voters in the capital Warsaw, where support for nationalists is traditionally lower, the outcome heralded major change. "Women's rights are absolutely crucial to me and I really hope something will change here," Aleksandra Metlewicz, an interior designer, told AFP. The 33-year-old said she wanted "good times to come back, in place of the Middle Ages" in which she said Poland was stuck. According to a report by the Guardian, the full official election results may only be available on Tuesday.

'More women than men'

The PiS government is based on traditional Catholic values and Poland has the EU's most stringent abortion laws. Tusk has promised to liberalize them. This issue, according to analysts, prompted an unprecedented mobilization among women and helped tip the balance in favor of the liberal opposition parties. "Until recently, half of women said they would not vote. Now these exit polls actually show more women than men voted," said Justyna Kajta, a sociologist at SWPS University in Warsaw. For Kajta, the turnout among women, predicted at 73.7 percent, was the main "positive surprise" of the election. Projections based on preliminary results and exit polls by Ipsos on Monday showed Tusk's Civic Coalition could win 161 seats in the 460-seat parliament. Two smaller parties which are potential allies, Third Way and Left, were set to win 57 and 30 seats respectively. That would give the three together a majority of 248.

'Very happy'

For eight years, Law and Justice has put Poland on a collision course with the EU, with controversial judicial reforms, a refusal to take in migrants and headline abortion policies. PiS increased nationalist rhetoric in its campaign and even entered a row with its war-torn neighbor Ukraine, despite huge Polish solidarity to help Kyiv in the face of the Russian invasion. To the opposition electorate, ending the PiS reign would restore Poland's reputation on international stage. "I believe that now all these (international) ties will improve and normalize. But this will take some time," Krzysztof Dabrowski, a pensioner from Warsaw, told AFP.

Tusk served as Poland's prime minister between 2007 and 2014 and as European Council president between 2014 and 2019. He has pledged to restore relations with Brussels if he returns to power and to unblock the EU funds frozen due to the ongoing standoff over the rule of law in Poland.

Many Poles queued late into the evening to cast their vote, in what all parties billed as the most important election since the fall of Communism. While the results appear to give the liberal opposition a better chance of forming the next government, there was still caution among many voters. "I am curious as to what will come next and how people who will take power will act," said 42-year-old businessman Karol Jedlinski, adding that he was "far from euphoric". He struggled to imagine Tusk leading Poland again. "For me he is more of a figure of the past," he said.

Kaczynski still has 'hope'

Much still depends on President Andrzej Duda. Analysts warn that any governing coalition formed by the opposition could face run-ins with the president, who is a PiS ally. PiS meanwhile appeared defiant and has presented the election as a win, since the party appeared to have garnered the most votes.

Kaczynski said he still had "hope" he could form a government. "This is not a closed road for the moment," he said late on Sunday as the exit poll showing an opposition win came in. The most likely coalition partner for PiS had been Confederation, a far-right party that has called for an end to Poland's large-scale assistance for Ukraine and has campaigned on a strongly anti-migrant platform. But the exit poll showed PiS and Confederation together would fall short of a majority, with a total of just 212 seats. Kyiv and its Western supporters have been watching the Polish election closely in case of any effect on aid to Ukraine. —AFP

China prepares for summit under shadow of Zionist war on Gaza

BEIJING: China began welcoming on Monday representatives of 130 countries for a conference that will be overshadowed by the Zionist occupation's war on Palestine, as an increasingly assertive Beijing is asked to help de-escalate the violence. At the top of the invitation list to China's Belt and Road Initiative forum is Russia's President Vladimir Putin, on his first trip to a major global power since the Ukraine invasion threw his regime into international isolation.

Leaders have begun to pour into the Chinese capital for a gala event marking a decade of the BRI, a key project of President Xi Jinping to extend China's global reach. While China hopes the forum will help boost its international standing, the Zionist attack on Palestine will continue to dominate the headlines.

The current attack on Gaza started after waves of Hamas fighters broke through the heavily fortified border on Oct 7, killing more than 1,400 people. More than one million people have fled their homes in scenes of chaos and despair under heavy Zionist bombardment of the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip. Zionist bombing has killed at least 2,750 people in Gaza, mainly civilians, and flattened entire neighborhoods. China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi condemned the Zionist occupation's actions for going "beyond the scope of self-defense" and called for it to "cease its collective punishment of the people of Gaza". "(The Zionist occupation) should listen earnestly to the calls of the international community ... and cease its collective punishment of the people of Gaza," Wang said Sunday, in China's strongest response to the conflict so far. Western officials have criticized Beijing for not naming Hamas in statements on the war.

Wang spoke on Sunday with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who called on China to use its "influence" in the Middle East to push for calm. This year, China brokered an entente between former regional foes Iran and Saudi Arabia. Beijing's special envoy Zhai Jun will visit the Middle East this week to push for a ceasefire and peace talks, China's state broadcaster CCTV said on Sunday, without specifying which countries he would visit. Several leaders are already in Beijing ahead of the two-day forum, which starts Tuesday. Among them are the prime ministers of Hungary, Ethiopia and Cambodia, and the presidents of Kenya, Chile and Indonesia. Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov flew into Beijing on Monday and within hours held talks with his Chinese counterpart. Lavrov thanked China for inviting Putin as the summit's "chief guest", according to a readout from Moscow, which later said the top diplomat would head to North Korea after Beijing. —AFP



BEIJING: Honor guards prepare for the arrival of Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet at Beijing Capital International Airport on Oct 16, 2023. — AFP

Business

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2023

Propelling tech landscape: ZainTECH reaches agreement to acquire STS

A testament to Zain's commitment to driving region's digital transformation journey

• **Zain Vice Chairman & Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi:** This deal comes 20 years after Zain's first regional expansion into Jordan, a testament to our commitment to driving the region's digital transformation journey.

• **STS employs over 350 professionals and offers advanced cloud solutions, managed services and cyber security to more than 500 regional corporate clients across multiple sectors**

DUBAI: ZainTECH, the integrated digital solution provider of Zain Group, announced it has entered an agreement for the complete acquisition of Specialized Technical Services Company (STS), one of the pioneering and largest digital transformation solutions providers in the region and the Kingdom of Jordan. This strategic move enables ZainTECH to expand its service offerings to enterprises and government bodies, access top talent, foster innovation, and enhance its competitive position across the region.

Since its establishment in 1989, STS has been a key player in the digital transformation landscape across Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Iraq. As one of the pioneer players in the industry, STS also stands as a forward-thinking, tech-savvy entity that has consistently fueled the digital transformation journey of the entire region. The company is renowned for its advanced hybrid multi-cloud solutions, robust managed cloud services, and comprehensive cybersecurity offerings, backed up by a state-of-the-art security operations center (STS SOC), infrastructure and system integration capabilities, along with licensing solutions.

With a dedicated team of over 350 professionals, STS has built long-standing partnerships with industry leaders such as Cisco Systems, Dell Technologies, IBM, Microsoft, Oracle, among others. STS serves over 500 customers across industries, including banking and financial, governmental, health, education, and telecommunications sectors across the Middle East and North Africa.

Commenting, Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO said, "This deal comes 20 years after Zain's first regional expansion into Jordan and is a testament to our commitment to driving the Kingdom's and the region's digital transformation journey. Innovation has always been a catalyst for driving regional economies and improving the lives of citizens across our markets. The current roll-out of the state-of-the-art 5G services across the Kingdom and the acquisition of STS by ZainTECH will further consolidate Jordan's position as a leading digital hub and a key enabler of innovation and entrepreneurship in the region."

Andrew Hanna, ZainTECH CEO commented, "The agreement to acquire STS, with its talented team, years of expertise and impressive customer base, will amplify ZainTECH and Zain B2B teams' capabilities to provide clients with cutting-edge and comprehensive digital transformation solutions, solidifying our position as leaders in the in-



(Standing): Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO (left) and Ahmad Al-Hanandeh, Jordan Minister of Digital Economy & Entrepreneurship. (Sitting): Ramzi Zeine, Co-founder and Executive Chairman of STS (left), Andrew Hanna, CEO of ZainTECH (center) and Aiman Mazahreh, Co-founder and CEO of STS.

• **Acquisition positions ZainTECH to expand its service offerings, access top talent, foster innovation and enhance its competitive position across the region**

dustry and driving digital transformation in Jordan and across the region."

Ramzi Zeine, Co-Founder and Executive Chairman of STS said: "The momentum gained by ZainTECH since its launch in October 2021 has been

cultural heartland into a thriving venture. Through World Bank support from the Emergency Social Protection Enhancement and COVID-19 Response Project, Aldarbi got essential resources like a drip irrigation system that uses less water, shade nets to protect his crops, an electric generator, and fertilizers, all crucial in adapting his farm to changing climatic conditions. That, along with training on sound agricultural practices, has made a huge impact on his crop yields and livelihood.

"It's more than just resources; it's knowledge and skills that changed our lives," said Aldarbi. "We learned not just to survive, but to thrive." Aldarbi's farm is in Jahran, part of the Dhamar governorate around 100 km from Yemen's historic city of Sanaa. "Food is the source of life," he added.

Efforts like Aldarbi's are crucial in Yemen where food insecurity is a dire issue, with millions of people across the country facing hunger on a regular basis.

Jordan's multi-faceted approach

The World Bank is supporting Jordan as it takes a multi-faceted approach to boosting food system resilience. This includes new investments in climate-smart agriculture production that are creating jobs; building capacity of a new generation of farmers and agricultural specialists to spearhead water efficient and climate resistant farming techniques; and the continual adoption of good practices and innovations. All of this is aligned with Jordan's new National Food Security Strategy.

One example of this work in action is the World Bank supported Agriculture, Resilience, Value Chain Development and Innovation project, known as "My Land", which was launched in early 2023 and will provide about 30,000 farming households with financing to adopt climate smart agricultural practices. My Land builds on the ongoing pilot project Exploring High Value, Socially-Inclusive, And Water Efficient Agriculture, which promotes an innovative social enterprise model for commercial fruit and vegetable production in marginalized areas using highly water efficient hydroponic technology.

The My Land project is expected to generate

nothing but remarkable, and we are excited to collaborate and support its growth and development from our standing point in Jordan and from our regional operations in Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, and Iraq. The Jordanian ICT sector is undoubt-

edly a key pillar in the national economy." Aiman Mazahreh, CO-Founder and CEO of STS said: "Today we witness a strategic leap in the history of STS, and we are extremely proud to join forces with ZainTECH. We look forward to leaving noticeable marks on the digital transformation scene in Jordan and the region".

PWC-Strategy advised ZainTECH and Lumina Capital Advisers advised STS on this transaction. DLA Piper was the legal advisor for ZainTECH and Clyde & Co was the legal advisor for the shareholders of STS. This acquisition is subject to regulatory approvals.

around 12,000 employment opportunities, particularly for women and youth. The types of activities the project will support include the highlighted examples below already being supported by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Lina Madlboh is a Jordanian farmer who received training in hydroponics and aeroponics through the World Bank supported Agriculture, Resilience, Value Chain Development and Innovation (ARDI) project. By replacing soil with a water-based medium, through hydroponics, she's been able to produce high-quality and high-density crops. This new technique not only reduces water consumption by 80 percent, it also provided her family with jobs and benefited the local community.

Fatima Abu Akleek, a 22-year-old graduate of the Jordan University of Science and Technology, has been trained in hydroponics and fish farming and currently works at the Faisal Plant nursery in Jerash, a fertile area dotted with rolling hills and plains northwest of Amman. "The training has provided many opportunities and opened wide doors for me" said Akleek, as she puts her new skills to work converting nutrients produced by fish into non-chemical fertilizer for plants. Madlboh and Akleek are part of a young generation adopting innovative practices to build sustainable food systems to deliver now and last for the future.

Morocco deploys digital tools

Morocco's agricultural heartland has been hit hard by climate change. Successive droughts, interspersed with unexpected violent storms, have accelerated the adoption of new approaches for farming and water resource management. The Green Generation Program is supporting several activities, amongst them the creation of regional centers to promote youth employment in the agrifood sector, the modernization of four wholesale markets and the development of digital tools to improve jobs and efficiency of value chains (ie, water efficiency).

Egypt renovates food silos

Building resilience requires action across the food production chain, and Egypt's government has taken

MENA farmers braving food shocks with resilient systems

KUWAIT: The impact of unprecedented shocks to the global food system in the last few years has hit the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region hard. As net food importers severely affected by climate change (increasing water scarcity in particular), the region has been highly vulnerable to the global market shocks that disrupted supply chains, drove food prices to record high levels, and led to a food insecurity crisis. Farmers and vulnerable people have been amongst the most affected, risking long lasting impacts to health and livelihoods, according to the World Bank.

The World Bank has responded quickly to these needs, delivering close to a billion dollars for emergency programs to support people facing food insecurity in MENA.

Looking ahead, building resilient agriculture and food systems that can withstand shocks is a top priority in the region. This requires investment and action across multiple fronts – from climate-smart farming, removing distortions in the food markets, reforming subsidy systems, reliance on financial markets to ensure against climate and disaster risks and water management to agribusiness development and green job growth. This is a story told from farmers, engineers and innovators from Yemen, Jordan, Morocco and Egypt, on what they are doing to ensure food – the source of life – remains a sustainable bounty for people and planet.

Yemen's thriving venture

Farmers in Yemen, a country that has endured years of conflict, are finding innovative ways to produce food for themselves and their communities despite the many obstacles they face.

Vegetable farmer Zaid Saleh Aldarbi has transformed his once-struggling farm in Yemen's agri-



Lina Madlboh, a Jordanian farmer who received training in hydroponics and aeroponics, has been able to produce high-quality and high-density crops. — World Bank

a multi-pronged approach. One of the foundational elements of the strategy is to improve and expand the capacity of grain storage. This helps reduce waste and loss across the food production system – and helps ensure wheat remains steadily available in the country, even in the face of external shocks.

The World Bank's Emergency Food Security and Resilience Support Project is part of the efforts to expand and renovate Egypt's food silos. The Assiut food silo in the Upper Egypt Governorate is one of the first to be expanded under the project, which involves rehabilitating and expanding seven silos and building two new ones. At the Assiut silo, storage will be expanded from the current level of 60,000 tons of grain to 100,000 tons annually.

"This will absolutely help us in receiving the largest amount of wheat from traders, farmers, and public and private sector companies without needing to rent additional silos or an external storage facility," said Ahmed Hussein Ibrahim, Assiut silo's manager, who added that the expanded silo will also boost jobs in the area. Bread is a staple in Egypt and the World Bank's food security project has also supported the country's bread programs that provide about 70 million low-income Egyptians with continuous access to this staple food.



A memorial photo featuring the executive management and representatives of the Ministry of Education and Nazaha.

NBK launches 'Bankee' program in cooperation with MoE and Nazaha

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has signed an MoU with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Kuwait Authority for Anti-Corruption (Nazaha) to officially launch the "Bankee" program for raising financial literacy among government and private school students, in cooperation with Creative Confidence.

The agreement was signed at NBK's HQ in the presence of Isam Al-Sager, Vice-Chairman and Group CEO of National Bank of Kuwait, Saud Al-Juwaiser, Acting Undersecretary of Education, Counselor Nawaf Al-Mahamel, Vice-President of Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha), and Sumayah Al-Jasem, Founder, Managing Director at Creative Confidence.

The ceremony was attended by Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group CEO of NBK and Sulaiman Barrak Al-Marzouq, Deputy CEO of NBK-Kuwait. The attendees also included Faisal A Al-Hamad, CEO - Global Wealth Management, and Emad Al-Ablani, GM - Group Human Resources.

In his speech on the sidelines of signing the agreement, Al-Sager stated, "The Bankee program reflects the concerted efforts to raise financial literacy among government and private school students in Kuwait, by providing training for 15,000 students and 3,000 teachers, which is a

awareness about the importance of financial stability and independence among them. We firmly believe that private sector's initiatives launched in cooperation with government authorities to provide the young generation with the required knowledge and skills are instrumental to individual as well as social wellbeing and prosperity," he underscored.

The first- of-its-kind in Kuwait
"Bankee" is Kuwait's First Hands-on School Financial Literacy Program, which was launched by NBK with the aim of promoting financial inclusion, especially among school students, in an effort to set the younger generation in Kuwait on a path to a resilient financial future. The program aims to familiarize students with key financial concepts including earning, spending and saving, and financial responsibilities and instilling financial culture, which is done in an innovative and interactive way using classroom economy model.

Moreover, Bankee aims to instill the main values including integrity and transparency, personal growth and development, accountability and responsibility, collaboration and teamwork. It also seeks to raise a generation of a young Kuwaiti generation who recognize the importance of financial wellbeing and independence,



KUWAIT: Isam Al-Sager, Saud Al-Juwaiser and Counselor Nawaf Al-Mahamel during the signing of the agreement.

enrolled in the program so far, in addition to a special needs school for learning difficulties (Joan Al-Kuwait Elementary School), with a total of 15,000 students and 3,000 teachers.

Bankee also launched its website in Arabic and English, as well as social media pages on Instagram, TikTok and YouTube, to enable all participants to benefit from the provided content, activities and events held at different schools all year round.

Bankee design

Bankee is designed based on the classroom economy model, which simulates a real-world economy within the classroom. This is done in an innovative and interactive way enabling students and teachers to leverage an online tool to make different financial transactions including:

Digital platform

Bankee digital platform serves as a virtual bank, on which students receive their allowance, salaries, bonuses, and fines, and pay their expenses. Each student participating in the program has a virtual bank account, which simulates real-life financial transactions.

Bankee currency

"Bankoz" is the digital currency used within the program. It is exclusively for school transactions and serves as a medium of exchange for various activities and incentives.

Jobs

At Bankee, students are presented with the chance to apply for classroom-specific or school-wide jobs, which offer them an opportunity to earn additional income or salary. Classroom jobs are tailored to each classroom and encompass roles such as attendance monitor or teacher's assistant. On the other

hand, school jobs involve participating in extracurricular activities at the school level, such as joining the student council and school radio team.

Expenses and payments

Using this feature, students will be able to manage their finances by making payments for classroom-related expenses,

area within the school, while the online store provides a convenient and accessible platform for students.

In both settings, the store offers a wide variety of items and services that are relevant and appealing to students, such as school supplies, toys, stationery, and school privileges. This integrated approach ensures students have a holistic

- Isam Al-Sager: The program reflects the concerted efforts of the government and private sectors to raise financial literacy among school students in Kuwait
- NBK's initiatives actively contribute to the development of this generation of young Kuwaitis

such as renting desks and paying utility bills such as water and electricity.

Bonuses and fines

To instill core values and accountability, Bankee incorporates a system of bonuses and fines. Students can receive bonuses for exceptional performance or positive behaviors, while fines may be imposed for rule violations or inappropriate conduct.

Bankee Store

The Bankee Store is a central component of the Bankee program, where students can engage in real-life simulated transactions using the virtual currency, Bankoz. It serves as a practical and interactive platform within the classroom economy, allowing students to experience the process of buying and selling tangible and intangible items, thereby enhancing their financial literacy and decision-making skills. The physical Bankee Store is typically set up as a designated

learning experience, developing their financial competence in both physical and virtual marketplaces.

Teachers' role

Teachers play a crucial role in guiding students through the program, setting financial goals, and monitoring their progress. They act as facilitators and provide support to ensure the successful implementation of the classroom economy model. It is worth mentioning that the pilot phase of Bankee was launched by NBK last year, with the participation of 9 schools from various governorates, including six government and three private schools. The primary objective of this phase is to evaluate the program's implementation settings by engaging teachers and students in introductory workshops to assess, enhance, and modify implementation features to align with the existing educational curriculum.



During the signing of the agreement.

real investment for them." "NBK is confident that this program will make a real difference in the lives of school students by providing them with the required knowledge and skills to manage their finances and make decisions that support their financial future," he added.

"NBK always seeks to actively contribute to the development of this generation of young Kuwaitis and spreading

and have the required financial knowledge and skills to achieve sustainable development, economic wellbeing for individuals and the community at large.

15,000 students

Having achieved a remarkable success in its pilot phase, Bankee encouraged more schools and students to join it. Out of 150 applicants, 30 schools have been



The audience listens to an explanation as to how the Bankee program works within schools.



China sees moderate Q3 growth as hurdles persist for recovery

Sluggish external demand weighs heavily on exports: Survey

BEIJING: China's economy is expected to have seen moderate growth in the third quarter, according to an AFP survey ahead of data this week, while experts warn that there were still significant hurdles for its recovery.

Authorities have been seeking ways to reinvigorate activity in an economy grappling with a major property crisis and weaker consumption since Beijing abolished its strict zero-COVID policy last year. Analysts polled by AFP saw an average 4.3 percent on-year growth in gross domestic product in July-September, falling short of more ambitious projections of a sustained recovery.

"Troubles in the property sector have spilled over into wider consumer activity and translated into consumers still spending a smaller share of their income relative to pre-COVID," Capital Economics' Sheana Yue said. Beijing has set a goal of around five percent growth for 2023 -- one of its lowest targets in years following decades of breakneck expansion.

And that goal "is not a strong number considering last year's low base", Gene Ma of the Institute of International Finance said. "The main challenge is still housing." While real estate was once a driving force for the world's number two economy, many developers are now fighting for survival—exacerbating a crisis of confidence among potential buyers.

"Given the large stock of empty homes, ageing population, and the end of speculation fever, we expect home sales to remain subdued for years to come," said Ma. The newest quarterly figures are due to be released on Wednesday, the same day that a slew of world leaders including Russian President Vladimir Putin arrive in Beijing for

a summit on China's Belt and Road—potentially meaning they could be delayed.

Authorities last year postponed the release of third-quarter figures ahead of a major political conference, without providing a reason. Experts say China is on track to reach its modest goal for the year, with AFP's survey of analysts forecasting annual growth of 4.92 percent.

But last quarter's results missed expectations following a rapid resumption in activity in the first three months of this year. The economy grew 6.3 percent in the second quarter, much weaker than the 7.1 percent predicted in a survey of analysts by AFP. "Households and businesses are ever-so-slowly gaining some confidence," said economist Harry Murphy Cruise of Moody's, adding that the country's growth for the entire year is on pace to "sneak into the bottom" of official targets.

Exports, another traditional engine for growth, have also flagged this year. As many major economies face the prospect of rising inflation, consumers around the world are buying fewer Chinese products. "Sluggish external demand will continue to weigh heavily on (China's) exports and manufacturing activity," said Brian Coulton, chief economist at Fitch Ratings. In the face of growing challenges, authorities are coming under pressure to step in with stimulus, but other than a few small interest rate cuts and pledges of action, there has been little of substance out of Beijing.

Authorities have so far been "hesitant to come with the needed 'big bazooka' stimulus", said Robobank's Teeuwe Mevisen. But help could be on the way. "According to some sources, Beijing is



SHENYANG: Vendors wait for customers at a market in Shenyang, in China's northeastern Liaoning province on October 16, 2023. — AFP

considering... 1 trillion yuan (\$137.0 billion) in stimulus during the last quarter of this year," said Mevisen. And Jing Liu, Greater China chief economist at HSBC Global Research, said that while the country is "now facing both cyclical and structural headwinds", it is starting to see signs of recovery in consumption demand and property sales in major cities.

"In the upcoming quarters, we expect the gov-

ernment to focus more on structural reforms, such as supporting consumption-led growth, as well as fostering new growth drivers in manufacturing upgrading and green development," said Liu. China's economy expanded 3.0 percent in 2022, well short of the official target of 5.5 percent, and one of the lowest rates in four decades, owing to the impact of strict COVID containment measures. — AFP

Meloni targets tax cuts, working mums in budget

MILAN: Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni outlined her proposed 2024 budget on Monday, focused on tax cuts and incentives to get women back to work after having children.

Ministers in Meloni's hard-right government agreed around 24 billion euros (\$25 billion) in new measures focused on support for low- and medium-income families and companies after months of high inflation. There is concern in the financial markets at the lack of focus on getting Italy's public finances in order, with Rome late last month having raised its deficit forecast. But at a press conference in Rome, Meloni insisted it was a budget that was "very serious and realistic and which does not waste resources, but concentrates them on the main priorities".

These priorities, financed with 15.7 billion euros in additional debt and unspecified spending cuts, are intended to "defend the purchasing power of families", the prime minister said. The government is now forecasting a deficit of 4.3 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2024, up from 3.7 percent estimated previously. The announcement in late September drew an immediate response from the financial markets, with borrowing rates for the debt-laden euro-zone country rising sharply.

The first budget from Meloni, the leader of the post-Fascist Brothers of Italy party, drew praise for its prudence. But commentators have warned of a loosening of the purse strings this year as she and her coalition partners seek to fulfill their electoral promises, particularly ahead of European Parliament elections next year. The budget plans Monday include renewing a reduction in salary contributions for those earning up to 35,000 euros a year, at a cost of around 10 billion euros. Meloni said this would put an average of 100 euros a month into the pockets of 14 million Italians. — AFP

Australia outlines plan to regulate crypto exchanges

SYDNEY: Australia plans to protect people from cryptocurrency collapses by forcing the platforms to get a financial services license, the government said Monday. Any crypto exchange or digital asset platform with more than Aus\$5 million (US\$3.2 million) in aggregate assets would have to comply, the Treasury said in a proposal paper.

About one in four Australians own some cryptocurrency, it said. Cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin rely on decentralized cryptography to secure transactions instead of the traditional banking system. "Collapses of digital asset platforms, both locally and globally, have seen Australians lose their assets or be forced to wait their turn amongst long lines of creditors," the Treasury said.

"These reforms seek to reduce the risk of these collapses happening, by lifting the standard of their operations and increasing their oversight." The government invited feedback on its proposal by December 1, with further consultation due in 2024 on proposed legislation. If they are required to get a license, digital asset platforms would be governed by Australian financial services law. The law includes minimum solvency and cash reserve requirements and the need to be efficient, honest and fair, keep records, and manage conflicts of interest. The platforms would also be subject to specific standards governing their holding and transacting in cryptocurrencies. — AFP

Yagoot takes home KD 100,000 prize from Gulf Bank

KUWAIT: As part of its keenness to reward its customers, Gulf Bank has announced Abdulaziz Fahad Ibrahim Al-Yagoot, as the lucky winner of the quarterly Al-Danah draw prize of KD 100,000 which took place on Oct 12, 2023 under the supervision and presence of representatives from both the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Ernst & Young.

The Al-Danah Millionaire account is one of the most rewarding and prestigious savings accounts in Kuwait, with periodic draws that have been creating millionaires since its launch in 1998. Gulf Bank is proud to add two new winners to the country's list of millionaires annually.

For the seventeenth consecutive year, Al-Danah account has been offering monthly opportunities to win KD 1,000 to ten lucky winners, in addition to two quarterly draws with KD 100,000 prizes each, a semi-annual draw prize of KD 1 million, and a grand draw prize of KD 2 million.

While the Al-Danah Millionaire account custom-

ers await the announcement of the grand draw prize winner of KD 2 million on Jan 18, 2024, the opportunity to deposit and qualify for the grand prize draw still applies until November 30, 2023. One of the many advantages of the Al-Danah account, is being the only account in Kuwait that transfers the customers' chances of winning from the previous year to the next as part of a program that rewards customers for their loyalty to Gulf Bank.

In order to increase one's chances of winning, customers must maintain a minimum of KD 200 in their accounts, or deposit continuously to increase their chances of winning. Al-Danah account holders are eligible to win Gulf Bank's monthly, quarterly, and annual Al-Danah draws. Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience.

Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining robust developments in sustainability at environmental, social and governance levels through diverse sustainability



initiatives, strategically selected to benefit the Bank both internally and externally. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various parties to achieve it.

Chinese-funded airport opens in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH: A billion-dollar Chinese-funded airport began operations in Cambodia Monday, with local officials hoping it will revive the vital tourism sector. Phnom Penh became one of Beijing's strongest regional allies under former strongman leader Hun Sen, receiving huge sums of Chinese investment. Cambodian ministers welcomed the first commercial flight from Bangkok at the 3,600-metre (11,800-foot) runway at Siem Reap Angkor International Airport (SAI) on Monday.

The \$1.1 billion hub, built on 700 hectares of land, will handle up to 12 million passengers annually from 2040. "This achievement will be a key factor in boosting the recovery of tourism in Cambodia," Deputy Prime Minister Yongsey Vissoth said during a ceremony at the new facility.

Mao Havannal, head of the State Secretariat of Civil Aviation, touted it as "a historic milestone" for Cambodia—as well as a tangible result of the two nations' increasingly close diplomatic relations.

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet and a top Chinese leader are expected to officially open the air-



Siem Reap Angkor International Airport (SAI)

port next month, officials said. Hun Manet, who succeeded his father Hun Sen in August, met Chinese President Xi Jinping last month. The Cambodian leader is currently in the Chinese capital for the upcoming Belt and Road Initiative forum.

SAI airport is located roughly 40 kilometers (25

miles) from Cambodia's famed Angkor Wat temples, the country's main tourist destination. Tourism is hugely important to the country's economy, but visitors nosedived to below 200,000 in 2021 from roughly 6.6 million pre-pandemic. Cambodia received 3.7 foreign tourists so far in 2023. — AFP

EU's bitter bid to agree new budget rules before year end

LUXEMBOURG: The clock is ticking, the debts are racking up but the EU still remains far from a deal on new budget rules. When EU finance ministers gather in Luxembourg this week, there will be one headache at the top of their agenda: reforming the EU's fiscal rules.

The current rules, known as the Stability and Growth Pact, are scorned by many EU countries—some of which often fell afoul of the strict stipulations—because of the one-size-fits-all approach. If ministers do not agree by the end of the year, the old rules will be back in force in 2024. The EU first suspended the pact in March 2020 as coronavirus ran rampant in Europe, forcing the bloc's 27 member states to pour billions of euros into their economies to keep households and businesses afloat.

Then just as Europe reached the light at the end of the tunnel, Russia invaded Ukraine last year, sending energy prices spiraling and forcing another suspension. Supporters of greater fiscal discipline ar-



Reforming the EU fiscal rules will be one headache when EU finance ministers gather in Luxembourg this week.— AFP

gue that tough rules are needed to control national budgets from ballooning, while critics say they curb member states from investing just as Europe needs to fend off challenges from China.

Today the pact says a country's debt must be 60 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP), while its deficit must be three percent of GDP. The reforms published in April would keep these objectives, but allow a more tailored, country-specific approach

to debt reduction, with greater flexibility. Member states are, however, divided over whether the reforms should keep some blunt rules to lower debts and deficits every year. The current rules suffer from many shortcomings, according to Bruegel think tank senior fellow Zsolt Darvas, who said the reforms would be a "major improvement".

He pointed to "many different targets" and "sometimes conflicting rules within the current framework", adding there is too much focus on budgets on a year-on-year basis. "The main issue is whether in the medium and long term, the public debt is sustainable," Darvas told AFP.

The European Commission's reforms propose that member states work with the EU's executive arm to formulate a debt-reduction plan for their country over four years. The plan can even be extended to seven years in exchange for reforms and investments. Every government accepts the need for reform, but some countries, including Germany, want to maintain certain targets to ensure discipline over debts and deficit. The stickiest subjects include common safeguards on debt and deficit reduction that has pitted France against Germany. In a concession to Germany, the reforms demand countries reduce their deficit by a minimum of 0.5 percent every year until they no longer exceed the three percent limit. — AFP



Fahad Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah



Sheikh Abdullah Nasser Al-Sabah, Chairman of Burgan Bank, and his guests at the dinner reception.

Burgan Bank chairman hosts dinner reception for Kuwait's financial leaders in Marrakech

An exclusive event for all Kuwaiti delegations on sidelines of WBG, IMF meetings

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank recently hosted a prestigious VIP dinner reception under the auspices of the Bank's Chairman, Sheikh Abdullah Nasser Al-Sabah, at the Assoufid Golf Club Marrakech, for all the Kuwaiti delegations taking part in this year's Annual Meetings of

event, the evening was marked with numerous fruitful conversations that hold the key to limitless market growth within the financial industry in Kuwait.

"It was an honor to host this reception on behalf of Burgan Bank, as it allowed us to bring together key figures from within Kuwait's banking industry, in a rare opportunity to connect and engage beyond the bounds of our traditional industry events. On the heels of the IMF meetings, this was a great opportunity for us to continue building on the important conversations that had been initiated during these meetings; connecting and building bridges with potential partners to usher in positive industry change," commented Chairman Al-Sabah. "The full extent of what we can achieve as humans, financial institutions, or decision-makers cannot be measured by the value of our individual ideas, but the potential that sharing those ideas holds."

Among the distinguished and honorable guests of the dinner reception were Fahad Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah, Kuwait's Minister of Finance, His Excellency Jassem Mohamed Al-Budaiwi, Secretary General of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, His Excellency Ambassador Abdullatif Al-Yahya, Kuwait's Ambassador to Morocco and Sheikh Ahmed Duaij Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA), as well as all top executives and senior management representatives from all Kuwaiti banks taking part in this year's international confab. The reception was also attended by Burgan's delegation at the IMF Annual Meetings, including Faisal Mansour



(From right to left) Faisal Mansour Sarkhou, Abdulwahab Al-Rushood, Sheikh Abdullah Nasser Al-Sabah, Dr Anwar Al-Mudhaf, Isam Jassem Al-Sager, Abdullatif Al-Yahya, Jassem Mohamed Al-Budaiwi, Adel Abdul Wahab Al-Majed, Fahad Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah, Sheikh Ahmed Duaij Al-Sabah, Bader Khalid Al-Shalfan, Raed Jawad Bukhamseen, Abdullah Al-Sumait and Waleed Mandani.

Sarkhou, Vice Chairman: Abdullah Mohammad Al-Sharekh and Mazen Issam Hawwa, Board Members; and Abdullah Abdulmajeed Marafie, Deputy General Manager of Investments and Treasury.

Throughout the dinner reception, which tastefully entwined traditional Kuwaiti hospitality and rich Moroccan culture, many guests were encouraged to expand on the primary topics of discussion that the Annual Meetings 2023 agenda focused on, such as macro challenges, digitization and fintech, climate

and sustainability, combating inequality, and geoeconomics. It was also an excellent opportunity to encourage closer ties and connections between the key financial decision-makers and banking thought leaders in Kuwait.

It serves to note that the Burgan dinner reception was a true reflection of the Bank's active role in driving important and valuable conversations around the role of the banking and financial sector, and how its participants can grow around sustainability and

environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles, promising growth and development for the institutions and their surrounding communities.

Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is currently the second-largest conventional bank by assets in Kuwait. From its earliest days, the Bank has significantly focused on the corporate and financial institution sectors, in addition to diversifying its offering to cater to its growing retail and private banking customer base.



Burgan Bank logo

the Boards of Governors of the World Bank Group (WBG) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The reception sought to encourage the exchange of views, experiences, and ideas with monetary and financial policymakers from within Kuwait's banking sector. With more than 50 high-profile guests, who were present in Marrakech for the



Sheikh Abdullah Nasser Al-Sabah, Chairman of Burgan Bank, welcomes guests to his dinner reception.



Sheikh Abdullah Nasser Al-Sabah, Chairman of Burgan Bank, and his guests at the dinner reception.



Snapshots from Burgan Bank's prestigious VIP dinner reception

FROM PENCIL AND PAPER TO MEDIA GIANT: A CENTURY OF DISNEY

The Walt Disney Company celebrated its 100th anniversary on Monday, marking the occasion with the release of a short film featuring more than 500 characters from 85 films. The nine-minute short entitled "Once Upon a Studio" combines digital images, hand drawings and live-action to honor the studio's mammoth body of work. Here are some major milestones in the history of the global entertainment giant.

Birth of Disney

Walter Elias Disney is born in December 1901 to an Irish-Canadian father and a German-American mother in Chicago, Illinois. In 1923, he joins his brother Roy in Hollywood, where they set up a studio in a garage.

Mickey and Snow White

Mickey Mouse makes his first appearance in the 1928 short film "Steamboat Willie". Initially christened Mortimer, the mouse is later renamed with inspiration from Walt Disney's wife Lilly. Mickey Mouse becomes so famous during the 1930s and 40s that he is used as a code name for the Normandy landings by Allied troops on June 6, 1944.

Disney's first color feature film "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" is released in 1937 and awarded an honorary Oscar the following year. The company issues its first shares in 1940 and employs over 1,000 people at its studios in Burbank, California.

Disneyland

On July 17, 1955, Disney opens



its first theme park in Anaheim, California, with a second one, Magic Kingdom, unveiled in Orlando in 1971. The parks revolutionize the tourism industry and later expand outside the United States — first in Tokyo in 1983 and later in Paris, Hong Kong and Singapore. Walt Disney dies in 1966 at the age of 65. He still holds the record for the most Oscars won during a lifetime, having been honored 22 times. "I only hope that we never lose sight of one thing: that it was all started by a mouse,"

he said. Walt's brother Roy heads the group for five years.

Eisner to the rescue

Michael Eisner takes over the helm of the group in 1984. During his 21 years at the helm, he transforms Disney into a powerful multinational entertainment company and sales soar.

The group buys the ABC television network, the ESPN sports channel and Miramax Films, as well as developing merchandising including clothes, video games, toys, records and cruises.

Disney even creates its own currency — the "Disney Dollar" — which was used in theme parks for 30 years until being discontinued in 2016. Eisner steps down after a shareholder revolt in 2003-4, led by Walt's nephew Roy Disney.

Pixar and superheroes

Bob Iger becomes Disney CEO in 2005 and over 15 years boosts share prices through acquisitions and brand diversification. Disney relaunches its animation business with the \$7.4-billion

purchase of Pixar in 2006. It then buys Marvel in 2009 for \$4 billion and Lucasfilm and "Star Wars" in 2012 for \$4.05 billion. International box office sales for "Star Wars: The Last Jedi", which was released for the franchise's 40th anniversary in 2017, exceeded \$1.3 billion according to IMDbPro.

The streaming era

To compete with streaming giant Netflix, the group launches Disney+ in 2019, an on-demand service offering films and series from Disney, Marvel, Lucasfilm and 21st Century Fox. The success of Disney+ helps to partially revive the group, which suffers losses after the Covid-19 pandemic forces it to close parks and cinemas. But the streaming platform begins to lose subscribers in 2022, leading Disney to call back its former CEO Bob Iger. In a quest for profitability, the company announces 7,000 layoffs. By mid-2023, Disney+ has more than 145 million subscribers.

'Woke' battle

Although traditionally conservative, Disney in 2022 denounces a new law prohibiting Florida elementary schools from addressing subjects related to gender and sexual orientation. In his campaign against "woke" ideology, the state's Republican Governor Ron DeSantis hits back at Disney by ending the special economic status enjoyed by the group in Florida since 1967. In May 2023, Disney decides to abandon plans to build a \$900 million campus in central Florida to house 2,000 employees. — AFP



Yadira Martinez, member of the "Hasta Encontrarte" ("Until we find you") collective, prepares her missing son's favorite dish at her home in Irapuato, Guanajuato State, Mexico. — AFP photos



Cooking with love: Recipe book honors Mexico's missing

When Yadira Martinez makes her son's favorite dish it feels like he is back home, so she and other mothers decided to share recipes in a cookbook dedicated to their missing children. "When I prepare his eggs I feel that he's here, that he'll come and sit down to eat with us," Martinez said at her house in Irapuato in Guanajuato, one of Mexico's most violent states. And proceeds from sales of the recipe book are helping to pay for the tireless search by her and other mothers for their children.

Around 3,700 people have gone missing in Guanajuato state in central Mexico, out of a total of more than 112,000 nationwide. Most disappearances have taken place since 2006, when the government deployed the military in the war on drugs, leading to a spiral of violence.

Using an onion, tomatoes and chili peppers, Martinez makes the Mexican-style eggs with fried beans that her son Jaime loved so much until he disappeared in 2018 at the age of 22. "Stuffed pepper for Antonio" and "Lasagna for Raymundo" are among more than 70 other dishes in the book aimed at keeping memories of the missing alive.

Karla Jimenez shared a recipe for enchiladas, the favorite dish of her brother Juan Valentin, who disappeared, aged 37, in 2020. The book has a note on each missing person and their families' struggles to find them. "We all have a favorite dish. We have all cooked with love



Yadira Martinez (center) and other members of the "Hasta Encontrarte" ("Until we find you") collective, search for missing relatives in Penjamo, Guanajuato State, Mexico.

for someone, or someone cooked for us with love," said Zahara Gomez Lucini, the photographer behind the project.

"It's about talking about the missing in a different way, not just about the search for them or their death, but also about what they like, what they don't like, what music they listen to," she added. Some 2,000 copies of the cookbook have been printed since October 2022. Half of the profits from sales are donated to search groups.

Desperate search

Martinez has worked with the collective "Hasta Encontrarte" ("Until I find

you") for four years looking for her son and other missing persons. The mothers report having located 180 bodies in Guanajuato since forming the group in 2021. On one recent day, members used metal rods to search a patch of land after receiving an anonymous tip about possible remains.

"Afterward, we sniff the rods to see if there's a smell of putrefaction. It might be because there is an unmarked grave," said Carla Vasquez, 20, who is looking for her missing brother. Armed police guarded the mothers from the dangers posed by criminal groups — a reflection of the risks they face even looking for the missing. In May 2023, a mother searching for her son was murdered in Guanajuato, where cartels vie for control of lucrative drug-trafficking routes.

Despite the dangers, the state is a major tourist destination and an industrial hub home to factories of foreign auto giants. Guanajuato "attracts German or North American investments, but it's also a state that attracts drug trafficking groups," said security analyst David Saucedo. In addition to the many missing, more than 420,000 people have been murdered in Mexico since 2006. The country's forensic system is overwhelmed, and tens of thousands of unidentified bodies lie unclaimed in morgues or mass graves. — AFP

Young slave, once painted out, is back in a work at New York's Met

For years, the three children from a well-to-do New Orleans family seemed to be the only figures in a nearly forgotten painting attributed to French artist Jacques Amans. The family's slave, Belizaire, had simply been painted over, erased from both history and the picture, which this week went on display — with his image restored — at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

For the prestigious Manhattan museum, the artwork represents "the first naturalistic representation of a named enslaved individual pictured in a Southern setting," said Sylvia Yount, the curator in charge of the museum's American wing. "We have no other work like this in the collection, and it allows us to tell a lot of different, interesting and complicated stories," she told AFP, standing before the 1837 oil painting, on display since Thursday.



Curator Sylvia Yount stands before French painter Jacques Amans' "Belizaire and the Frey Children" at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. — AFP

And yet despite its significance, the young enslaved man — standing erect, arms crossed and with a grave expression — had nearly disappeared forever from the painting, commissioned by the children's father, Frederick Frey, a successful New Orleans banker originally from Germany.

Painted over

While no one knows the exact reason, the mixed-race lad was painted over, probably early in the 20th century. Frey and his wife were both dead by then, and the painting had been passed on to an heir. "The family may not have been proud, or they may have been ashamed" to have an enslaved worker in the painting "because it really implicates them, you know, as a slaveholding family," said Yount.

"The other side of that could be that they just didn't want a black figure shown with their white ancestors." In 1972, the New Orleans Museum of Art acquired the painting but kept it in storage until reselling it in 2004. In 2005 the work's new owner had it restored—and the young slave reappeared. —AFP



British singer of The Streets, Mike Skinner, performs on stage during the Rock-en-Seine music festival on August 27, 2011, in Saint-Cloud, near Paris, France. — AFP

The Streets' Mike Skinner: 'AI will force us to be more bonkers'

Mike Skinner of The Streets has returned "rejuvenated" with a new album and his own self-made movie, optimistic for the future of music as it sits on the cusp of an AI revolution. Having defined a musical era in the early 2000s with his unique mash-up of UK garage and US hip-hop, Skinner retired The Streets in 2011.

The project flickered back to life a few years ago with occasional tours and singles, and on Friday sees the release of the first proper album in 12 years, "The Darker The Shadow, The Brighter The Light". But Skinner's real obsession for the past decade has been the movie of the same name which it soundtracks — one in which he starred, as well as wrote, directed, shot, edited and funded by himself.

"It's actually a lot easier to make a film than you think... It's just the amount of work that's the problem," he told AFP during a trip to Paris. "I really enjoyed each individual job — recording the sound, lighting the scenes. Even the special effects — which are awful — I did myself," he said with typically self-deprecating frankness.

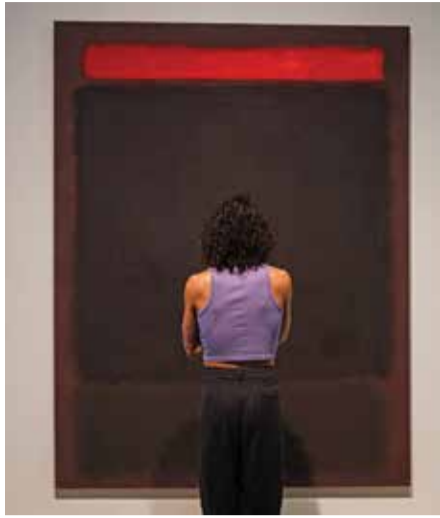
Set in the underworld of London clubs, the film has the same jarring feel as his music — a homespun delivery that straddles the line between amateurish and daringly experimental. "The reason it seems experimental is just because I did everything myself and I didn't really know how it's supposed to be done," he said. "But my best work in the past I think has been when I didn't know how things were supposed to be done. I sabotage myself... Even if I could make my stuff sound slick I would pull it apart because I would feel that's fake somehow. I can't quite bear to do things well," he added with a chuckle.

It is that embracing of imperfection that has made The Streets such a singular musical creation. It also gives Skinner hope for the future at a time when the industry is freaking out over the coming deluge of AI-generated music. "AI will make human creativity so much weirder because in order to stand out against that you won't be able to copy anything," Skinner said. "It will force humans to be a bit more bonkers and a bit more avant-garde." — AFP



Yadira Martinez (third left) poses with other mothers, members of the "Hasta Encontrarte" ("Until we find you") collective, during a search day in Penjamo, Guanajuato State, Mexico.

Lifestyle



A visitor looks at a painting by US artist Mark Rothko (1903-1970).



A visitor takes a photograph of the painting "No.9 (White and Black on Wine)", 1958, by US artist Mark Rothko (1903-1970).



Paintings by US artist Mark Rothko (1903-1970) are displayed.

A huge show of 115 works by Mark Rothko opens in Paris this week. His son says he combined a "European soul" with "the freedom of America" to become an icon of 20th-century art. The show at the Louis Vuitton Foundation spans Rothko's entire career, from the more traditional figurative pictures to the huge rectangles of brooding colour for which he is best remembered. Rothko's stated goal was to "raise painting to the same level as music and poetry", said his son Christopher Rothko, who helped curate the exhibition and has written a new collection of essays to coincide with it.



Curator Christopher Rothko poses for a photograph at exhibition showing paintings of his father, US artist Mark Rothko (1903-1970).

"My father died when I was six but we talked about music a great deal," he told AFP ahead of the opening on Wednesday.

"He spoke of Mozart, smiling with tears in his eyes, and I think it's the same effect with his paintings," he added. Marcus Rothkovitch was born in 1903 in Daugavpils, then known as Dvinsk, in modern-day Latvia—his family emigrating 10 years later to the United States. He discovered his vocation fairly late, in the 1930s, but his early works already capture a dark mood, full of isolated and melancholy figures. Figurative art did not come naturally—"he became aware of not being



Paintings by US artist Mark Rothko (1903-1970), a major figure in American painting and was associated with Abstract Expressionism, are displayed at the exhibition dedicated to his works at the Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris.--AFP photos

"GREAT VIBRATIONS" OF MARK ROTHKO AT BLOCKBUSTER PARIS SHOW

able to paint without mutilating it," said co-curator Suzanne Page—and by the 1940s he was dabbling in surrealism.

New language

As for many artists, the horrors of World War II and the Holocaust forced him to seek out a new language in art. And it was with the "Multiforms" of the late 1940s that his work evolved into abstract shapes—at this stage looking like brightly colored ink blots but with the famous rectangles lurking among

them, waiting to take centre stage.

He settled into his late style in the 1950s and stuck with it until his death in 1970 -- vast ragged rectangles of incredible colour that somehow give off "a great vibration", as Page puts it. Seventy of these works are displayed at the Louis Vuitton Foundation, which has funnelled the vast profits of the LVMH luxury brand into a series of blockbuster shows lately, most recently an unprecedented collection by Jean-Paul Basquiat and Andy Warhol.

Rothko's shifting moods are on display, from the blood-reds and maroons of the "Seagram Murals", to the near-monochrome "Blackforms", to a sudden burst of brightness after he suffered a mild aneurysm that led to warnings from his doctor. "There's an inner glow even in the lighter paintings," said his son. "He only gives you the suggestion of the idea. You have to bring a large piece of yourself in order to communicate with him."

Years of heavy drinking and a mari-

tal breakdown took their toll. He was 66 when he took an overdose of barbiturates and slit open a wrist. "He sought to express fundamental human emotions—tragedy, death, ecstasy," said Page. It is all there "if you take the time and the risk to look inside the painting and look for a very long time".—AFP

Amusement park stages experiment to find horror 'sweet spot'

"This was the scariest thing I have ever been through," said Vicki Baath after being hooded and made to feel "like a hostage". "I didn't know where to go and where they would lead me," said the 45-year-old teacher who was also walked into a dark wood, tied up on a bed and surrounded by creepy voices and forms. She had just completed a horror-themed experiment that sought to establish the perfect balance between fear and excitement. In an observation room, researchers and the production team followed the spectacle on a monitor.

The "Peak Fear" experiment is a collaboration between the Liseberg theme park and the Recreational Fear Lab at Aarhus University which seeks to "explore the limits of fear, and to find the sweet spot between fun and the unpleasant". Karl Svedung, head of marketing for Liseberg, said the experiment would allow them to expand their "horror experiences". "We want to develop all the time... and that requires new insights," Svedung said.

Clowns and blood

The experience is divided into five stages focusing on different types of

fear. The participants navigate flashing lights, confined and dark spaces as well as blood splattered walls. Actors play scary monsters while in some cases other victims try to push them to their breaking point. After completing it, Baath said she was "really proud". Only two participants out of 1,600 applicants were selected to take part in the tailor-made horror experience. The two were not told anything about it beforehand—meaning they didn't know what to expect or even how long it would last.

Helge Branscheidt, 38, a hair and makeup artist from Hamburg, Germany, signed up after hearing about it online. Despite his fondness for horror movies, he admitted being a bit scared and called the experience "crazy, creepy and really terrifying." "But because I love horror so much it was really the right thing for me... I'm still like kind of flying high because it was so special," he said. The experiment was overseen by researcher Mathias Clasen of the Recreational Fear Lab at Aarhus University. Recreational fear refers to "behaviors in which people derive pleasure from being frightened," Clasen explained.

Health benefits

A camera filmed the subjects' faces and expressions throughout the experiment. They were also fitted with a host of sensors, measuring things like their heartbeat and other fear responses such as how sweaty their palms became. With just two test subjects, Clasen admitted that from a scientific perspective there wasn't much that could be concluded from this particular experiment. But it was still an opportunity to examine the participants' responses in an extreme setting.

The research has shown that engaging in frightening activities can have surprising health benefits. For instance, during the pandemic, they found that people who reported regularly watching horror films had better mental health outcomes during lockdowns. "People who watch many scary movies reported better psychological resilience and fewer symptoms of stress," Clasen told AFP. According to Mathis, this suggests that playful engagements with fear can act as a type of "stress vaccine".—AFP



(From left to right) Fetcher (Daniel Mays), Nick (Ramesh Ranganathan), Mac (Lynn Ferguson), Bunty (Imelda Staunton), Ginger (Thandiwe Newton), Babs (Jane Horrocks) and Fowler (David Bradley).

Team behind 'Chicken Run' sequel hail stop-motion filmmaking

The director of a long-awaited sequel to stop-motion classic "Chicken Run" believes the "unique" filmmaking technique has enduring cinematic appeal, as the new film premieres in Britain on Saturday.

"Chicken Run: Dawn of the Nugget", from Aardman Studios—the British animation studio behind "Wallace and Gromit"—has a big-screen debut at the London Film Festival ahead of its release on Netflix on December 15. The beloved original in 2000 -- a spoof on wartime prison escape dramas, about a flock of chickens fleeing the clutches of a sadistic farmer—remains the highest-grossing stop-motion animation of all time.

The painstaking filmmaking method involves physically manipulating objects—in this case puppets of chickens, other animals and human characters—frame-by-frame to create the illusion of movement. Sam Fell, the director behind the follow-up, expects it to prove similarly popular on the streaming platform because people still crave "the handmade" even as society becomes ever more technological. "Stop motion is truly handmade, it's a very tactile thing, and a piece of stop-motion animation is a one-off event that's been captured on camera—it's lightning in a bottle," he told AFP ahead of its red carpet unveiling.

For the film's production designer Darren Dubicki, the use of physical materials in the process helps forge a spe-

cial relationship with audiences. "When you see characters made from materials that you're kind of used to... there's a warmth and charm to it that really appeals," he said.

'Like a heist film'

"Dawn of the Nugget" sees returning lead characters Ginger and Rocky safe on an island bird sanctuary, but with a daughter, Molly, who is itching to see the world but gets trapped on a factory farm. Fell and Aardman Studios have been laboring over the much-anticipated sequel for six years, carefully plotting how to bring their cherished creations back to the screen for another action-packed adventure. "In the end, the thing that cracked it was a simple line... 'this time they're breaking in,'" the director explained.

"It just conjured up a new kind of movie for Aardman, like a break-in movie, like a heist film, and all of the promise of that premise." Finishing the film took so long in part because of the pandemic, which required some special measures for the crew—some of whom worked on the original—as well as the puppets. "Once a chicken had been animated, it had to go into quarantine. So there was a chicken quarantine area with UV lights, where the chicken would be out of action for three weeks!" recalled Fell.—AFP



Sports

Afghanistan defeat champions England in World Cup shock

'It's a very proud moment to be here in the World Cup beating the last champions'

NEW DELHI: Afghanistan pulled off one of the greatest World Cup shocks on Sunday when they defeated defending champions England by 69 runs in New Delhi. Chasing 285 to win, after opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz had hit a blistering 80, England were bowled out for 215 despite Harry Brook's 66 with spinners Mujeeb Ur Rahman and Rashid Khan claiming three wickets each. "It's a very proud moment to be here in the World Cup beating the last champions, it is a good moment for the whole nation and the team. A wonderful performance for the bowlers and the batters," said Mujeeb. The stunning upset gave Afghanistan just their second World Cup win to add to a lone victory over Scotland at the 2015 tournament.

They came into Sunday's clash having lost their opening two games in India and on a 14-match losing World Cup streak. After Gurbaz and the recalled Ikram Alikhil, with 58, had given them a decent target to defend, Afghanistan's bowlers went to work, striking at regular intervals. "It was disappointing, having won the toss and elected to bowl," said England skipper Jos Buttler. "Congratulations to Afghanistan, they outplayed us today." Jonny Bairstow (two) was lbw to Fazalhaq Farooqi in the second over before Joe Root was clean bowled by 22-year-old man of the match Mujeeb for 11. Mohammad Nabi got rid of Dawid Malan, who made 140 against Bangladesh, for 32 to precipitate a slide which saw England slump to 138-6. Buttler was clean bowled

by seamer Naveen-ul-Haq for nine, Rashid Khan had Liam Livingstone lbw on 10 before Nabi also dismissed Sam Curran (10). England were tied down, at one stage going more than eight overs without hitting a boundary until Brook managed the team's lone six of the innings in the 31st over. Mujeeb sent back Chris Woakes before effectively sealing the game in his next over, having Brook caught behind by Alikhil with England at 169-8.

Brook's 66 came off 61 balls with seven fours and a six. Late fireworks from Adil Rashid (20), Reece Topleley (15) and Mark Wood (18) only served to take England past the 200-mark. Earlier, Gurbaz, 21, piled up his runs off 57 balls with eight fours and four sixes to register his eighth score in excess of fifty in his ODI career. However, he was furious that he was unable to go on to make a sixth century when he was involved in a disastrous run-out mix-up with captain Hashmatullah Shahidi in the 19th over. Gurbaz failed to make his ground and Buttler whipped off the bails from a throw by substitute fielder David Willey.

Gurbaz run-out anger

An angry Gurbaz smashed his bat into a chair as he departed with his team on 122-3. Gurbaz had needed just 33 balls to get to his half-century as Afghanistan, put into bat, stormed to 100 without loss from 77 deliveries. Once Gurbaz was dismissed, England's spinners dragged the champions back into the contest in



NEW DELHI: Afghanistan's Rashid Khan (C) celebrates with teammate after taking the wicket of England's Mark Wood (L) during the 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup one-day international (ODI) match between England and Afghanistan at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi. — AFP

the middle overs. The impressive Adil Rashid finished with 3-42 from his 10 overs having initially broken Afghanistan's 114-run opening stand when he had Ibrahim Zadran (28) caught. But Alikhil chimed in with a 66-ball 58 after surviving being hit on the shoulder by a 147 km/h delivery from fast bowler Mark Wood. Mujeeb added 28 to the total off 16 balls as Afghanistan fin-

ished strongly. England's seamers endured a day to forget with Sam Curran conceding 46 runs off four overs and new ball bowler Chris Woakes coughing up 41 off his four. England went into Sunday's game after a loss to New Zealand and victory over Bangladesh while Afghanistan suffered heavy defeats by six wickets to Bangladesh and eight wickets to India. — AFP



KOC member Al-Jraiwi seen with Ali Al-Kharafi and Masoud Jouhar Hayat.

Al-Jraiwi asks PAS to find solutions for supporting Equestrian

KUWAIT: Member of Kuwait Olympic Committee Board of Directors Rider Ghazi Al-Jraiwi lauded the obvious development of Kuwait Equestrian Sport lately due to the support of the Public Authority for Sport (PAS) and efforts of the board of directors of Kuwait Equestrian Federation which resulted in having a local league championship with the participation of Kuwaiti clubs during the past two seasons for the first time in the history of Kuwaiti equestrian sport, that in addition to organizing several international championships of the two and three star categories in the presence of representatives from the International Federation for Equestrian Sport.

Al-Jraiwi said meetings were held with PAS Director General Yousef Al-Baidan with him and head of the riders committee along with Member of the

Federation's Board Rider Ali Al-Kharafi, and PAS Board Member Sheikh Yousef Al-Sabah to stress the role of PAS in supporting Kuwait Equestrianism in order to continue its march and take this noble sport to new heights as it started attracting many new riders due to the major technical level it reached in the past few years. The meeting resulted in having preliminary solutions to support the equestrian sport in the coming period so it can prepare its schedule as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, President of Kuwait Equestrian Federation Masoud Jouhar Hayat said it is necessary to find solutions by PAS to support the local league which contributes to the development of riders and horses so the pace of development continues as it started to gain popularity among the youth which promises a bright future for the sport, that in agreement with the instructions of HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah who stressed the state's support for the sport when he received the players participating at the 19th Asian Games. He spoke about the necessity of continuing the development of all types Kuwait sport in order to make sports achievements that benefit Kuwait's name and

ICC head confident of 'outstanding' WCup despite crowd concerns

MUMBAI: International Cricket Council chairman Greg Barclay still expects India to stage an "outstanding" World Cup despite concerns over the size and composition of crowds in the early stages of the event. Pakistan team director Mickey Arthur took aim at the ICC for a lack of support for his side in their show-piece match against arch-rivals India in Ahmedabad's 132,000 capacity stadium on Saturday. The South African said the game had looked more like a "BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India) event" than a major international cricket fixture. "Every event we have, there are always criticisms from various quarters, things that we will take away and try to work on, try to do better," Barclay said in answer to a question from AFP in Mumbai on Monday.

The BCCI — the global game's financial powerhouse — had already been criticized for a delay in announcing the World Cup fixture list until three months before the tournament began.

The schedule was suddenly overhauled a few weeks after it was first published with the dates of some of the biggest matches changed. Fans have meanwhile complained about online ticketing crashes, and matches not featuring the hosts have been sparsely attended.

Pakistan fans were effectively banned from the Ahmedabad ground after failing to secure visas to cross the border, leaving the arena awash with the blue shirts of India supporters as the hosts coasted to a seven-wicket victory. But Barclay, speaking in Mumbai after the International Olympic Committee voted to include Twenty20 cricket in the programme for the 2028 Los Angeles Games, defended the orga-

nization of the World Cup. "This event has only just started, let's just see how the whole thing plays out. Then we will review what we could change, how we can improve World Cups and the general offering around cricket," he said. "I'm satisfied that it will be an outstanding World Cup." In Ahmedabad, Pakistan were backed only by a handful of expatriate fans who had made the trip from the United States and United Kingdom.



MUMBAI: International Cricket Council (ICC) Chairman Greg Barclay (L) addresses the media after cricket was approved as an Olympic sport on the second day of the 141st session of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Mumbai on October 16, 2023. — AFP

"It didn't seem like an ICC event to be brutally honest," Arthur said afterwards. "It seemed like a bilateral series; it seemed like a BCCI event." Arthur also accused the public address system organizers of favoring India by refusing to play "Dil Dil Pakistan", the nation's unofficial anthem. "So yes, that does play a role, but I'm not going to use that as an excuse," Arthur added. Since the 2008 attacks on Mumbai, India and Pakistan have not played a full bilateral series, with New Delhi and Islamabad still involved in a bitter diplomatic dispute. — AFP

Waqar tells Shaheen to copy Bumrah World Cup blueprint

BENGALURU: Pakistan legend Waqar Younis on Monday advised misfiring strike bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi to learn from India seamer Jasprit Bumrah if he wants to make an impact at the World Cup. Shaheen is struggling with his pace and fitness and has been unimpressive in all three games at the World Cup where his four wickets have come at a cost of 139 runs. "I don't know if there is a problem with his fitness," Waqar, who is India as a commentator, told AFP. "The missing link in his bowling is discipline and he is over trying to get wickets. "When you do the same thing again and again, like Shaheen is bowling to get his yorker going, then batsmen know that and they are ready for it."

Waqar suggested Shaheen should follow the example set by Bumrah who he described as a "top bowler." The Indian spearhead is joint top wicket-taker in the World Cup with eight wickets at just 11.52. New Zealand spinner Mitchell Santner and fast bowler Matt Henry also have eight victims each. India thumped Pakistan by seven wickets in Ahmedabad on Saturday, with Shaheen unable to help Pakistan defend a meagre 192-run target. In contrast, Bumrah dismissed Mohammad Rizwan and Shadab Khan with two well executed deliveries to finish with 2-19 in seven overs. "Bumrah is creating pressure and his line is top of the off stump. He bowled so well against Pakistan and created pressure to get wickets," said Waqar.

Shaheen, 23, has been leading Pakistan's new-ball attack since taking 16 wickets in five World Cup games in the United Kingdom four years ago. He has been likened to former great Wasim Akram who with 414 Test and 502 ODI wickets was regarded as one of the best left-arm pacers to have played cricket. But former India allrounder Ravi Shastri blasted the comparison during the Pakistan-India match, saying: "Shaheen is no Wasim Akram", claiming that the Pakistan star is "not special." Waqar believes that the absence of regular new-ball partner Naseem Shah — ruled out of the World Cup with a shoulder injury — may have had a detrimental effect on Shaheen's performances so far.

"Naseem is a good bowler and doesn't give many runs away," said Waqar of the 20-year-old. "When Naseem creates pressure, batsmen take chances with other bowlers and they get wickets." — AFP



RIYADH: Brooks Koepka of the US celebrates his trophy after winning the 2023 LIV Golf Jeddah champion at Royal Greens Golf in Jeddah. — AFP

Koepka defends LIV Jeddah title in play-off

KING ABDULLAH ECONOMIC CITY: Brooks Koepka defended his LIV Golf Jeddah title on Sunday, beating his American compatriot Talor Gooch in a play-off. Despite losing out on the day at the Royal Greens Golf and Country Club the 31-year-old Gooch walked away with the individual season title.

Gooch fired a final round eight-under par 62, forcing the play-off after runaway leader after the first two rounds Koepka shot a 68. Koepka was struggling on the greens and was even par through 15 holes.

However, he made a 30-footer birdie putt on the par-3 16th when he needed it, and closed with another on the par-5 18th to catch up with the bogey-free Gooch. In the play-off, after tying at 14-under par, the duo made birdies on the first extra hole, before Gooch dumped his second shot into the water to the left of the 18th green the second time.

Apart from claiming the \$4 million winner's cheque, Koepka also knocked Bryson DeChambeau out of third place in the season-long individual standings, earning another \$4 million bonus for finishing third. Gooch picked up the \$18 million bonus as overall individual champion. Australia's Cameron Smith was second and received a bonus of \$8 million. — AFP



Dazzling performances by Kuwaiti gymnasts at Int'l championship

ZAGREB: Kuwait national rhythmic gymnastics team made a good start at the Croatia International Championship that was held from Oct 12-15 with the participation of 15 countries.

Sarah Al-Bannai won two silver medals for the hoop and mace events and placed fourth in the gen-



eral individual routine of the pro-junior as she competed with 24 players while Nour Al-Ruzaihan had outstanding performance in the juniors category competing with 31 other players.

Raya Al-Qassar who competed with 14 players ended in 7th place with the free style event of the level A, while Nabeela Al-Kharafi was placed fourth in the ball event of the level A.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Gymnastics Federation lauded the performance of the gymnasts in this international strong championship adding that the goal behind the participation is to enhance the level of the players and provide contact with various schools in the field of rhythmic gymnastics.

Sports

Number 3 seed Zverev exits Japan Open after 'horrible' first round

Canada's Fernandez returns to form with Hong Kong title

TOKYO: Number three seed Alexander Zverev said he "played horrible" after crashing out in the first round of the Japan Open on Monday, losing to world number 60 Jordan Thompson. Germany's Zverev, ranked ninth in the world, lost 6-3, 6-4 in Tokyo, one week after falling at the first hurdle at the Shanghai Masters.

Zverev, who won the Chengdu Open in China last month, said there was "nothing that I did well" after having his serve broken three times by Thompson. "Today, I played horrible," said Zverev. "He played quite good, he served quite good but it's just a very, very bad match for me. I don't know what to say."

Zverev had said that illness contributed to his loss to Roman Safullin in Shanghai, but Thompson had "made it tricky" for him. The Australian lost in straight sets to Novak Djokovic at this year's Wimbledon but did not back down against Zverev.

"I haven't done anywhere near as much as he has but when I get on the court with these guys, I've got to believe that I can beat them," said the 29-year-old. "If you don't believe it, you may as well not be out here, so I'm just really enjoying the challenge."

Zverev was returning to Japan for the first time since winning Olympic gold two years ago at the Tokyo Games, which were held behind closed doors because of the coronavirus pandemic. He said it was "nice to play in front of spectators but I only played one match". "I lost today so the feeling generally is not very great right now," he said.

Earlier, Canada's Leylah Fernandez won her third WTA title with a hard-fought victory over ailing Czech doubles specialist Katerina Siniakova at the Hong Kong Open on Sunday. The 2021 US Open finalist triumphed 3-6, 6-4, 6-4 after two hours and 49 minutes at Victoria Park stadium.

Fernandez, ranked 60th in the world, has endured a lean couple of years after losing the Flushing Meadows final to fellow teenager Emma Raducanu two years ago. "We had a very, very hard past couple of years," the 21-year-old said as she thanked her team. "The hard work is paying off," said Fernandez, who won the Monterrey title in 2021 and 2022. Fan favourite Fernandez, born in Montreal but with a Philippine background, also thanked the Hong Kong crowd for their support.

It had appeared the diminutive left-hander might be blasted off court as Siniakova broke her serve in the third game of the first set between the unseeded finalists. The 85th-ranked Czech's groundstrokes were stronger and allowed her to move Fernandez around the court.

Siniakova's movement became restricted and she lost her first two service games of the second set before leaving the court for treatment. She returned with her left thigh strapped and ground her way back to break Fernandez in the sixth game, the Canadian grimly hanging on.

Siniakova then crashed to the court after stretching for a Fernandez backhand in the first game of the de-



TOKYO: Alexander Zverev of Germany hits a return against Jordan Thompson of Australia during their men's singles match on the first day of the ATP Japan Open tennis tournament in Tokyo on October 16, 2023. — AFP

ciding set. She cried in pain and left the court for more treatment, returning with her right thigh bandaged as well. Siniakova fought on, the players swapping four straight service breaks before Fernandez served out

the match on her second championship point. "Today was a very tough battle and I enjoyed every moment of it, so thank you for making this hard for me," Fernandez said to her opponent. — AFP



Korea sweep men's, women's bowling competitions

KUWAIT: President of the International, Asian and Kuwait Bowling Federations Sheikh Talal Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah said defending Al-Aqsa Mosque and the rights of the brotherly Palestinian people did the top Arab and Muslims cause that we must give all that is dear to support it under the inaction of countries that introduced themselves as a patron of human rights but did not do anything despite the brutality and abuse by the military of the Zionist occupation against the Palestinian people without mercy.

Al-Mohammad appreciated Kuwait's official and popular stand as well as brotherly and friendly countries that moved in support of the Palestinian rights as well as the material and moral support that had a

great effect on the Palestinian steadfastness in Gaza despite the Zionist actions of preventing all means of life sustenance, adding that the Higher Organizing Committee cancelled all types of celebrations in the closing ceremony organized by Kuwait from October 4th until Oct 15th. Korea meanwhile swept the bowling competitions of both men and women in an exciting final that had very strong competition between all participants who exerted major efforts to attempt to be in top places.

Public Authority for Sport Director General Yusuf Al-Baidan said Kuwait hosting of this international event with 36 international teams participating placed Kuwait on the world's sports map and that the organizational success led by Sheikh Talal Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah confirmed the ability of Kuwaiti manpower to organize such events adding that PAS will continue to extend all types of support for sport and athletes to help them excel.

Sheikh Talal Al-Fahad Al-Sabah visited the Bowling Complex on the final day of the tournament and met with Sheikh Talal Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah and saw part of the competitions.

Rangers blank champion Astros in MLB playoffs

WASHINGTON: Texas pitcher Jordan Montgomery baffled Houston batters for 6 1/3 scoreless innings on Sunday as the visiting Rangers beat the defending champion Astros 2-0 in the Major League Baseball playoffs.

Montgomery struck out six and scattered five hits with a walk as the Rangers took a 1-0 lead in the best-of-seven American League Championship Series, which continues on Monday in Houston. "He had command of all his pitches," Texas catcher Jonah Heim said. "He made some really big pitches when he had to. That was really impressive."

Arizona visits Philadelphia on Monday to open the National League Championship Series, which will decide the Texas-Houston winner's opponent in the World Series. An Astros club making its seventh consecutive appearance in the ALCS was mystified by Montgomery, a 30-year-old US left-hander who outduelled Houston ace Justin Verlander, a two-time World Series champion who struck out five but surrendered two runs on six hits over 6 2/3 innings.

Texas took a 1-0 lead in the second inning when Evan Carter doubled and scored on a Heim single. Leody Taveras homered off Verlander in the fifth to give the Rangers a 2-0 lead. At 21, Carter, who made his MLB debut last month, is the youngest player in MLB history with five extra-base hits in his first six playoff games.

"This is so much fun. That's all I think about," Carter said. "This is awesome. I'm just trying to keep my



HOUSTON: Kyle Tucker #30 of the Houston Astros grounds into a fielder's choice in the second inning against the Texas Rangers during Game One of the American League Championship Series at Minute Maid Park in Houston, Texas. — AFP

feet grounded and keep rolling with this team. This has been a lot of fun." Houston squandered a golden scoring chance in the eighth inning after Jose Altuve walked. Alex Bregman followed with a deep fly ball to left field that was grabbed by Carter for an out.

"I was hoping it wouldn't go over right there," Carter said. "If it would have been a couple feet to the left, it might have. It played to our favor playing a tough wall back there. It worked out well." Altuve had rounded second base and raced back to first, but in doing so did not retouch second base on his way back. The Rangers threw back to second, made a video replay appeal and Altuve was called out. Yordan Alvarez then grounded out to end the inning. Rangers closing relief pitcher Jose Leclerc entered in the ninth inning and retired the heart of the Astros lineup in order to complete the victory. — AFP

Eagles, 49ers see NFL unbeaten runs ended by upsets

MIAMI: The San Francisco 49ers and Philadelphia Eagles both saw their perfect starts to the NFL season end with upset defeats on Sunday, leaving the league without an unbeaten team after six weeks.

The Eagles fell 20-14 in their first-ever loss to the New York Jets with Philadelphia quarterback Jalen Hurts throwing three interceptions at MetLife Stadium. The Eagles led 14-9 at half-time, a lead that was cut to two points after a third-quarter field goal from 38 yards by Greg Zuerlein.

But in the fourth, Eagles kicker Jake Elliott missed a 37-yard field goal and then Hurts threw his third interception of the game, with Tony Adams returning the ball 45 yards to the eight-yard line. The Eagles allowed Breece Hall to run into the end zone, giving Philadelphia 1:46 to get a game-winning touchdown.

But on a fourth-down play needing eight yards, Hurts went deep towards DeVonta Smith and New York's Jordan Whitehead broke up the play to

ensure a huge win for the Jets, who improved to 3-3 even without injured star quarterback Aaron Rodgers. "It's huge, it's a big win for us. That's an unbelievable team," said Jets quarterback Zach Wilson, who threw for 186 yards with no interceptions. "We needed that win. Everyone kept fighting... everyone was battling all across the board. There's no quit in this team."

The 49ers ended a 15-game regular-season winning streak, as Jake Moody missed a late 41-yard field goal attempt in a 19-17 loss to the Cleveland Browns on Sunday. The blow of that defeat, the first as an NFL starter for quarterback Brock Purdy, was even heavier for the 49ers, with star running backs Christian McCaffrey and Deebo Samuel both leaving the game with injuries.

Going into the game on the back of five straight wins, including last week's 42-10 trouncing of the Dallas Cowboys, the 'Niners were heavily favored against a Browns team with just one victory. McCaffrey scored from a 13-yard Purdy pass to put San Francisco ahead in the first quarter and a 25-yard Moody field goal made it 10-0. But the Browns fought back, with a 16-yard touchdown run from Kareem Hunt and took the lead after two field goals in the third quarter by Dustin Hopkins. — AFP

Classifieds

Clinics & Hospitals

Clinics

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

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

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620

Change of Name

I, REGENE ROKI CUTHINO, holder of Indian Passport No. R8110803 having permanent address Karnataka, India - 581360 residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) **REGINA ROCKY** (surname) **COUTINHO**. **#4247 - 17-10-2023**

I, ESMAIL, holder of Passport No. M0230004 do hereby change my name to **ISMAIL AMARJI** (as given name)

AMARJI (as surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known as in the name of **ISMAIL AMARJI** and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all documents. **#4246 - 16-10-2023**

I, Natasha holder of Indian Passport #Z4825793 have changed my name to be **Natasha Priti Menezes** (New Name) from **Natasha Priti Menezes Fernandes** (Old Name) **(C#4244) 15-10-2023**

SA edge France for rugby final 4

Springboks keep their hopes of a record fourth title alive



PARIS: France's wing Damian Penaud (L) is tackled by South Africa's outside centre Jesse Kriel (C) during the France 2023 Rugby World Cup quarter-final match between France and South Africa at the Stade de France in Saint-Denis, on the outskirts of Paris. — AFP

PARIS: Defending champions South Africa edged hosts France 29-28 in a thrilling seven-try encounter on Sunday to reach next weekend's Rugby World Cup semi-finals. The Springboks kept their hopes of a record fourth title alive thanks to fly-half Handre Pollard's second-half points, setting up a last-four meeting with England back in Paris on Saturday.

France were knocked out at the quarter-final stage despite leading at the break in a huge disappointment for the expectant home support at the Stade de France. "I just thought we really wanted it. I must give credit to the guys who came off the bench. They came and made a good defence," South Africa captain Siya Kolisi said.

"It was a hard game. We knew how tough it was going to be with the French team at home and honestly I just want to say well done to them for what they have achieved and how hard they worked." France fly-half Matthieu Jalibert said: "We could have taken some chances in the second half but you have to congratulate the Springboks for resisting our attacks. "There is a feeling of a lot of disappointment and

frustration. It is sad and very disappointing for us... it is hard to accept going out." French President Emmanuel Macron was among the 79,500 crowd expecting—and getting—a match of the highest quality between Fabien Galthie's France team, third in the world rankings, and Jacques Nienaber's Boks, in second place.

All eyes on Dupont

All eyes were on France captain Antoine Dupont, returning from a cheekbone fracture he suffered last month as the host nation eyed a first semi-final spot since they finished runners-up for a third time in 2011.

And 26-year-old Dupont was involved as the French opened the scoring, feeding Damian Penaud who found prop Cyril Baille with a deft pass in the corner to send the Parisian crowd wild. Full-back Thomas Ramos made it 7-0 with the conversion and despite France seeming to be in control the Springboks reacted quickly as Kurt Lee-Arendse made the most of a bouncing box kick.

Manie Libbok, inconsistent from the tee so far this World Cup but picked ahead of World Cup-winning fly-half Handre Pollard at fly-half, then brought things level after 10 minutes to cap a breathless start to the game.

The Boks benefited from another high ball as centre Damian de Allende crashed over a few phases after collecting a Libbok up-and-under, although the fly-half missed the extras. Dupont was again instrumental as he set up Peato Mauvaka for the mobile hooker's third try of the tournament.

Ramos' difficult conversion attempt was dramatically charged down by Cheslin Kolbe to make it 12-12 before the Boks took the lead again—those spurned points would prove costly in the final result. Lock Eben Etzebeth hassled Dupont at a ruck before centre Jesse Kriel set up Kolbe with a grubber kick that he ran onto like an Olympic sprinter. Libbok slotted the extras and the clinical Springboks led 19-12.

An outstandingly open first 30 minutes was wrapped up with the sides level at 19-all as Baille claimed his double. South Africa went in at the break down a man after Etzebeth was shown a yellow card

for making head contact with Uini Atonio as he tackled the mammoth prop. Ramos slotted the resulting penalty to leave France 22-19 up at the interval.

After just five minutes of the second half Cobus Reinach and Libbok were replaced by Faf De Klerk and Pollard as South Africa made tactical changes that would serve them well. Etzebeth was booed by the French crowd as he returned from the sin bin.

France were controlling territory and possession as Ramos extended his advantage as the tournament's top scorer with a penalty to make it 25-19. But the momentum swung back South Africa's way as Etzebeth made up for his earlier misdemeanour by crashing over for a try and Pollard's conversion put the Boks back in front at 26-25 going into the final 15 minutes.

Pollard, from his own half, traded a penalty with Ramos in a nerve-racking ending. France had possession with the clock in the red, but De Klerk came up with a crucial rip of the ball from the grasp of Reda Wardi, Kurt-Lee Arendse booting the ball out to end French dreams of a first World Cup triumph. — AFP

Spain, Scotland, Turkey lock up Euro 2024 spots

PARIS: Spain clinched their place at Euro 2024 on Sunday after a 1-0 win away to Norway, also sending Scotland through from Group A as Turkey joined the growing ranks of qualifiers. Barcelona midfielder Gavi scored the only goal early in the second half in Oslo, bouncing a shot into the corner to help Spain qualify for next year's finals in Germany with two games to spare.

"We are very happy because the team has grown a lot and has a great future," said Spain coach Luis de la Fuente. "We have worked to get to this moment." They moved top of Group A on goal difference, but the result ensured Scotland punched their ticket to the tournament as well, with Norway five points adrift going into their last match next month.

"When we qualified via the play-offs last time, we set ourselves a target of doing it automatically next time — so that's the first mission accomplished," said Scotland captain Andy Robertson. Norway have not qualified for a major competition since Euro 2000, but a team featuring Erling Haaland and Martin Odegaard still has hope of advancing to the play-offs.

Georgia thrashed Cyprus 4-0 in the other game in that group. Turkey capped off a momentous week in which they were announced as co-hosts of Euro 2032 with Italy, by turning on the style in the closing minutes to beat Latvia 4-0 and book their place at the finals.

Yunus Akgun broke the deadlock just before the hour and former Everton forward Cenk Tosun grabbed two late goals either side of a Kerem Ak-



OSLO: Norway's defender #04 Stefan Strandberg (3rd L) heads the ball during the UEFA Euro 2024 group A qualification football match between Norway and Spain at the Ullevaal Stadium in Oslo, Norway. — AFP

turkoglu strike to complete the victory for the Group D leaders. "I am very happy that we confirmed (qualification) tonight with this win," Turkey coach Vincenzo Montella told UEFA.com. "I am perhaps the happiest coach in the world right now. That's why I'll enjoy it first, and then we'll continue our preparations immediately."

Turkey sit six points clear of Wales, who leapfrogged Croatia into second as Harry Wilson got both goals in a 2-1 victory over last year's World Cup semi-finalists in Cardiff. Wilson outran the Croatia defence to loft in the opening goal shortly after half-time and then glanced in a Dan James cross for the second.

Mario Pasalic reduced the deficit but Wales now have control of their own destiny heading into the concluding rounds of qualifying games in November. Croatia find themselves at risk of missing a major tournament for the first time since the 2010 World Cup after back-to-back defeats. — AFP

Cricket to feature at 2028 LA Olympics

MUMBAI: Cricket will feature as one of five new sports at the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles after being approved on Monday in a vote of the International Olympic Committee's session. The IOC's executive board last week accepted a proposal by LA organizers for cricket's Twenty20 format, together with baseball/softball, flag football, squash and lacrosse, to be included.

But the final choice still had to be voted on Monday at the IOC session in Mumbai, one of the global centres for cricket, as India hosts the men's 50-over Cricket World Cup. Only two delegates at the session voted against the new sports.

Organizers have proposed a six-team event, in both men's and women's Twenty20 cricket, the shortest form of the game. The United States is set to field sides as the host nation, but no firm decision has been made on the number of teams, or how they will qualify.

Cricket last featured at the 1900 Paris Olympics, when a team from Britain beat a side representing France. Adding cricket to the Olympic program is an obvious move, financially speaking. It would tap into the lucrative South Asian market, attracting fans in countries such as India and Pakistan.

The Indian Premier League, featuring cricket's global stars, has helped India become the unquestioned economic driving force of the sport, thanks to legions of fans and lucrative broadcasting deals in a nation where the game is almost a religion.

Major League Cricket, a professional Twenty20 League, launched in the United States in July, with the US a co-host of next year's men's T20 World Cup together with territories in the West Indies. "It's a win-win situation," International Cricket Council chairman Greg Barclay told reporters in Mumbai, of cricket's

inclusion in the LA 2028 programme. "We've got a global sport, what I think is the fastest-growing global sport, but getting onto the biggest sporting stage in the world, the Olympics, is a massive shot in the arm for the game," the New Zealander added.

Explaining the push for cricket's inclusion, Los Angeles 2028 chairman Casey Wasserman, said: "It's a sport that is incredibly popular around the world, it's growing in the United States. The diaspora in the US is growing and engaged and exciting."

"We think the opportunity to bring a sport that has 2.5 billion rabid fans to what we think is the greatest sport city in the world, it's a really powerful combination." IOC president Thomas Bach said the five new sports' additions would "showcase iconic American sports to the world, while bringing international sports to the United States".

Among the newly included US sports is flag football—a limited-contact form of American football. Pierre Trochet, president of the International Federation of American Football, said its place on the program would "offer an exciting new dimension to the Games—uniting them, for the first time in history, with America's number-one sport in its youngest, most accessible and inclusive format".

Monday's vote also saw the racquet sport of squash finally make it onto an Olympic program after several failed attempts. Zena Wooldridge, president of the World Squash Federation, said the game is an "amazingly dynamic, diverse and demanding sport that is perfectly suited for the Olympic Games".

There was no place, however, for the dance sport of breaking, which is set to disappear from the schedule after making its Olympic debut in Paris next year. Meanwhile the IOC said Monday the status of boxing at the 2028 Games remains "on hold" after it stripped the International Boxing Association (IBA) of its recognition following a dispute over how the sport is governed. The IOC had set a limit of 10,500 athletes at a Games in a bid to control costs. — AFP