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Kuwait sends second Gaza relief aid plane, calls for meeting of Arab human rights panel

Crown Prince in UK on invitation by King Charles

LONDON: HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and an accompanying delegation arrived on Tuesday to the UK on an official invitation from King of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland Charles III. Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and senior officials at the Crown Prince Diwan are accompanying HH the Crown Prince on this trip. HH the Crown Prince was received at the airport by Kuwaiti Ambassador to the UK Bader Mohammad Al-Awadhi, UK Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis, UK Military Attache in Kuwait Paul Mulvaney, Kuwait Embassy staff and chiefs of accredited attached and technical offices in London. — KUNA



LONDON: HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is received at the airport by UK Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis on Oct 24, 2023. — KUNA

ROME/KUWAIT: Kuwait urged on Tuesday the international community, represented by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), to prevent the use of starvation as a military and political weapon against Palestinians in Gaza, and to ensure delivering humanitarian aid to them. Kuwait's permanent representative to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Yousef Jheil made the remarks during the UN committee's annual meeting, which was held at FAO's headquarters addressing the starvation and the siege imposed by the Zionist government on the people of Gaza.

Jheil also said Kuwait appeals to the member states of CFS to adhere to the right to food for all without discrimination in accordance with the charter of the Food and Agriculture Organization and the United Nations. He also called on member states and the international community to accelerate the delivery of food and humanitarian aid to the besieged Gaza Strip, calling on FAO and all its mem-

ber states to search for urgent solutions to confront the acute shortage of food and water in the strip. Representatives of member states from various regions of the world supported Kuwait's position in support of saving the Palestinian people from the threat of starvation.

Meanwhile, a second Kuwaiti plane loaded with 10 tons of humanitarian and relief aid for Palestinians arrived at Egypt's Al-Arish airport on Tuesday. Speaking to KUNA, charity officials said the medical and food supplies will be offered to the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) through the Rafah border crossing to hand them out to brothers in the Gaza Strip. They stressed Kuwait's continued support and urgent humanitarian and relief aid to the people in Gaza. They extolled Amiri directives to launch an air bridge to send humanitarian and relief assistance to brothers in the Gaza Strip through the Kuwait Red Crescent

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'Enough is enough': Qatar Amir slams Zionist supporters

DOHA: The Qatari ruler hit out at the Zionist entity's backers Tuesday, charging they had given it "free license to kill" in its war with Hamas and questioning what the conflict would achieve. Major powers, including the United States, Britain and France, have rallied to support the Zionist entity and affirmed its right to defend itself after this month's deadly attack by the Palestinian Islamist group.

"We are saying enough is enough," Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani told a meeting of the Shura Council, Qatar's legislative body, according to a translation released by the royal court. "It is untenable for (the Zionist entity) to be given an unconditional green light and free license to kill, nor is it tenable to continue ignoring the reality of occupation, siege and settlement."

Qatar, a US ally which hosts a large US military base, also hosts an office of Hamas which doubles as the main residence of its self-exiled leader Ismail Haniya. The wealthy Gulf monarchy has acted as a communications channel with Hamas and is playing a key role in negotiations to release the captives, with four freed so far.

"It should not be allowed in our time to use cutting off water and preventing medicine and food as weapons against an entire population," the emir said, referring the Zionist entity's siege of Gaza. "We call for an earnest regional and international stance vis-a-vis this dangerous escalation that we are witnessing, and which threatens the security of the region and the world."

He added: "We would like to ask those who have aligned with the war, and those acting to gag any dissenting opinion: what would come in the aftermath of this war? Would it bring security and stability to (Zionists) and Palestinians? Where would the Palestinians head for afterwards?" — AFP

UN chief slams violations by Zionists in Gaza

UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday alleged violations of international law in Gaza and urged an immediate ceasefire as the Zionist entity pounds the Palestinian territory in response to Hamas attacks, with the crisis deeply dividing the Security Council. The Zionist entity voiced anger over the UN chief's plea before a high-level session of the Security Council, where the

Palestinian foreign minister in turn denounced what he described as inaction in the conflict that has killed thousands on both sides, mostly civilians.

Opening the session, Guterres said there was no excuse for the "appalling" violence by Hamas militants on Oct 7 but also warned against "collective punishment" of the Palestinians. "I am deeply concerned about the clear violations of international humanitarian law that we are witnessing in Gaza. Let me be clear: No party to an armed conflict is above international humanitarian law," Guterres told a Security Council session, without explicitly naming the Zionist entity.

Guterres said that the Palestinians had been "subjected to 56 years of suffocating occupation," telling the Security Council: "It is important to also

Continued on Page 6



NEW YORK: Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad Al-Maliki speaks during a UN Security Council meeting on Oct 24, 2023. — AFP

Raisi says Muslim disunity enabled Zionist aggression

TEHRAN: Iran's president on Tuesday expressed regret at a "lack of unity" among Muslim countries in response to the war between its arch-foe the Zionist entity and Gaza's rulers Hamas. Ebrahim Raisi said greater coordination across the Muslim world could have stopped the Zionist entity's bombing of the Palestinian territory. "A united and unified position in the

Muslim world could have prevented the oppression and aggression of the Zionist regime and the excesses of its Western supporters in a more effective way," he said, quoted by state news agency IRNA.

Raisi also called for "strengthening co-operation" between countries in the region to avoid interventions from outside nations. He made the remarks while receiving the credentials of the new Saudi ambassador to Tehran, Abdullah bin Saud Al-Anazi. "The presence of foreigners in the region not only does not solve any issues but is itself a factor in exacerbating the problems," Raisi added without naming any specific countries. — AFP



TEHRAN: Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi meets Saudi Ambassador to Iran Abdullah Al-Anazi on Oct 24, 2023. — AFP

Freed Zionist captive treated well in Gaza

TEL AVIV: A Zionist 85-year-old freed by Palestinian group Hamas said Tuesday she was treated well during more than two weeks held captive in Gaza. Yocheved Lifshitz was a resident of Nir Oz kibbutz, one of the Zionist communities near the Gaza Strip which Hamas militants attacked on Oct 7.

"They treated us well," she told reporters at a Tel Aviv hospital, explaining a doctor visited her and fellow captives every two to three days and provided medicines. Her husband, also in his

80s, is among more than 200 captives still being held in Gaza. "They treated us gently, and provided all our needs," she said, when asked why she reached out to shake the hand of a militant the moment she was freed.

Lifshitz described her captors as "very friendly" and "very courteous" people who held her with four other captives. "They seemed ready for this, they prepared for a long time, they had everything that men and women needed, including shampoo," she told journalists. "We ate the same food they did — pitas with cream cheese, melted cheese, cucumbers. That was a meal for an entire day," said Lifshitz. The octogenarian was released along with fellow Nir Oz resident Nurit Cooper, 79, three days after an American woman and her daughter were freed. — AFP



TEL AVIV: Zionist Yocheved Lifshitz, 85, holds a press conference after she was released by Hamas on Oct 24, 2023. — AFP



Local

Sadu House weaves for peace in Palestine

Charity drive pledges support and solidarity with Palestinians



KUWAIT: A volunteer weaves during a charity event for Palestine at Sadu House. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Items created by volunteers at Sadu House.



A handmade toy by volunteers at Sadu House for Palestinian children.

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: In joint efforts with Kuwait Red Crescent Society, Al-Sadu Society organized an event that expressed their support and solidarity with Palestine. The event took place at Al-Sadu House and Al-Sadu Street on Monday from 10 am to 10 pm.

"This day's event is a charity drive. Driven by love and by dedication to human cause and rejection of the atrocity that is happening in Palestine. We are now weaving, knitting, crocheting and sewing all of these items as an act of love. It is not life changing, but humane and heartwarming, and we hope that they feel all of the support and love that we are sending their way. We are donating all the items that are being produced during 12 hours work directly to Palestine. Some of the items are hand woven, and some have been donated," Chairperson of Al-Sadu House Sheikha Bibi Al-Sabah told Kuwait Times.

Through the act of crafting, volunteers connected their humanity and love with victims in Palestine.

Each item they produced is a tangible representation of their empathy with the Palestinians, which makes the items more than just objects — they are symbols of the volunteers' compassion and love. "Humanity, love and volunteerism are what drove us to participate in and organize this event. Even if you are giving something simple, it leaves an impact. During the period of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, we felt that the Palestinians feel today. It is difficult for someone to take your land, and they have been suffering from this for more than 70 years," member of Al-Sadu Society Ablah Ahmed Hussain told Kuwait Times.

"Today, there are participating groups in Al-Sadu House associated with programs organized under Al-Sadu House's umbrella. Also, there are volunteers who participated by themselves. What distinguishes these handmade works from others is that they go towards humanitarian goals. Some of the things we will send are fabrics, blankets, pillows, towels and toys. In fact, most of the products are for children, as they are our main focus," Hussain said.



Handmade toys displayed at Al-Sadu Street ready to be delivered to Palestine.



Children volunteering to create toys of love for children in Palestine.

The patient calls you...

In my view



Dr Khalid Al-Saleh

Local@kuwaittimes.com

I recently visited a patient, may Allah cure him, in a government hospital. A nurse entered the room and provided my ailing friend with instructions in English. He nodded, clearly not comprehending much of what was being said. After the nurse left, I inquired if he had understood the nurse's instructions. He smiled shyly, and it struck me that a language other than our own had been imposed on us. People had become proud of a language other than their own. Mothers in the Arab Peninsula are delighted when their children speak English, even if they do not know the language of the Holy Quran.

My friend, who did not properly understand the instructions, appeared confused. So, who would be held criminally and ethically responsible if the patient suffered harm due to a lack of understanding of the health instructions?

This is a question that requires a precise legal answer, but in my view, the responsibility rests with the leadership of the health ministry. They have failed to implement an earlier decision requiring non-Arab doctors and nurses to complete a course in the Arabic language to communicate with patients. This is not just a legal matter; it is an ethical, humanitarian and medical duty. The burden lies with the health ministry and the health committee at the National Assembly.

Each life lost due to a failure to understand instructions, or due to the psychological distress our patients experience as a result of their confusion and inability to comprehend what they are told, is a heavy responsibility. Those in positions of authority must bear the consequences before Allah. The patient is already weak due to illness, and they are entrusted to the care of officials who should understand and communicate effectively with them. This need is greater than the need for spacious rooms, despite their significance.

Once sat in a clinic where a foreign doctor, who did not speak a word of Arabic, was working. A Kuwaiti patient complained to him about heartburn, and the doctor prescribed a medication. When the patient left, I followed her and asked for the prescription. To my surprise, I discovered that the doctor had prescribed a medication for contractions, which had no relation to her complaint. I brought this to the attention of my colleague, and he corrected the prescription. It was clear that this doctor represented an authority that did not prioritize the welfare of patients, so why should he?

I wonder how many patients in our hospitals are misunderstood, or how many fail to find doctors who can communicate with them and understand their complaints, even with limited language skills. I hope for decisions that mandate every doctor and nurse to complete a course in our language before interacting with patients.

Our patients are appealing to you!

Kuwait's Namaa Charity to aid Sudanese families

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Namaa Charity of Social Reform Society and UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Kuwait on Tuesday signed an agreement enabling UNHCR to provide multi-purpose cash assistance to 338 families displaced due to outbreak of conflict in Sudan. Chairman of the Social Reform Society Dr Khaled Al-Mathkooor told KUNA on the sidelines of the agreement that the relief and humanitarian cooperation are deep values in Islamic religion, the verses of which from the Holy Quran underlining the importance of providing assistance and relief to those in need.

He underscored that the partnership between Namaa and UNHCR embodies the Islamic values that seek to help humanity, especially the displaced in Sudan, indicating the grave difficulties they face due to the conflicts and difficult conditions there. In

a statement to KUNA, CEO of Namaa Charity Saad Al-Otaibi confirmed that the agreement shows the shared commitment towards improving the conditions of the displaced in Sudan and supporting them in this critical period. Namaa is determined to make efforts to ensure the achievement of the goals specified in this agreement, Al-Otaibi said, pointing out that it seeks to achieve development and well-being for these displaced people.

The world is currently witnessing a noticeable increase in challenges facing people displaced from their homes due to crises and conflicts, especially since they are in dire need of support and assistance to meet their basic needs and preserve their human rights, he explained. Namaa's educational, health and relief projects in Sudan constitute an essential part of its vision to support young people with education that will enable them to create a better future for themselves and their society and defying various conflicts, he added, stressing that the agreement is an example of how to continue collective humanitarian work to give to the world.

Speaking to KUNA, UNCHR's Representative to Kuwait Nisreen Rubaia commended the humanitarian partnership with Namaa, which reflects Kuwait's



Kuwait's Namaa Charity and UNCHR sign an agreement. — KUNA

solid commitment to help the forcibly displaced. On his side, Director of the Department of Charitable Societies and Foundations at the Ministry of Social Affairs Abdulaziz Al-Ajmi told KUNA that the ministry is keen to continue the international agreements supporting refugees, noting that displacement has reached several countries, including Egypt, Chad and Ethiopia. — KUNA



KUWAIT: A dedicated breast cancer awareness day was held by the Medical Oncology department within Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Hospital in collaboration with Novartis.

Sheikh Jaber Hospital, Novartis hold breast cancer awareness day

KUWAIT: To commemorate Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the Medical Oncology department in Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Hospital collaborated with Novartis for a dedicated breast cancer awareness day. The initiative aimed to underscore the importance of early screening and detection in the battle against breast cancer.

As part of the awareness day, the medical oncology department offered educational resources and information to women of all age groups. Novartis joined the effort to provide valuable information on the importance of early awareness and share educational materials to support women navigating a diagnosis.

The collaboration not only ensured that a large number of women gained vital knowledge about breast cancer but also served as an educational platform for all women, empowering them with crucial information to support their healthcare decisions.

"Early detection is key to the successful treatment of breast cancer," said Dr Faisal Al-Terkait, Medical Consultant Oncologist at KCCC, Head of Medical

oncology department at Jaber Al-Ahmad hospital, Kuwait. "That's why we encourage women over the age of 40 to get regular mammograms, even if they have no symptoms. Mammograms can detect breast cancer early, when it is most treatable."

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in Kuwait, accounting for over 39 percent of all new cancer cases in 2020. According to the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the five-year prevalence of breast cancer is 169 cases per 100,000 women.

Rabab Munir, Country Head, Kuwait at Novartis said that breast cancer is a global challenge, but it is one that we can overcome through collaboration. "At Novartis, we are committed to working with healthcare partners like the medical oncology department within Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Hospital to raise awareness about breast cancer, promote early detection, and provide personalized treatment to all patients affected by the disease. Working together, we can help all women live longer, healthier lives," Munir said.

The breast cancer awareness day comes one year after Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Hospital opened its Oncology Unit, which the hospital intends to continually expand to be a leading oncology facility in Kuwait. It marks a significant step towards addressing the breast cancer burden in Kuwait and improving the outcomes for breast cancer patients.

Int'l Friends Club joins cancer awareness drive

KUWAIT: Responding to an invitation from the administration of Dar Al-Shifa Hospital, members of the International Friends Club participated in a program and activities related to the national campaign for health awareness on breast cancer. This campaign is aligned with the global initiative of the World Health Organization in the month of October each year.

The event was graced by the presence of the ambassadors of Kenya and Sierra Leone, as well as several ambassadorial wives and diplomats. Club members accepted the invitation and actively engaged in the specially prepared program.

The program included a cultural segment focused on health awareness. It featured a comprehensive lecture on safeguarding women against the perils of breast cancer, emphasizing the importance of self-examination, mammogram X-ray screenings, physical fitness, social activities and a balanced diet. The event also featured social competitions and promotional activities such as flower arranging. Towards the conclusion of the program, a group of female members underwent chest X-ray screenings.

Following the day's activities, a luncheon was organized, centered around healthy foods and dishes. Attendees had the opportunity to learn about specific foods that have beneficial properties in combating this disease. Club members expressed their heartfelt gratitude by presenting a commemorative plaque to Narges Al-Yousifi, the hospital's owner. They wished her continued success, prosperity and well-being.



KUWAIT: Members of the International Friends Club visit Dar Al-Shifa Hospital as part of the national campaign for health awareness on breast cancer.

Local

Zain Kuwait successfully tests early warning system with MoI and CITRA

Company's network ready once the system is officially rolled out



KUWAIT: Dr Waleed Al-Hasawi and Amer Hayat with Malek Al-Sabah, Zain's team and CITRA & MoI officials.

KUWAIT: Continuing its proactive approach in adopting the latest socially impactful technologies, and in line with its journey to empower full digital transformation in Kuwait, Zain on Tuesday announced that it has successfully tested the early warning system (EWS) with the Ministry of Interior and the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA). The move aims to strengthen the nation's security system during major crises.

The test was conducted at the Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC) in the company's headquarters in Shuwaikh, attended by CITRA board member Dr Waleed Al-Hasawi, CITRA Chief of Telecommunications Sector Amer Hayat, Zain Kuwait Chief Government Affairs and Business Development Officer Malek Jaber Al-Sabah, and a number of officials from the Ministry of Interior.

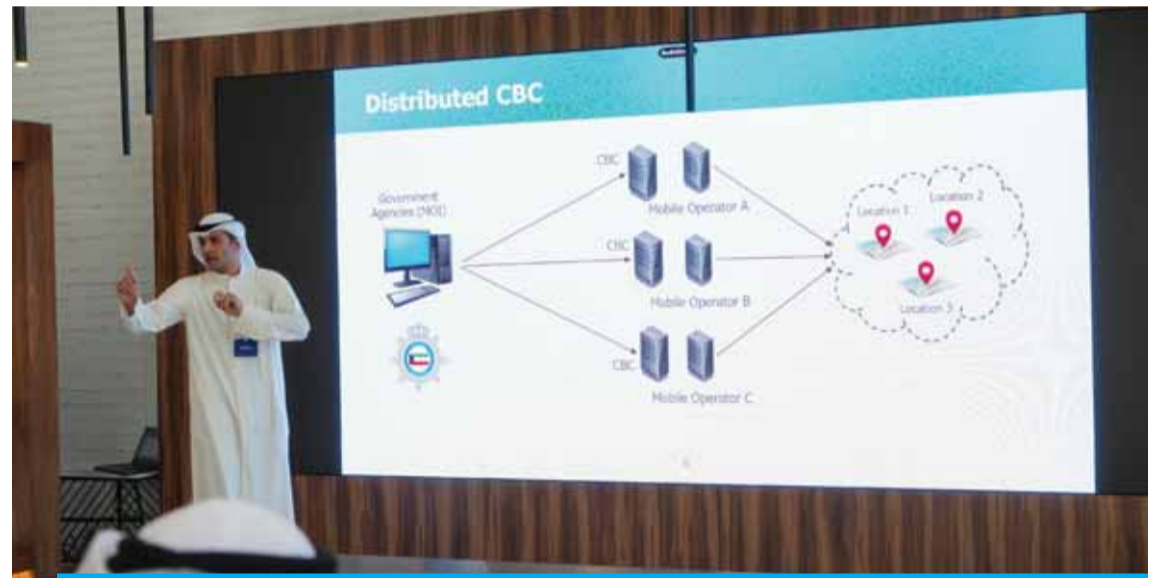
After the test was successfully completed, Zain's Core Networks team showcased in a presentation the company's full readiness for the rollout of the early warning system as soon as it is officially introduced by Kuwait's authorities, allowing them to send out instant warnings via smartphones to alert citizens and residents of any major crises or emergencies.

The announcement comes in line with Zain's

System allows authorities to send instant alerts to smartphones during emergencies and major crises

unwavering efforts to adopt the latest and most advanced digital applications and solutions to contribute to achieving the nation's developmental goals, strengthen its security, and help protect and save lives. The company will not spare any efforts to make its tech capabilities and expertise available to serve the nation's needs.

The early warning system is an essential digital tool that contributes to saving lives during major crises and emergencies and can complement the currently used siren systems. EWS allows authorities to instantly send visual and audible alerts directly to every smartphone within any given geographical area as long as it is connected to a network. The system can be used to warn users of any imminent or ongoing natural crises like major fires, floods, hurricanes, air and water pollution, or tremors and earthquakes. EWS use cases also include incidents like crimes, industrial accidents, missing persons, epidemics, evacuations, or any



Zain team demonstrates the network's readiness for the system.

other significant public announcements.

Zain steadily continues its journey towards empowering full digital transformation in all of Kuwait's most vital sectors, leveraging on its lead-

ership and solid infrastructure. The company will always seek to serve the nation's needs, reflecting the private sector's role as a strategic partner and a main pillar of the New Kuwait vision.



Kuwait perfumes exhibition to support Gazans

KUWAIT: The activities of the Perfumes and Cosmetics Exhibition were launched Tuesday with the participation of more than 300 local, regional and international companies and agencies. The exhibition will continue until November 4.

The products were displayed in several halls with high-level equipment, namely halls 5, 6, 7, and 8, with an area of more than 13,140 thousand square meters. This exhibition is one of the annual exhibitions that the Kuwait International Fair Company is keen to host, as it presents everything that is new in the world of perfumes and cosmetics and attracts major international companies specialized in the field. The company announced the participation of licensed charitable organizations this year, where a portion of the profits from the exhibition will be allocated to provide humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The activities of the Perfumes and Cosmetics Exhibition were launched Tuesday. —KUNA



Sheikh Firas hails revival of Islamic Heritage Society

KUWAIT: The Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, Sheikh Firas Saud Al-Malik Al-Sabah, praised the initiative of the revival of Islamic Heritage Society to provide assistance to various groups in the social welfare sector. The Undersecretary stressed the importance of implementing the Cabinet's decision to localize charitable work inside Kuwait through joint work between the Ministry of Social Affairs and charitable societies.

Tariq Al-Issa, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the revival of Islamic Heritage Society, said: "This protocol will have a good impact on supporting joint projects between the two parties, and perhaps one of the most prominent projects. We will work together to accomplish hopefully first the establishment of a



Sheikh Firas Saud Al-Malik Al-Sabah (right) meets Tariq Al-Issa.



An IT staff at DDI speaks during the session.

Dasman Diabetes Institute holds cybersecurity session

KUWAIT: In response to the increasing prevalence of cybercrimes worldwide, Dasman Diabetes Institute, established by Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, recently held a cybersecurity

session. The Information Technology Department in the Institute conducted an educational interactive session for all staff consisting of different presentations on the topic of cybercrime awareness and mitigation strategies.

During the session, the IT staff showcased examples of common and trending scamming and anomalies techniques and how to avoid them among many other related topics. Holding these sessions stem from the Institute's care to protect its data and patients' information and raise the staff awareness of cybersecurity in general.



KUWAIT: Dasman Diabetes Institute's Information Technology Department conducted an educational interactive session on cybersecurity.

social building inside care homes, secondly, the provision of various services to inmates, as well as we will work to support social care sector projects." He cited the establishment of a diwaniya for the elderly, supporting medical teams for the elderly, providing medical devices, holding professional workshops for inmates, and organizing trips including Umrah.

"Revival of Islamic Heritage Society is keen to support charitable and humanitarian projects inside Kuwait and give them priority, as the Society has many initiatives in this aspect. The Society last year provided direct material assistance to needy families amounting to KD 2,225 million from which more than 17,000 beneficiaries benefited, including 750 Kuwaiti families," adding that 16,000 beneficiaries were non-Kuwaitis.

Al-Issa concluded that the Society also provided support to a number of official bodies, public benefit entities, or institutions operating inside Kuwait. For instance, support was provided to the Prisons Department of the Ministry of Interior benefiting around 1,500 people, support for a number of schools of the Ministry of Education, distinguished support was provided to the Ministry of Health during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, and from non-governmental institutions, such as the Kuwaiti rescue team (Sabah Falcons), the Kuwait Blind Association and others.

Court of Appeal acquits Lebanese and 2 nationals

KUWAIT: The Court of Appeal upheld the verdict of the Court of First Instance acquitting a Lebanese defendant and two citizens on charges brought against them by the Public Prosecution, including joining the Lebanese Hezbollah group, collecting cash funds without a license from the competent authorities, supplying them to the Lebanese Hezbollah organization, as well as publishing and promoting information related to the Hezbollah group on the Internet for the purpose of spreading and promoting its ideas. The defense of the Lebanese defendant, lawyer Dr Fawaz Al-Khatib was present, as he submitted a memorandum containing his defense requesting a verdict of acquittal against her.

"The investigations were not serious, as they were bureaucratic and inaccurate. Moreover, the indictment authority relied on supplementary evidence, namely investigations that were nothing more than the opinion of the author subject to the possibility of truth, invalidity and falsehood," he said.

Al-Khatib pointed out that investigations alone are not suitable to be a presumption or basic evidence of proving the charge, in addition to the absence of the elements of crimes and good faith of the accused donor, as her intention was charitable.

The Court of Appeal, while upholding the verdict of the Court of First Instance, justified the defendant's decision to support Hezbollah in its charitable assistance, which prompted her to send money to them for religious charitable purposes. Another defendant said: "Hezbollah aims to resist the Zionists and protects girls from Zionist aggression and that these are noble goals."

Citizen dies in traffic accident on Abdali Road

KUWAIT: A citizen in his thirties was killed on Tuesday morning in a horrific traffic accident that occurred on Abdali Road. The Public Relations and Media Department of the General Fire Force said that the Abdali Fire Station dealt with a case in which a vehicle overturned and caught fire on Abdali Road on Tuesday morning. The accident resulted in the death of the driver of the vehicle and the body of the deceased was handed over to the forensic men.

Kuwait University gets US patent for solar cooling system invention

Dr Bahman's invention to boost Kuwait's green energy initiative



KUWAIT: Kuwait University team with the patent they received from the US Patent Office of the US Department of Commerce, under the title "Air conditioning system with a solar-based sub-cooling device."

KUWAIT: In an innovative step aimed at improving the efficiency of air conditioning systems and preserving the environment, and with the efforts of Dr Ammar Bahman from the Department of Mechanical Engineering at the College of Engineering and Petroleum and his research team, Kuwait University received a patent from the US Patent Office of the US Department of Commerce, under the title "Air conditioning system with a solar-based sub-cooling device."

This new innovation represents a significant innovation in the field of refrigeration and air conditioning technology as it meets the growing needs to improve the cooling systems for homes and buildings.

In this context, the Acting Director of Kuwait University, Faysal Al-Dhafiri, congratulated the inventor, Dr Ammar Bahman, for obtaining a new patent, and expressed his pride in the role of the Patent and Intellectual Property Office in the research sector, which has always been a pioneer in supporting inventors and facilitat-

ing all ways to obtain patents.

The Acting Vice Chancellor for Research, Dr Othman Al-Khodr, stated that Kuwait University is proud of luminous inventors such as Dr Ammar Bahman, whose milestone invention contributes to improving the Kuwaiti environment. This patent comes in line with the Vision 2035 of Kuwait and the sustainable goals of the United Nations. It also contributes to raising the index of Kuwait University's QS classification of international universities as Kuwait University pays great attention to the quality of scientific research outputs and excellence in inventions, and seeks to promote a culture of quality and apply its standards in all academic and research practices to ensure excellence in education and scientific research outputs.

Dr Bahman stated that the idea of the invention is based on the main air conditioning system that works in a conventional cooling cycle using refrigerant gas and the device also includes a sub-cooling system that powers the compressor by a re-

chargeable battery linked to a photovoltaic solar panel.

"The main and subsystems are connected by a heat exchanger so that the two systems can use the same type of refrigerant or different types to obtain maximum efficiency of the device."

"This innovation aims to increase the efficiency of air conditioning systems by providing additional cooling of the coolant in the main device through the sub-cooling process. Thanks to the sustainable solar energy used to operate the compressor, dependence on other energy sources will be reduced and thus the environmental impact of these systems will be reduced," Dr Bahman added.

He also stressed that the patent is an important step towards the development of the most effective and sustainable cooling technology and will contribute significantly to improving the quality of life and the environment in Kuwait and around the world. The applications of this innovative technology can be used in homes, com-

mercial and industrial buildings, he explained. "It also has a significant positive impact on reducing energy consumption and reducing air cooling bills, which is also a significant saving in energy costs."

Dr Haneen Al-Ghabra, Assistant Vice Chancellor for External Research Cooperation and Consulting at the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research, stated: "Kuwait, which faces the problem of hot weather during the summer will significantly benefit from Dr Bahman's invention based on the air conditioning system with a solar sub-cooling system. It will help raise the quality of life and achieve energy savings thus reducing the environmental impact and reducing dependence on electricity from the main power plants."

"This will have a positive impact on citizens and society in general. In an effective scientific way, we in the research sector, encourage inventors to come up with more such innovations that serve Kuwait and achieve its development goals," she added.

AAW Chairman receives Swiss Ambassador

KUWAIT: Chairman and CEO of Ali Abdulwahab Al-Mutawa Commercial Co (AAW) Faisal Ali Al-Mutawa received the Swiss Ambassador to Kuwait, Dr Tiziano Balmelli, on Oct 23, 2023 at the company's headquarters in the presence of AAW's deputy CEO, Khaled Faisal Al-Mutawa. The meeting was held to discuss current business relations between AAW and Swiss companies, and to explore potential collaboration opportunities.

AAW Chairman and CEO Faisal Al-Mutawa said: "We are honored to

host the Ambassador of Switzerland to the State of Kuwait, Dr Tiziano Balmelli. During his visit, we discussed ways to strengthen business relations between AAW and Swiss private companies across different sectors including medical and pharmaceuticals, consumer goods, and more. At AAW, we are committed to continually seeking new opportunities to partner with Swiss companies, and introduce their leading brands to Kuwait."

Ali Abdulwahab Al-Mutawa Commercial Company is one of the largest retail and distribution companies in Kuwait's private sector, with world-class operations across various industries. The company is the distributor for numerous global brands in Kuwait's surging wholesale and retail market, and is one of the main representatives for several Swiss brands in Kuwait.



KUWAIT: A photo of the meeting held between Ali Abdulwahab Al-Mutawa Commercial Company and the Swiss Ambassador to the State of Kuwait.



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The art workshop hosted by GIA in collaboration with "State of Art" at Salmiya.

GIA and State of Art host 'Art for a Cause' workshop

KUWAIT: GIA hosted an art workshop at its Salmiya Branch in Khalid Complex on Oct 18, 2023. The event was held in collaboration with "State of Art", a local art studio co-founded by Abrar Zenkawi and Ghadeer Al-Awadhi.

The people of Palestine have been living amidst humanitarian crisis, scarcity of basic necessities and terror caused by the Zionist entity. This event was held to raise donations for the betterment of the Palestinian people. The workshop was attended by 20

guests who painted about the idea of a "Free Palestine". These guests joined by paying a donation based enrollment fee and were later invited to sell their paintings to customers.

While some paintings have already been sold, there are still a few displayed at GIA Salmiya for customers to buy. All proceeds from the workshop and sales of the paintings will be donated towards the Palestinian cause.

GIA is a Kuwaiti-based modern-Mediterranean restaurant. It boasts a wide array of clean menu items such as breakfast, salads and sandwiches that its customers keep coming back for. GIA has always recognized the voice of its guest and people and have always stood for the improvement of its community on a local and international level. In the past, GIA has stood for various humanitarian causes such as road safety, women's empowerment etc.



An artist paints during the workshop.



Pakistan high court bails Sharif

Sunak nears first anniversary as PM with little to celebrate

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RAFAH: A Palestinian man looks at the rubble after Zionist strikes in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on Oct 23, 2023. — AFP photos

Zionist siege disconnects Gaza from outside world

Without Internet, Gazans struggle to reach loved ones, get news

JERUSALEM: "Hello from Gaza — I'm still alive": it's a message many Palestinians trapped in the besieged and bombed territory send each morning to their loved ones outside the coastal enclave. The Zionist occupation has been relentlessly bombing Gaza since October 7, killing more than 5,791 Palestinians, mainly civilians. The escalated attacks came following the infiltration of hundreds of Hamas fighters into occupied areas near the Gaza border which left 1,400 people dead.

The occupation cut the electricity supply to Gaza as part of the "total siege" it launched on October 9, seriously hindering communications between the Palestinian territory and the rest of the world. "I'm recording this message, which could be the last, a voice message that I will send to my colleagues at Medical Aid for Palestinians, but I hope not," Mahmoud Shalabi, an executive at the British NGO said from Beit Lahia in northern Gaza.

He described his day, punctuated by "bombings that affect everyone", before ending with "I am not leaving my home ... I will not leave, I will die standing, my existence in itself on this land is resistance". The occupation army has ordered the more than one million civilian inhabitants of northern Gaza to evacuate southwards to avoid the worst of its onslaught, although it has also bombed the south.

'No dial tone'

With utter destruction around them, solemnity and despair often fill the messages Gazans post on social media to friends, colleagues, and the outside world. "This is the kind of message I try to interrupt right away, when they tell me: 'If something happens to you, take care of yourself,'" said Walid, a Gazan living in Paris, who declined to give his surname.

"Sometimes I call 10 times in a row, but there's no dial tone, and sometimes I receive a message that was sent the day before, and sometimes I get through to them online but the line drops after 30 seconds," he said.

With no 3G mobile service in the Gaza Strip, residents must either find a rare landline or hope for an Internet connection, but the siege has taken its toll on these too. Air strikes have destroyed two of the three main mobile and Internet communication lines, according to the UN's humanitarian agency OCHA, leaving the remaining connection overwhelmed. Even where an Internet connection is functioning, electricity to power it is in extremely short supply. Some Gazans use generators for power, but fuel for these is hard to come, while others opt for car batteries.

Cooking oil for power

Hebh Jamal, a Gazan woman living in

Mannheim, Germany, said her family resorted to using cooking oil to power their generator and charge their phones. Even then, she said, there was "barely enough" of a connection "for a single WhatsApp" message. "We can't call each other," Jamal said, adding she had received no news from her in-laws.

For those she has been able to get through to, she described single message exchanges: "They bombed your area in Khan Yunis today — is everyone ok?" "Not our house — thank God. We're alive". After many hours without news, Walid said he found himself "looking at the faces of the victims of the bombings on Al Jazeera, which is the only way to have live and ongoing news".

Wafa Eleiwa, living in France's Haute-Savoie region, said he calls his parents every few hours in order to reach them just once. He said he doesn't dare ask them "what they have to eat", with severe food shortages in the territory. "People are in shock", Eleiwa said, adding that his relatives "are afraid for their lives".

The communication difficulties also make it hard for journalists to get news out of Gaza and for its residents to hear news from the outside world. "We are completely disconnected," said journalist and writer Jamileh Tawfiq, displaced to Khan Yunis with her whole family. Her



People search the rubble of a building following Zionist strikes on Oct 24, 2023.

parents frequently ask her brother, who is not in Gaza, how the Arab world is reacting, or how many people have died since the start of the war. "When I have news about others (in the Gaza Strip), it is by accident," she said.

Just to find mobile signal to send a few messages, Tawfiq has to leave the train-

ing center she is sheltering in and walk more than 10 minutes, exposing herself to possible bombings. "Telling what is going on here is an important role, that matters to me, it's an important responsibility," she said. "This (war) is not fair," she added. "I'm always afraid that I get disconnected." — AFP

Bereaved Gaza father in anguish over lost family

RAFAH: It was the day of their shared birthday when three-year-old Adam and his sister Sham, 9, were killed along with their mother in a Zionist strike on southern Gaza, their distraught father told AFP. Ayman Abu Shamalah says he himself escaped death by a matter of seconds when the strike slammed into a building in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip.

"I was coming down the stairs when the strike happened. If I had come down 30 seconds earlier, I would have been killed with them," he told AFP on Monday, sobbing inconsolably. It was a Saturday evening and Abu Shamalah had gone up to the roof to check that the water tanks were filling up after they finally got a delivery 11 days after supplies were cut.

The 34-year-old said the family had fled the bombardments in Gaza City to shelter with relatives in Rafah. But the building where they were staying was hit by Zionist occupation forces, Abu Shamalah says, robbing him of his wife and children, along with four other relatives and two of their children.

"They put my son's shattered body in a blue bag. Sham's body was totally burnt," Abu

Shamalah said, his voice a strangled sob. "October 21 was Sham and Adam's birthday and it became the day they died. It will be a very difficult day for me every year."

Nine months pregnant

His 28-year-old wife Dureen was pregnant, almost full term with their third child, a little girl whom they had decided to call Mecca. "My wife was hanging out washing on the balcony when the strike happened and the blast threw her from the third floor down to the neighbor's place below." Rushing down, he found her on the floor.

"I thought she and the baby would be dead after such a fall. I found her lying on the floor but she was still alive. She begged the doctor 'to save the baby'. 'I told him it was her last wish.' The doctors managed to get the baby out by carrying out a Caesarian section, with the tiny newborn urgently rushed to the pediatric unit at the Emirates Red Crescent hospital in Rafah.

In the Abu Yousef al-Najjar hospital where her body was taken, he begged the doctor "to save the baby". "I told him it was her last wish." The doctors managed to get the baby out by carrying out a Caesarian section, with the tiny newborn urgently rushed to the pediatric unit at the Emirates Red Crescent hospital in Rafah.

'Permanent after-effects'

"The baby was in very serious condition when she was brought here and immediately put onto a



RAFAH: Ayman Abu Shamalah stands next to his daughter Mecca, as she receives care inside an incubator at a hospital in Rafah on Oct 23, 2023. — AFP

ventilator," the hospital's head of emergencies, Mohammad Salameh, told AFP. "But the initial prognosis doesn't look good because her brain was starved of oxygen between the time of her mother's death and when she was born," he said. "It is very likely she will suffer permanent after-effects."

Standing in front of his tiny daughter's incubator, Abu Shamalah burst into tears, as a doctor tried to console him. A name tag on the incubator reads: "Baby of the martyr Dureen Abu Shamalah" with the date of birth October 21 — the same date on which his other two children were born. And the date on which they died along with their mother. — AFP

UN Security Council has 'deepened' Gaza crisis: Erdogan

ISTANBUL: Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan on Tuesday accused the United Nations Security Council of deepening the crisis in Gaza by bowing to the "Zionist regime". Erdogan, a fervent supporter of the Palestinian cause, had taken a more measured tone in the first days of the war, calling on both sides for restraint.

But he became much more vocal after the Ahli Arab hospital in Gaza was hit one week ago, leading to large and angry protests across the Muslim world. "The international community is not rising to the challenge in the face of the (Zionist) regime's unlawful and unrestrained attacks against civilians," Erdogan said in a statement marking the 78th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. "We observe that the United Nations Security Council has deepened the crisis with its one-sided attitude, instead of stopping the bloodshed, ensuring a ceasefire as soon as possible, and taking steps to prevent civilian casualties," Erdogan said.

Erdogan's comments appeared moments after he spoke by phone with Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose country is one of the five permanent Security Council members, alongside Britain, China, France and the United States. The council "can only look on (at) the collective punishment of the people of Gaza," — AFP

International

Sunak nears first anniversary as PM with little to celebrate

‘The more people see of Sunak, the less they like him’

LONDON: A first anniversary in office is normally a moment for a leader to celebrate, but Britain's Rishi Sunak hits the milestone this week with a mountain to climb to retain power in a general election expected next year. Two by-election losses to the main opposition Labour Party on Thursday underscored how Sunak, 43, has failed to revive the Conservatives' beleaguered fortunes during his first 12 months in charge.

“The more people see of Sunak, the less they like him in some ways,” Tim Bale, author of a book about the right-wing Conservatives since Brexit, told AFP. “He doesn't really project authority, he doesn't necessarily give the impression that he's in control of events. He looks, in part, as if he's sort of lurching from one policy initiative to another in a desperate attempt to curry favor with the electorate.”

Sunak entered 10 Downing Street on October 25, 2022, following the chaotic 49-day premiership of Liz Truss, who critics say tanked the UK economy and her party's ratings. Truss had succeeded Boris Johnson, who quit following a revolt by colleagues over numerous scandals, including lockdown-breaking parties at his official residence during the COVID pandemic.

British politics expert Richard Hayton said Sunak had “calmed the factional fighting” among Tories and “helped restore some credibility” to the prime minister's office. But Hayton, an associate professor at the University of Leeds, added that the former finance minister had “struggled to articulate a coherent or compelling vision for his premiership” that could resonate with voters.

With center-left Labour enjoying double-digit leads in voter surveys for over a year now, politics lecturer David Jeffery agreed that the work done by Sunak had “not been anywhere near enough”. “If you're 15 to 20 points behind in the polls, you don't want to be steadying the ship, you want to be recovering,” said Jeffery, of the University of Liverpool. Sunak is

struggling to meet five flagship year-long policy priorities he made in January that include halving inflation, growing the economy and stopping boatloads of migrants crossing the Channel from France.

Economy hope

Inflation is stuck at 6.7 percent and growth is minimal, while more than 26,000 migrants have landed on England's southeast coast so far this year — a slight decrease on last year's levels. “He made himself a hostage to fortune” with his pledges, Jeffery told AFP. In a change of tack this autumn, Sunak tried to position himself against Labour leader Keir Starmer as the candidate of change — despite the Conservatives having been in power since 2010.

He pitched himself as a champion of motorists, rolling back green energy policies and confirming at the Tory party conference that he was scrapping part of a costly high-speed rail link. But the leadership reset has failed to shift the dial. Sunak's approval ratings hit a record low last month while a More in Common survey this week showed the Tories remain 12 points behind Labour.

After Thursday's ominous losses in two previously safe Tory seats, including the biggest by-election overhaul of a majority since 1945, Sunak appears to be running out of road ahead of an election that must be held by January 2025. “It seems as if they have fired all their ammunition now,” said Bale, a politics professor at Queen Mary University of London.

Many experts say that Sunak's best chance of securing a fifth consecutive term for his party will come from any uptick in the economy that provides relief from a crippling cost-of-living crisis. Data released Wednesday showed that UK wage growth was outstripping inflation for the first time in almost two years, providing Sunak with a glimmer of optimism. Another hope is that Labour implodes.

“The appellant's trafficking was a mandatory, relevant consideration in determining whether it was conducive to the public good and proportionate to deprive her of citizenship, but it was not considered by the Home Office,” Samantha Knights said in a written submission to the court. “As a consequence, the deprivation decision was unlawful.”

Begum was 15 when she left her east London home for Syria with two school friends in 2015. While there, she married an IS fighter and had three children, none of whom survived. In February 2019, Begum said she was left stateless when Britain's interior minister at the time, Sajid Javid, revoked her British citizenship on national security grounds after she was found in a Syrian refugee camp.

A UK tribunal ruled in 2020 that she was not



CLACTON-ON-SEA: Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak speaks to an adult learning group at Clacton-on-Sea library on Oct 18, 2023. — AFP

Observers also expect Sunak to stoke “culture war” issues — such as pressing ahead with plans to ban conversion therapy for sexual orientation — and step up personal attacks on Starmer, 61. But Bale suspects that voters have already made up their

minds about Sunak and the Conservatives. “They're just looking for a change and neither he nor they are it,” he said. Hayton agreed, adding: “It is difficult to see him being able to do enough to prevent Labour becoming the largest party.” — AFP

Former ‘IS bride’ citizenship removal ‘unlawful’: Lawyer

LONDON: A woman who left Britain to marry an Islamic State jihadist fighter when she was a teenager began her appeal against the revocation of her citizenship in a UK court Tuesday. A lawyer for Shamima Begum, 24, told the Court of Appeal in London that the Home Office had failed to consider its legal duties owed to her client as a potential victim of trafficking.

stateless because she was “a citizen of Bangladesh by descent” when the decision was made, by virtue of her Bangladeshi mother. Earlier this year, Begum lost a challenge against the decision at the Special Immigration Appeals Commission (SIAC).

The SIAC said that while there was a “credible suspicion that Begum was recruited, transferred and then harbored for the purpose of sexual exploitation”, this did not prevent Javid from removing her citizenship. The ruling meant that Begum could not return to the UK from her current home, a refugee camp in northern Syria.

Lawyers for the Home Office, which is set to begin oral arguments on Wednesday, told the court that SIAC's conclusion was correct. “The fact that someone is radicalized, and may have been manip-

ulated, is not inconsistent with the assessment that they pose a national security risk,” James Eadie said in written submissions for the department. The hearing is set to conclude on Thursday, with a decision expected at a later date.

Begum is one of hundreds of Europeans whose fate has challenged governments following the 2019 collapse of the Islamist extremists' self-styled caliphate. Knights told the five-day SIAC hearing last November that her client had been “influenced” along with her friends by a “determined and effective” IS group “propaganda machine”. Around 900 people are estimated to have travelled from Britain to Syria and Iraq to join the IS group. Of those, around 150 are believed to have been stripped of their citizenship, according to government figures. — AFP

Kuwait slams use of starvation...

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Society (KRCS) in coordination with its Egyptian counterpart. Public Relations Officer at International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO) Saud Al-Kandari said several charities and philanthropists offered accelerated humanitarian and relief aid to brothers who are affected in the Strip. He pointed to the continuation of the Kuwaiti air bridge to provide Gazans with basic needs in order to face the Zionist occupation's siege imposed on Gaza.

Meanwhile, Chairman of Al-Salam Charity Nabil Al-Aoun commended continuous coordination between the charity and the IICO to prepare all needs for Palestinian brothers. He said the charity communicated with KRCS to deliver humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip via the Rafah border, in coordination with Egyptian and Palestinian Red Crescent Societies. He indicated that Palestine Red Crescent Society has called for humanitarian aid including foodstuff, clothes for children, blankets and medical supplies and devices.

Kuwait on Tuesday called for holding an extraordinary meeting of the Arab Permanent Committee on Human Rights at the Arab League to respond to the war crimes and crimes against humanity com-



KUWAIT: Humanitarian aid bound for Gaza through Egypt is loaded into a military aircraft on Oct 24, 2023. — KUNA

mitted by the Zionist occupation against Palestinians in Gaza. The Kuwaiti foreign ministry said in a press release that the call came due to the Zionist occupation's continued targeting of civilians, in addition to its collective punishment, in a flagrant breach of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. It also came to urge the international community to seek to attain an immediate ceasefire, ensure humanitarian aid and lift the blockade on the Gaza Strip, the ministry said. — KUNA

voys so far through the Rafah crossing. “But it is a drop of aid in an ocean of need,” Guterres said, warning that UN fuel supplies will run out within days. To ease epic suffering, make the delivery of aid easier and safer, and facilitate the release of hostages, I reiterate my appeal for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire.”

The Security Council session is bringing together top diplomats including Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who has previously rejected calls for a ceasefire, saying it would only allow Hamas to regroup. The United States last week vetoed a draft resolution on the crisis, saying it did not sufficiently support the Zionist entity's right to self-defense.

Blinken told the Security Council that the United States was putting forward a new resolution that “incorporates substantive feedback”. He questioned why there was not more outrage over the killings of Zionists. “We must affirm the right of any nation to defend itself and to prevent such harm from repeating itself. No member of this Council, no nation in this entire body, could or would tolerate the slaughter of its people,” Blinken said.

The Palestinian Authority's foreign minister Riyad Al-Maliki, a rival of Hamas, denounced inaction by the Security Council. “The ongoing massacres being deliberately and systematically and savagely perpetrated by (the Zionist entity) — the occupying power against the Palestinian civilian population under illegal occupation — must be stopped,” he said. “It is our collective human duty to stop them,” he said. “Continued failure at this council is inexcusable.” — AFP

Gaza war sparks Arab fears of new Palestinian Nakba

CAIRO: The sight of tent cities for Palestinians displaced within war-torn Gaza evokes dark historical memories for the Zionist entity's Arab neighbors, especially Egypt and Jordan. “That's how the Nakba started,” says the Gaza-based rights group Al Mezan, reflecting regional suspicions that the Zionist entity is planning to empty the coastal territory. The Nakba, or “catastrophe”, is how the Arab world refers to the exodus or forced displacement of 760,000 Palestinians in the war that led to the creation of the Zionist entity 75 years ago.

The fear of history repeating itself has been stoked as the Zionist entity has waged war on Hamas since the Islamist group killed 1,400 people in the Oct 7 attack on the Zionist entity. The Gaza Strip is mostly populated by Palestinian refugees and their descendants, who have now endured over two weeks of withering bombardment that the Hamas-run health ministry says has killed over 5,000 people.

So Zionist warnings to evacuate the north of the territory ahead of a looming ground invasion have raised deeper historical fears, with one million Gazans already forced out of their homes. The only possible way out of Gaza that is not controlled by the Zionist entity is the Rafah border crossing with Egypt. Egypt has allowed aid convoys into Gaza through Rafah after the Zionist entity stopped bombing the Palestinian side under a US-brokered deal — but there has been no mass flight of refugees heading the other way.

Egypt fears that throwing open the gates could facilitate Zionist plans for a forced mass eviction of Palestinians, many of whom are now homeless, sleeping in the open or sheltered in UN tents. The Gaza-based Al Mezan Center for Human Rights said: “When we see the tents at the border today, it should

give the chills to anyone who know Palestinian history — the tents, that's how the Nakba started. Most of the people would rather die in Gaza than being made a refugee again.”

The Zionist entity has stressed its eviction order for northern Gaza aims to get Palestinian civilians out of harm's way as it goes after Hamas and hopes to rescue more than 220 hostages. But the suspicion the Zionist entity is planning a mass eviction has been reinforced by former Zionist officials who have suggested in TV interviews that Egypt could build vast tent cities in its Sinai desert, with international funding.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi has stressed that the Zionist entity as an occupying force has responsibility for Palestinian civilians under international law. “If the idea is forced displacement, there is the Negev,” he said, referring to the desert lands of the Zionist entity. Jordan's King Abdullah II and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas have warned that if the Zionist entity managed to drive Palestinians out of Gaza, it may want to do the same in the occupied West Bank in future.

Egypt — which has long suppressed the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas's Islamist ally — also has reason to fear the security implications of hosting displaced Gazans on its territory. The presence of Palestinians refugees and militant groups has previously pulled their host countries into conflict — Jordan in the 1970s and Lebanon in the 1980s. In Jordan, home to many Palestinians, the late King Hussein in the 1970s accused Palestinian fedayeen fighters of building a “state within a state” and seeking to take over the country.

To prevent this, Jordan's Black September offensive drove Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization to leave Jordan for Lebanon. Lebanon's Christian parties had the same suspicion and fought the PLO during the civil war. Arafat and his fighters were forced to leave in the wake of the Zionist entity's full-scale invasion of Lebanon in 1982. The PLO leadership dispersed to Tunisia and Yemen, while the occupied Palestinian territories were gripped by the first intifada or uprising from 1987. — AFP



GAZA: Tents for Palestinians seeking refuge are set up on the grounds of a UNRWA center in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on Oct 19, 2023. — AFP

UN chief slams violations by...

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recognize the attacks by Hamas did not happen in a vacuum.” His remarks infuriated Zionist Foreign Minister Eli Cohen who, pointing his finger at Guterres and raising his voice, recounted graphic accounts of civilians killed on Oct 7 in the deadliest single attack in Zionist history. “Mr Secretary-General, in what world do you live?” Cohen said.

Pointing out that the Zionist entity withdrew from Gaza in 2005, Cohen said, “We gave the Palestinians Gaza till the last millimeter. There is no dispute in regards to the land of Gaza.” The Zionist entity shortly afterward imposed a blockade of the impoverished territory in place ever since after Hamas took power. The Zionist entity's ambassador to the United Nations, Gilad Erdan, called on Guterres to resign, writing on X, formerly known as Twitter, that the UN chief has “expressed an understanding for terrorism and murder”.

Hamas militants stormed into the Zionist entity on Oct 7, killing at least 1,400 people and taking more than 220 captives, according to Zionist officials. More than 5,700 Palestinians have been killed across the Gaza Strip in retaliatory Zionist bombardments, the territory's Hamas-run health ministry said. Guterres, who personally traveled to the crossing between Egypt and Gaza in a push to let in assistance, welcomed the crossing of three aid con-

International

Pakistan high court bails Sharif

Graft convict expected to 'sail through' court proceedings

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistan high court granted bail on Tuesday to three-time prime minister and graft convict Nawaz Sharif, his party said, after he returned from exile with a bid to clear his name and contest elections due early next year.

Sharif left Pakistan in 2019 part way through a jail sentence to seek medical care in the United Kingdom, ignoring multiple court orders to return under the government of Imran Khan. But with Khan in custody and out of favor with the military, Sharif has launched yet another political comeback ahead of elections slated for January 2024.

Islamabad High Court — where Sharif is appealing two convictions — extended his bail until Thursday, according to Ahsan Iqbal, a senior official in his Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party. "We hope that the injustice that was done to him ... should be rectified," Iqbal said. "It is the right of Mr Nawaz Sharif to lead his party, to lead his people, and to lead Pakistan to turn around the country."

Earlier in the day his bail in a separate case was confirmed at a graft court in the capital, where supporters showered him with petals as he arrived. "A date will be fixed by the court for when proceedings should start," Sharif's lawyer Naseer Ahmed Bhutta told AFP outside the court. "He will attend all proceedings that he is required to."

Last week Sharif was granted protective bail in all cases, paving the way for his homecoming without the threat of arrest. Analysts say his return was likely smoothed by a deal with the powerful military establishment. "Nawaz is here to be a part of the electoral process and most likely to be the next prime minister of the country," political analyst Tauseef Ahmed Khan told AFP. "It's quite evident that he has reached a rapprochement with the establishment; he will sail through the court proceedings."

'Man of the soil'

Sharif's return has been touted for months by his party, which hopes his political clout and "man of the soil" swagger will revive its flagging popularity. On Saturday he greeted thousands of his supporters at a welcome home rally in his powerbase of Lahore, telling the crowds how much he had missed them. Sharif has been prime minister three times but has never completed a full term. His political fortunes rise and fall on his relationship with Pakistan's military establishment — the country's true kingmakers who have ruled directly for more than half of its history and continue to enjoy immense power.

His primary opponent Imran Khan, who remains wildly popular in Pakistan particularly among the young population, was on Monday indicted over

shortly after the collision. The other ship was the Polesie, under a Bahamas flag and travelling from Hamburg to La Coruna in Spain. The Polesie is owned by the Polish shipping company Polsteam.

The Verity, owned by the British company Faversham, was the smaller vessel with a length of 91 meters (almost 300 feet), compared to the Polesie's 190 meters. The Polesie was still afloat with 22 people on board, the CCME said. "The emergency services are doing everything they can to rescue the missing people," German Transport Minister Volker Wissing said in a statement. "My thoughts are with the crew members, their relatives and the rescue teams who have been in action since early this morning."

Two rescue cruisers, an emergency tug, a pilot boat, a police patrol boat and a helicopter were helping with the search, according to the CCME. "We will not stop the search and rescue operation as long as there is still a small chance of finding survivors," DGZRS spokesman Stipeldey said. Rescuers were considering the possibility that they were still inside the Verity and planned to send divers down to the wreck at a depth of about 30 meters (98 meters) to check whether there are any signs of life, Robby Renner, head of the emergency command, said. "The conditions on the spot are extremely difficult," he said. "Because of the weather and visibility under water, it's incredibly difficult to conduct such an operation." — Agencies

1 dead, 4 missing after 2 cargo ships collide in North Sea

BERLIN: One person has died and four are missing from the crew of a cargo ship that sank after colliding with another vessel in the North Sea, German authorities said on Tuesday. Two crew members from the sunken ship were rescued, German Sea Rescue Society (DGZRS) spokesman Christian Stipeldey said. The body of one man was recovered.

The collision happened about 22 kilometers (13 miles) southwest of the island of Helgoland, which is just off the German mainland, according to the German Central Command for Maritime Emergencies (CCME). Several ships are involved in a rescue operation in the area, the agency said. There was no immediate word on the cause of the collision.

The water temperature at the time of the accident was about 12 degrees Celsius (54 Fahrenheit), which experience shows people can survive for about 20 hours, Michael Ippich of the German Maritime Search and Rescue Service said.

The British-flagged Verity, which was on its way from Bremen to the UK town of Inmingham, sank



HAMBURG: This combination of pictures created on Oct 24, 2023 shows grabs from undated videos showing the Verity cargo ship (top) and the Polesie cargo ship. — AFP

New Zealand probes 2019 Christchurch mosques attack

WELLINGTON: The families of 51 people massacred in two Christchurch mosques in 2019 say they want a New Zealand coronial inquiry opening Tuesday to answer a key question: could any of them have been saved? White supremacist Brenton Tarrant shot and killed 51 Muslim worshippers in the mosques on March 15, 2019 in New Zealand's deadliest modern-day mass shooting.

Deputy Chief Coroner Brigitte Windley opens an inquiry in Christchurch on Tuesday to determine the facts of their deaths. It is expected to last until mid-December. Maha Galal, spokesperson for the "15 March Whanau Trust" representing the victims' relatives, said there was an "urgent need for answers." "Our paramount concern is to comprehend the truth," Galal said in a statement dated Tuesday.

The families of the victims "are united in their pursuit of understanding, seeking clarity on whether their loved ones could have survived," he said. "This pursuit of truth is crucial for healing and closure." The inquest will examine all events from the start of the attack to Tarrant's formal police interview, including the response times of police and emergency services.

"One of the central inquiries revolves around why our loved ones were left at the mosque without any immediate action for some time and the police did not allow us or anyone else to get them out," Galal said. "We place our trust in the coroner's process and our legal representation to address these pressing questions and provide the necessary insights," he added. Other questions for the coroner include: Did anyone help Tarrant? Could a different medical response have saved lives?

And did an emergency exit door at the Al Noor mosque fail to open on the day of the attack?

'Base hatred'

The killings carried out by Tarrant, an Australian former gym instructor from the rural New South Wales town of Grafton, horrified New Zealand and sparked global revulsion. After admitting to 51 charges of murder, 40 of attempted murder and one of terrorism, he was sentenced in August 2020 to life imprisonment without parole. In his sentencing, Judge Cameron Mander said Tarrant's "warped" ideology and "base hatred" led him to murder defenseless men, women and children. Tarrant had live-streamed the killings on social media and published a manifesto online before carrying out the attacks.

Then-prime minister Jacinda Ardern quickly moved to tighten gun laws in the aftermath and put pressure on social media giants to curb online extremism. Galal says the victims' families hope the inquest will provide some closure and highlight ways such an attack can be prevented in future. —AFP



CHRISTCHURCH: Al Noor Mosque Imam Gamal Fouda observes the proceedings at the opening of a coronial inquiry into the 2019 Christchurch massacre on Oct 24, 2023. — AFP



ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistan's Prime Minister and graft convict Nawaz Sharif (center) arrives to appear before the court on Oct 24, 2023. — AFP

allegations of leaking state documents. The charge could see him kept in custody in the lead up to elections. He was already disqualified from contesting polls after being convicted of graft in August, although his three-year prison sentence was later sus-

pending. Khan, who has waged a campaign of defiance against the military which ultimately led to a major crackdown against his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, has said the cases against him are political-ly motivated. — AFP

Nigeria struggles to contain worst diphtheria outbreak

KANO: Three nurses care for a 10-year-old girl at a clinic treating dozens of patients in Kano, northern Nigeria, amid the country's worst diphtheria outbreak which has killed hundreds of people since the start of the year. The girl lays inside a glass cubicle with a severe case of the contagious disease. "We have to admit her to the intensive care unit," Usman Hassan, a medic in charge of the clinic at Kano's largest hospital told AFP, his face covered by a mask. Nigeria is battling to contain the outbreak, which has killed around 800 people and infected 14,000. It has spread to almost half of the country's 36 states, with Kano accounting for the bulk of cases and deaths. The clinic at Murtala Muhammad Specialist Hospital is one of two health facilities run by the French medical charity MSF in Kano, the epicenter of the epidemic. "As of Thursday, Kano has reported 10,700 diphtheria cases with more than 500 fatalities," Hashim Juma Omar, a doctor overseeing MSF diphtheria intervention in Kano, told AFP.

Entry to the 90-bed clinic is strictly controlled to prevent the spread of the infection. "We are currently seeing more than 700 people with suspected diphtheria and admitting more than 280 patients on a weekly basis in the two diphtheria treatment centers," said Omar. Nigeria's Centre for Disease Control declared an outbreak of diphtheria in January after cases began to surface in May last year. It "has already surpassed the worst outbreak which had 5,039 cases in 1989," an MSF spokesman said last month. Diphtheria is a highly contagious and potentially life-threatening bacterial disease which affects the respiratory tract and skin. Without treatment, it can kill half of those infected and is still fatal in five percent of patients who receive treatment. "Women and children aged under five are the most vulnerable groups and are the people most affected right now in Kano state," said Omar.

Vaccine shortages

MSF warned a shortage in vaccine funding is an obstacle in ending the outbreak and called on the international community to offer support. The medical charity has so far supplied 7,000 diphtheria vaccines to Kano while the UN children's fund UNICEF last month donated 1.2 million doses to the state. MSF, which is also running diphtheria clinics in the northeastern Borno and Bauchi states, said these interventions were still inadequate. "There is a global shortage of diphtheria vaccines, and the problem is at the production level due to dwindling production capacity," said Hussein Ismail, MSF project coordinator in Kano.

"It takes 15 days to produce a vial of the vaccine and global demand is high," he said. Kano alone requires 31 million doses of the vaccine for at-risk groups, a difficult target to meet due to "supply constraints and funds", said Omar. Although the outbreak is now "under control" as cases gradually drop, Omar expressed concern that the coming harmattan season may prove a challenge when respiratory tract infections increase.

Decline in immunization

Routine immunization has plummeted in Nigeria since the Covid pandemic, when global attention focused on containing its spread and governments almost entirely committed health budgets to fighting the virus. Kano health commissioner Abubakar Labaran Yusuf said the state accounted for 80 percent of diphtheria infections in Nigeria because it missed routine immunization for 19 months.

"That is the main reason for the upsurge we are seeing nowadays in Kano," Yusuf said, blaming the vaccination hiatus on the previous state government, which left power in May. The drop in immunization saw 25 million Nigerian children not vaccinated against fatal diseases in 2021 alone, according to MSF data.

Last week two mothers claimed their children developed kidney complications after diphtheria vaccines, reviving old vaccine safety fears that were rampant in the region. A local radio station aired the mothers' claims which quickly circulated, with the audio shared online. "These two claims have thrown a spanner into the works as many people are now skeptical of the diphtheria vaccine and we have to scale up public sensitization," said Salma Ali-Suwaid, Kano health official in charge of diphtheria control.

Scandals such as the deaths of 11 Nigerian children in Kano in 1996, after they were administered an experimental meningitis vaccine by US pharmaceutical giant Pfizer, have not been forgotten. And for 13 months between 2003 and 2004, the state suspended polio immunization following claims that the polio vaccine was laced with substances that could make girls infertile as part of a Western plot to depopulate Africa.—AFP



SINGAPORE: China's Defense Minister Li Shangfu salutes before delivering a speech during the 20th Shangri-La Dialogue summit in Singapore on June 4, 2023. — AFP photos

China removes defense minister, ousts ex-FM

BEIJING: China removed defense minister Li Shangfu and ousted ex-foreign minister Qin Gang from its cabinet on Tuesday, state media said, in a major reshuffle of top leadership. The news comes after months of speculation about the country's cabinet, including confusion over the abrupt removal of Qin from office in July without explanation and the months-long absence of Li from public view.

Both Qin and Li are believed by experts to have been personally selected for their roles by President Xi Jinping. On Tuesday state broadcaster CCTV announced the removals in its regular evening bulletin but did not offer reasons for the ministers' fall from grace. No replacement for Li as defense minister was announced.

Previously it had been reported that the US government believed Li was under investigation and had been stripped of his ministerial duties, but China had refused to comment on the matter. Li travelled to Russia in August to attend a security conference near Moscow on August 15. Two days later, the government of Belarus released handout photographs of Li meeting with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko in Minsk. But since then, he has vanished from public view.

Li's now confirmed removal means there is no apparent host for China's regional security dialogue next week, the Xiangshan Forum, which is due to be attended by representatives from the US Department of Defense.



BEIJING: China's then-foreign minister Qin Gang holds a copy of China's constitution during a press conference on March 7, 2023 in this file photo.

Xi's 'unparalleled' power

Experts said Tuesday's announcement deepened the recent uncertainty around China's top leadership. Neil Thomas, Chinese politics fellow at the Asia Society Policy Institute, told AFP that the recent upheaval "hints at severe deficiencies in the vetting process for top officials at the 20th Party Congress last year, possibly due to lower-level officials not wanting to push back against Xi's preferred candidates."

But the removal of Li and Qin is "unlikely to significantly undermine (Xi's) political authority, as neither was part of his true inner circle", Thomas said. "Their purge reinforces to other officials the importance of retaining Xi's favor." As well as being removed as defense minister, Li has also lost his position on the State Council, China's cabinet.

Former foreign minister Qin, who was removed from office by Beijing's top lawmaking body after just 207 days in the job, has now also been stripped of his cabinet position. He was replaced by Wang Yi, a veteran diplomat who served as foreign minister before Qin and who outranked him in the Chinese government hierarchy.—AFP

Business

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2023

NBK joins China, GCC Economic and Trade Cooperation Forum

Bank strengthens economic ties, promotes investment prospects



KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) participated in China and the GCC Economic and Trade Cooperation Forum, an event organized by the Chinese Ministry of Commerce and held in Guangzhou on October 22, 2023. The forum was held on the sidelines of the inaugural session of meetings between the Ministers of Trade and Industry from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and the People's Republic of China.

NBK's delegation included Zaid Al-Sager, Deputy Head of the International Banking Group at NBK, and Meshari Bin Salamah, Deputy General Manager and Head of International Corporate & Commercial Real Estate, International Banking Group at NBK, Naser Al-Fassam Assistant General Manager of Foreign Corporate, Oil and Trade Finance Group at NBK and Lilian Yu Head of Corporate at NBK-China.

In his speech at the forum, Al-Sager said: "Since our debut in China, the growth of our banking business has been nothing short of remarkable. The expansion into the Chinese market has enabled us to tap into one of the world's largest and most dynamic economies." "Over the years, we have witnessed a substantial increase in our client base, the diversity of our services, and the overall scale of our operations", Al-Sager added.

Al-Sager reiterated NBK's commitment to providing innovative financial solutions and personalized services, which have resonated with both local and international clients, further fueling the Group's growth. He also highlighted that NBK's branch in Shanghai has become a strategic hub, connecting businesses and individuals from China to the Middle East and beyond, facilitating international trade, investment, and wealth management.

"As we continue to adapt to the evolving financial landscape and seize new opportunities, NBK's business in Shanghai serves as a testament to our dedication to fostering prosperity and financial connectivity between our two nations," Al-Sager explained. Al-Sager further stressed that



Zaid Al-Sager:
NBK's branch in Shanghai has become a strategic hub, connecting businesses and individuals from China to the Middle East and beyond.

going forward, NBK intends to maintain and strengthen its presence in the Chinese market to bridge any financial gaps between the GCC and China.

"Under the thoughtful guidance of the leaders of China and Kuwait, our two nations have deepened our strategic partnership and successfully aligned China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with Kuwait's Vision 2035. Our practical collaboration has showcased remarkable resilience and significant potential," Al-Sager noted. Furthermore, he emphasized the importance of the growing partnership between Kuwait and China, which transcends mere diplomatic relations and stands as a testament to the transformative power of international collaboration.

"As financial leaders, we recognize that fostering and strengthening these connections is not just a matter of strategic advantage but a shared commitment to facilitating economic growth, stability, and prosperity on a global scale. In this dynamic environment, where East meets West, we, as financial institutions, stand at the forefront, ready to harness the opportunities and navigate the challenges presented by the Kuwait-China relationship," Al-Sager stated.

Al-Sager further clarified that the Chinese market, driven by its vast and continuously expanding population, presents a wealth of opportunities for financial institutions, explaining that the country's economic growth, expanding business with the MENA region, and increasing demand for diverse financial services makes it an at-

tractive prospect for business expansion. "Our practical collaboration has showcased remarkable resilience and significant potential highlighted that bilateral trade between China and Kuwait has reached a historical high last year, amounting to US\$31.48 billion. Total trade has jumped by 42.3% year-on-year," Al-Sager concluded.

Meanwhile, Meshari Bin Salamah said: "NBK has always maintained strong and expansive relations with our counterparts in China, both within the country, throughout the region, and on a global scale. Our commitment to fostering these relationships is evident through the substantial financial resources we allocate to accommodate current and future business ventures, with a particular focus on treasury operations, trade facilitation, and lending services".

Bin Salamah stated that in recent years, there has been a notable increase in the participation of Chinese corporations in the GCC region. This has resulted in a growing demand for Counter-Guarantee services from Chinese banks, supporting their corporate clients involved in major projects across the GCC, affirming that NBK warmly embraces this heightened involvement and is ready to cater to all financial requirements.

He further explained that NBK is actively engaged in treasury operations with various Chinese banks, particularly within the GCC, stressing that NBK has consistently provided support to regional offices through Money Market placements, and is fully prepared to continue this valuable assistance, with substantial financial ca-



Meshari Bin Salamah:
Our strategic initiatives and prudent financial management have driven substantial growth.

pacities in place for these endeavors. "Our strategic initiatives and prudent financial management have driven substantial growth. On the assets front, our assets grew by 106% year-on-year in 2022, reaching US\$518 million, compared to \$251 million in 2021," Bin Salamah noted.

He further highlighted that NBK has seen a significant increase in loan portfolios, reflecting the Bank's commitment to supporting businesses' financial needs, with aggregate loans almost doubling, as it stood at \$471 million by the end of 2022, recording a whopping 95% increase year-on-year. Bin Salamah also mentioned that Letters of Credits and Lettes of Guarantees inched up by 15% in 2022, reflecting the growth of international trade and business transactions, as well as the growing market share NBK-China has established in fulfilling the need for financial assurances in various commercial dealings.

"This growth not only signifies NBK's expanding footprint but also our ability to adapt to a dynamic financial landscape, seize opportunities, and effectively serve the evolving needs of our customers and gaining their trust. As we continue along this trajectory, we remain focused on maintaining a solid financial position and providing exceptional financial services to our ever-growing clientele," Bin Salamah confirmed.

On the bilateral and syndicated loans front, NBK collaborates closely with several leading Chinese leasing companies, as explained by Bin Salamah, "NBK extends liquidity under favorable terms, encom-

passing various tenors to meet the diverse needs of various businesses. We eagerly anticipate furthering our support for this crucial sector of the Chinese economy". "We are currently engaged in constructive discussions with Chinese banks concerning funding requirements, both for our branch in China and our extensive network of subsidiaries and branches worldwide," Bin Salamah confirmed.

Bin Salamah pointed out that sustainable finance has become a key focus area in global markets, significantly contributing to the allocation of capital for the advancement of environmentally-friendly initiatives and the reduction of emissions in diverse economies. NBK has taken a leading position by wholeheartedly embracing this sustainability movement. Through our branches, we have rolled out a diverse array of services and products to facilitate the transition to eco-friendly practices, encompassing international loans like "green mortgages," consumer loans tailored for electric cars purchase, financing solutions geared towards sustainability, and innovative green home loans.

"It has always been our goal to keep NBK at the forefront of innovation and being future-proof. Notably, China stands at the vanguard of financial technology (FinTech) and innovation. Establishing our branch in China offers NBK valuable insights into state-of-the-art FinTech advancements and create possibilities for collaborative ventures with Chinese technology companies," Bin Salamah concluded.

It is worth noting that total trade has jumped by 42.3% year-on-year. China exported goods amounting to \$4.97 billion to Kuwait and imported goods amounting to \$26.51 billion from Kuwait, which stood as China's seventh largest supplier of crude oil. Moreover, recent numbers reveal that China's direct investment in Kuwait amounted to approximately \$410 million, positioning China as Kuwait's second most substantial source of foreign direct investments.

Mideast crisis and weak growth weigh on Asian markets

HONG KONG: Asian markets recovered ground on Tuesday with traders weighed down by unpredictability over the ongoing crisis in the Middle East and key earnings and economic data releases expected later in the week. Volatile US Treasury yields had affected Monday trading on Wall Street where some indexes rebounded after a sluggish start but the S&P 500 suffered its lowest close since May.

That uncertainty transferred to the Asian trading day with both Hong Kong and Tokyo trading down before the Nikkei 225 staged a late recovery at the close while the Hang Seng Index continued slumping. The rising bond yield has increased worries that Federal Reserve interest rates will stay higher for longer, denting the growth outlook. "The rise of the 10-year US bond yield and worries that the Middle East situation may deteriorate continued to weigh on the Tokyo market," Nomura Securities said.

After shares fell for the better part of the day, late bargain-hunting saw Tokyo end in the green. Seoul, Taipei, Jakarta, Singapore and Sydney also found themselves in positive territory. But these concerns, as well as an upcoming report on third-quarter US growth and September personal income and spending that includes key inflation data, weighed on Hong Kong, which ended down 1.1 percent. "The current economic environment presents a confusing backdrop, making it incredibly challenging to



NANTONG: This aerial photo taken on show combines harvesting rice in Nantong, China's eastern Jiangsu province. — AFP

make a definitive equity market trading assessment," said Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management.

"Geopolitical concerns and a weaker growth outlook are seemingly weighing more heavily on equities." The yield on the 10-year US Treasury note had topped five percent for the first time in 16 years on Monday but moved lower later in the day. Shanghai traded higher throughout the day to recover from its worst start to the week in months on Monday after China's sovereign wealth fund purchased exchange-traded funds to boost the country's diving stock markets.

"Authorities are making it a rule to step on the brakes whenever there looks like there's overwhelming downward momentum," Raymond Chen, fund manager at Zizhou Investment Asset Management,

told Bloomberg. "This does help somewhat ease the panic, assuring investors that the nation will continue offering support if it drops further." Europe's major bourses opened largely flat, with London starting just off while Paris and Frankfurt nudged into the green before retreating.

The war in Gaza had also hammered oil prices on Monday after major gains last week but crude was once again higher in Asian trade. "Geopolitical risks have led to divergent movements in commodity markets," Innes said. "While geopolitical tensions have contributed to a rising geopolitical risk premium for oil, no physical oil supply disruptions have occurred, taking some of the heat out of the rally." While markets saw-sawed, bitcoin crossed \$35,000 for the first time since May last year. — AFP

Microsoft announces \$3.2 billion investment in Australia

SYDNEY: Microsoft announced Tuesday a Aus\$5 billion (US\$3.2 billion) investment in Australia focused on cloud computing and artificial intelligence, saying it would boost the country's economy and cyber defenses. Details of the deal were outlined by bosses at the US tech giant and by Australia's prime minister, Anthony Albanese, who is on a four-day official visit to the United States. It represents Microsoft's largest investment in Australia in its 40-year history in the country, the company said in a statement.

Microsoft will expand its "hyperscale" cloud computing and AI infrastructure in Australia over the next two years, adding nine data centers to the 20 already in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne, it said. The tech giant said it would also work with Australia's cyber spy agency, the Australian Signals Directorate, on a "cyber shield" to protect the country from threats. Albanese welcomed the investment during a news conference at the Australian embassy in Washington. Microsoft's partnership with the signals directorate would improve Australia's capacity to identify, prevent and respond to cyber threats, he said.

"We know that this is having an impact on all companies. We know as well, that this is about individuals and the protection of who they are," the prime minister told reporters. "We need to get this right." There were 76,000 cybercrimes reported to the Australian Cyber Security Centre last year, although experts warn many more go unreported. — AFP



RIYADH: Attendees arrive for the yearly Future Investment Initiative (FII) conference in the Saudi capital Riyadh on October 24, 2023. More than 6,000 delegates are registered for the three-day event that will feature appearances by global banking chiefs and the presidents of South Korea, Kenya and Rwanda, organizers said. - AFP photos

Zionist-Hamas war threatens world economy, bankers tell Saudi forum

More than 6,000 delegates are registered for the three-day event

RIYADH: The war between the Zionist entity and Hamas could deal a heavy blow to the global economy, banking titans told a glitzy investment forum in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday. The dour mood from some of the gathering's most high-profile speakers underscored how the war threatens attempts by the world's biggest oil exporter to diversify its economy away from fossil fuels.

Hamas militants stormed into the Zionist entity from the Gaza Strip on Oct 7 and killed at least 1,400 people, according to Zionist officials. The militants also took 222 people hostage, according to the Zionist authorities' latest count. More than 5,700 Palestinians, mainly civilians, have been killed across the Gaza Strip in retaliatory Zionist bombardments, the territory's Hamas-run health ministry said.

"What just happened recently in (the Zionist entity) and Gaza — at the end of the day you put all this together, I think the impact on economic development is even more serious," World Bank President Ajay Banga told the Future Investment Initiative (FII), often referred to as "Davos in the

Desert", on Tuesday. "I think we're at a very dangerous juncture," he added.

The raging war risks drawing in other countries, notably Lebanon, home to the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group which has engaged in daily exchanges of fire with Zionist forces. "If these things are not resolved, it probably means more global terrorism, which means more insecurity, which means more (of) society is going to be fearful, less hope," said BlackRock CEO Larry Fink. "And when there's less hope we see contractions in our economies."

More than 6,000 delegates are registered for the three-day event that will feature appearances by global banking chiefs and the presidents of South Korea, Kenya and Rwanda, organizers say.

Unstable neighborhood

But Wall Street leaders indicated that lofty themes of innovation and economic transformation would be at least partly overshadowed by the shocking violence in the Zionist entity and Gaza. "We're sitting here with the backdrop, which I think we all acknowledge, of the

aftermath of the terrorist attack in (the Zionist entity) and the events that have been unfolding since, and it's desperately sad. So it's hard not to be a little bit pessimistic," Citi CEO Jane Fraser said.

The war stands in stark contrast to the vision of a more stable and prosperous Middle East championed by Saudi Arabia, which this year rebuilt ties with Iran and was in talks towards recognizing the Zionist entity before the fighting broke out. The conflict comes halfway through the Vision 2030 reform agenda championed by the kingdom's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, which is intended to remake the oil-reliant Saudi economy.

"Saudi Arabia today is all about their internal transformation which demands a stable neighborhood," said Kristin Diwan of the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington. "It's harder to get people to invest, to golf in Riyadh, or to sun along the Red Sea coast when the region is associated with war and terrorism." Riyadh has condemned violence against civilians in Gaza and affirmed its support for the Palestinian cause. A source familiar with discussions on

possible normalization with the Zionist entity told AFP this month that the process had been paused.

Hopes for stability

Saudi officials have signaled they intend to forge ahead with their economic reform plans despite fears of wider regional turmoil. In addition to FII, the capital this week is hosting its first fashion week and a boxing match between Tyson Fury and Francis Ngannou. The FII opening ceremony featured a vocal performance by Britain's Got Talent contestant Malakai Bayoh as a giant dove flashed on a screen behind him.

Some attendees struck a positive note despite grim headlines from the region. The war "is in the minds of each and everyone", Laurent Germain, CEO of construction engineering firm Egis Group, told AFP. "But I guess in the economic world we're optimistic people. We're hoping for the comeback to stability as soon as possible." Atul Arya, chief energy strategist at S&P Global Commodity Insights, said the current geopolitical situation was "challenging" but that "economic development never stops". - AFP



A cargo ship navigates the Mississippi river in New Orleans, Louisiana on Oct 19, 2023.

Drought-hit farmers in US heartland hope on Mississippi River

TURRELL: Jonathan Driver, an Arkansas farmer with blackened hands and a thick southern drawl, doesn't have a minute to spare. He's been working 16 or 17 hours a day to finish harvesting his crops and - an added stress this year - to find someplace to store tons of excess soybeans. "Getting it out of that field is very crucial," Driver said as he stepped out of his white pick-up truck. But for a second straight year, dangerously low water levels in the Mississippi River have drastically curtailed river transport, and that means added costs and complications for the farmers of the American heartland.

Driver, who sports a light beard and a gray baseball cap, also grows rice, which he stores in three squat corrugated-steel silos. But the soybean harvest isn't done, and the barges that in normal years would take his product downriver are in terribly short supply, slowing grain shipments to the Gulf

of Mexico and points beyond, eventually to feed livestock around the world. So Driver plans to sell his rice as quickly as possible - even if it's not for "the price I want" - to make room for soybeans. The need is pressing. For in his soybean fields, little yellow pods are already popping open and hitting the ground - crops that will be lost. It's a race against the clock. "Every day you see pods popping, you're losing \$3,000 a day," Driver said, before glumly adding, "I don't have \$3,000 left to lose." In the barn behind him, two men are busy repairing a massive combine harvester. Driver's father was in the fields operating another harvester, and his wife was out working as well.

With storage in desperately short supply, the Drivers are employing grain bags - enormous, long, tube-shaped plastic bags that, in proper conditions, can keep cereals good for some time, hopefully until traffic picks up again on the Mississippi.

"There is a possible scenario that you got to go into long-term storage" using the bags, Driver said, even "into sometime next year." But this alternative storage method is a risky one, and not just because of possible bad weather. After record global harvests this year, soybean and corn prices are depressed, and the buildup of grain reserves on US

farms due to the problems on the Mississippi could keep prices low for some time.

'Going to come back up'

There are alternatives to river transport - mainly rail and truck - but they cost more and emit more carbon dioxide. Plus, local farmers feel a real attachment to the Mississippi. Jimmy Moody works on riverfront land inherited from his grandfather in Tennessee, across the river from Driver's land in northern Arkansas. For as long as he remembers, he said, grain "all gets shipped on a river to the Gulf. You know, if we can't unload on the river, then we've got to go east." "So we're very dependent on the river," he adds. The volume of grain shipped on the Mississippi has dropped by half from the average of the past three years, according to the US Department of Agriculture. Like Driver, Moody is storing excess soybeans in the huge sausage-shaped bags, despite the inherent risks. He is hoping to get better prices for his crops once the Mississippi is again easily navigable. "I don't have any worry about it," he said. "You know, the river's going to come back up." At 71, Moody has seen hard times come and go. "We'll still be shipping grain to the Gulf long after I'm gone," he said. - AFP

News in Brief

TAP posts record profit

LISBON: TAP Air Portugal earned a record net profit of 180.5 million euros (\$192 million) in the third quarter, the airline said Tuesday as the government prepares to re-privatize the firm. The 62.2-percent jump in profits was accompanied by a 12.5-percent rise in revenue to 1.2 billion euros in July through September. Passenger numbers rose by 5.2 percent during the period - the key European summer holiday season - compared to the same time last year. "The third quarter results are encouraging," said chief executive Luis Rodrigues, adding the airline was implementing measures to boost its rebound following two difficult years. "The considerable rise in revenue" and the "strong trajectory of debt reduction proves the financial strength of the group in a difficult context," he added. Portugal nationalized TAP as losses mounted during the COVID-19 pandemic, injecting 3.2 billion euros into the airline as part of a restructuring plan agreed with the European Commission. - AFP

Hermes sees sales growth

PARIS: French luxury group Hermes, known for its leather bags and silk scarves, on Tuesday said it continued to see sales growth in the third quarter despite a dip in Asia. The 7.3-percent rise in overall sales in the third quarter from the same period last year to 3.4 billion euros (\$3.6 billion) narrowly beat analyst expectations. The performance also beat luxury sector leader LVMH, which reported flat sales between July and September after having posted double-digit growth in the first two quarters of the year. The luxury industry had previously seemed impervious to the crimp in consumer consumption as inflation soared and interest rates climbed. Chief executive Axel Dumas said Hermes continued to enjoy "sustained momentum" in third-quarter sales, but the performance was still a slowdown from the 22-percent increase registered in the first half of the year. Sales in most regions of the world still posted double-digit gains: 10 percent in Japan, 11.9 percent in the Americas and 16.4 percent in Europe. - AFP

Barclays' profit hit by costs

LONDON: British bank Barclays on Tuesday unveiled a 16-percent drop in net profit for the third quarter on souring loans and rising costs, and flagged more cutbacks ahead. Profit after tax slid to £1.3 billion (\$1.73 billion) in the June-September period, down from £1.5 billion in the third quarter last year, Barclays said in a statement. Pretax profit dipped four percent to £1.9 billion, but revenues climbed five percent to £6.3 billion on higher interest rates. However, credit impairment charges set aside for expected bad loans reached £433 million, hit partly by rising rates and weaker house prices. That compared with £381 million a year earlier. Income from corporate and investment banking fell six percent as financial markets volatility led to lower customer activity. Barclays chief executive CS Venkatakrishnan said in a statement that the lender was managing credit well and remained "disciplined" on costs. - AFP



A dead fish is pictured along the dry riverbanks of the Mississippi river, onlooking at the Memphis skyline, in West Memphis, Arkansas on Oct 13, 2023.



Members of the Army Corp of Engineers (ACOE) monitor freshwater being pumped from a barge into a treatment tank on shore, south of New Orleans, on Oct 17, 2023. - AFP photos

Business

Potential pitfalls to be aware of

By Mai Bader Al-Owaish

KUWAIT: In the modern economy, digital commerce has emerged as the preferred payment method for the majority of transactions. Most of us possess bank accounts and debit/credit cards, using them frequently to purchase goods, access services, and even transfer money to friends via various online applications. The ease of online transactions has significantly contributed to the widespread embrace of cutting-edge digital technologies.

However, akin to many technological advancements, digital commerce has a dual nature. While it provides unmatched convenience, the act of entering sensitive personal data into an app or website portal can result in catastrophic outcomes if that information is ever exposed. Online threats are widespread, but that shouldn't deter us from engaging in online transactions.

Instead, we need to learn to navigate the digital space cautiously. Just like we don't avoid driving due to road dangers, we can continue transacting online by adopting safe practices, such as using secure websites, protecting our passwords, and being mindful of phishing attempts. Much like driving safely and wearing a seatbelt, taking these precautions online can help reduce potential risks.

Diraya, or "Let's Be Aware," was a national awareness campaign that was initiated by the Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Banking Association to highlight consumer rights and increase awareness when transacting online. Below, I will outline seven critical pitfalls that if not properly identified, could result in the disclosure of your sensitive personal information.

Pitfall 1 - Ensure you're on the right website

Scammers are really good at copying payment websites and making a page that looks exactly like the ones that you use when making payments online. For instance, they might use www.knet.com to deceive users into believing it's the legitimate payment domain like www.knet.com.kw. If the fake site looks exactly like the one that you are accustomed to using, then you may not even think to check the domain address. Remaining vigilant, particularly concerning the website address, is essential as a primary precautionary measure.

Pitfall 2 - Banks don't ask you for personal information online

Be mindful that legitimate online payment platforms will never request your civil ID details or any other personal information. If you come across a fake payment page resembling KNET, remember that KNET will never ask for your civil ID information. Exercise caution when dealing with fraudulent pages attempting to obtain your sensitive personal data.

Pitfall 3 - Ensure that the website is secure

Whenever you visit a website gathering payment details, ensure it is secure. Look for a lock icon at the top of the page and check for the "https" prefix in the website address. If the website is not secure, you will see a broken lock accompanied by a yellow error icon, or the words "Not Secure" next to the website address.

Pitfall 4 - Receiving a call from your bank? Maybe not!
Always remember that your bank will never reach out to you through WhatsApp. If you receive a call from your bank via the regular phone line, be cautious; genuine bank representatives will never request your civil ID or password over the phone.

Pitfall 5 - Don't click on any link!

Another popular scam involves receiving notifications about a product, prompting you to enter your card number for shipping payment. Many individuals receive messages stating that the post office has parcels for them. It's crucial not to respond to these messages or click on any uncertain links. Stay cautious and refrain from taking any actions related to such messages.

Pitfall 6 - Keep your devices updated

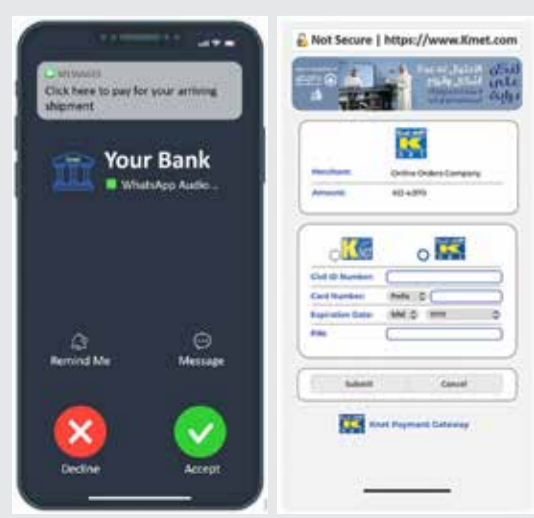
Failing to install security patch updates on your phone, laptop, or tablet, which you use for online transactions, might compromise software security. Consequently, your personal data could become vulnerable to hackers.

Pitfall 7 - Never give out OTP codes that you receive
OTPs (One-Time Passwords) are codes utilized by banks to confirm your identity during online transactions. Even if someone possesses your card and PIN number, the only additional safeguard is an OTP code. Be cautious if anyone calls, promising a gift and requesting your OTP; it's likely a scam. Similarly, if a message from a social media contact asks for an OTP or card details, it could be a scammer impersonating your friend. Stay vigilant and avoid falling for such requests.

In summary, digital commerce provides unmatched convenience, yet it sparks concerns about our sensitive personal data falling into the wrong hands. Although worries about data exposure and app security can be overwhelming, the answer isn't to avoid online transactions entirely. Instead, it's essential to exercise caution, similar to how we navigate the risks of the road when driving.

In this context, Diraya, or "Let's Be Aware," serves as a vital national awareness campaign initiated by the Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Banking Association. Its purpose is to empower consumers with knowledge about their rights and enhance their awareness when engaging in online transactions. In this article, we looked at some ways in which Diraya extends to online transactions to help identify potential scams and security issues. By utilizing these and other practices, you can continue to enjoy the conveniences of user-friendly payment applications while staying safe.

Mai Bader Al-Owaish is Gulf Bank's chief data and innovation officer.



US auto union halts work at Stellantis, expanding strike

6,800 workers walk off the job in Sterling Heights

NEW YORK: The US auto workers union halted work at a giant Stellantis truck plant on Monday, expanding a five-week strike hitting Detroit automakers. The United Auto Workers action means that 6,800 workers walked off the job in Sterling Heights, Michigan, where the European auto giant assembles the highly profitable Ram 1500 pickup trucks. On Friday, UAW President Shawn Fain reported progress in talks with Stellantis, but said further concessions were necessary for a deal that would end the stoppage. The UAW's press release said Monday's action was needed because Stellantis' current offer lags those from General Motors and Ford.

Following the announcement, officials with the Sterling Heights UAW on Monday organized strike logistics, including to enable employees to sign up for strike pay. The strike plan calls for about 500 workers at plant gates each day for assigned strike shifts, said Michael Spencer, vice president of UAW Local 1700. "This is in support of us getting a fair and equitable contract," Spencer told AFP in a phone interview. "They're moving in the right direction, but they haven't gotten there yet. It's time for them to get serious at the negotiating table."

But Stellantis blasted the latest strike escalation, saying it was "outraged" after last week presenting an improved offer to the UAW. "Following multiple conversations that appeared to be productive, we left the bargaining table expecting a counter-proposal, but have been waiting for one ever since," Stellantis said. The strike "actions not only decrease our market share, but also impact our profitability and therefore, our ability to compete, invest and preserve the record profit sharing payments our employees have enjoyed over the past two years."

The union on September 15 ordered a strike of Stellantis and fellow "Big Three" automakers GM and Ford with a stoppage of just three plants with about 12,700 UAW members. But as automakers have improved their offers of pay increases and benefits, the union has kept up the pressure by expanding the strike to additional factories. Automakers have countered by arguing that the strike risks doing lasting damage to a fragile supply



ONTARIO: Labor supporters and members of the United Auto Workers union (UAW) Local 230 march along a picket line during a strike outside of the Stellantis Chrysler Los Angeles Parts Distribution Center in Ontario, California. — AFP

chain and asserting that further concessions risks future investments needed for the transition to electric vehicles.

'Record' contracts not enough

With Monday's action, the number of UAW workers on strike now stands at more than 40,000, according to a UAW press release. "Despite having the highest revenue, the highest profits (North American and global), the highest profit margins, and the most cash in reserve, Stellantis lags behind both Ford and General Motors in addressing the demands of their UAW workforce," the UAW said.

"Currently, Stellantis has the worst proposal on the table regarding wage progression, temporary worker pay and conversion to full-time, cost-of-living adjustments (COLA), and more." The action

at Sterling Heights comes on the heels of a similar sudden walkout at Ford's giant Kentucky Truck Plant in Louisville.

In Friday's briefing, Fain reported "serious movement" from the companies, with both GM and Stellantis producing new offers within the prior 24 hours. Fain suggested that the parties were potentially close to a deal—but only if the companies give more. Fain said he agrees with the companies' characterization of their offers—which currently amount to 23 percent wage hikes—as "record contracts." But "they come at the end of decades of record decline," he said. "So it's not enough to be the best-ever, when autoworkers have gone backwards over the last two decades. That's a very low bar," said Fain, adding that "these extremely profitable companies have more to give." — AFP

Gulf Bank showcases pioneering experience in women's empowerment

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank participated in a seminar organized by the American Business Council AmCham Kuwait at the Grand Hyatt Hotel. The seminar, titled "Diversity, Inclusion and Sustainable Practices", saw active participation from numerous representatives from both the public and private sectors. Gulf Bank was represented at the seminar by Salma Al-Hajjaj, the General Manager of the Human Resources Department, Mai Al-Owaish, Chief Data & Innovation Officer, Nada Al-Sabbagh, the Deputy General Manager of the Finance Department, and Maysoun Al-Attar, Assistant Manager of Corporate Communications and Sustainability.

The seminars' discussions delved into policies and practices implemented by both public and private sectors to attain sustainable development and foster the ideals of diversity, equality, and inclusion in workplaces. Gulf Bank's notable expertise in upholding sustainability principles, particularly concerning women's empowerment, was spotlighted during the discussion.

Salma Al-Hajjaj highlighted that Gulf Bank made history by ensuring complete equality in job benefits between women and men. This initiative aligns with the United Na-

tions Women's Empowerment Principles and supports the bank's 2025 strategy, a cornerstone of which is fostering social sustainability within and beyond the bank. She further stated, "In Kuwait, three girls graduate from university for every young man annually. Consequently, women possess ample talent, making it crucial to not only attract, but also retain this talent. Thus, our focus at Gulf Bank remains on fostering a diverse, inclusive, and equal work environment."

Al-Hajjaj further highlighted that statistical data demonstrates the initial appeal of the private sector to young graduates. However, the allure of the public sector, with its enticing factors such as early retirement options, often diverts their attention. This, in turn, poses a significant challenge for women in their pursuit of leadership roles, despite the substantial efforts made



Salma Al-Hajjaj



by the bank to foster a conducive work environment and provide extensive training and development opportunities.

She concluded by affirming, "Gulf Bank remains dedicated to involving its employees actively. We continuously strive to engage, empower, and enhance their skills because they are the foundation of excellence in customer service and community outreach." 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 cus-

tom 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.

Euro-zone business activity going from 'bad to worse'

BRUSSELS: Euro-zone business activity slumped at a faster pace in October, resulting in job losses, a closely watched Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) survey put out by S&P Global showed Tuesday. The PMI score for October slumped to 46.5, lower than the revised 47.2 given for September. A figure under 50 indicates a contraction of business activity, while one over 50 suggests growth. "In the euro-zone, things are moving from bad to worse," said Cyrus de la Rubia, chief economist at the Hamburg Commercial Bank which partners with S&P for the PMI. "We wouldn't be caught off guard to see a mild recession in the eurozone in the second half of this year," he said.

The lacklustre reading will add to pressure on the European Central Bank to pause its succession of interest rate hikes when its governing council next meets in December. Although euro-zone inflation is still far above the ECB's two-percent target - driven up since last year by Russia's invasion of Ukraine - it is slowing, and economic headwinds are growing. The PMI score has now dropped for five successive months, and was declining at the fastest pace since November 2020.

The data showed private-sector activity in the euro-zone was shrinking at the fastest rate in a decade if figures from pandemic-affected months were stripped out. New orders were plummeting. "Companies cut employment as a result, representing the first drop in headcounts since the lockdowns of early 2021," S&P Global said in a statement giving the PMI survey result. Jobs in the manufacturing sector were being shed at the fastest rate since



FRANKFURT: A man shelters from the rain under an umbrella as he walks past the Euro currency sign in front of the former European Central Bank (ECB) building in Frankfurt am Main, western Germany, on July 27, 2023 ahead of the ECB's monthly announcement on euro-zone monetary policy. — AFP

August 2020, and hiring in the services sector was close to a standstill.

France, Germany slumping

The year-ahead outlook of purchasing managers questioned "remained among the weakest seen over the past year," even if it there was a "marginal" uptick for October. Even though the euro-zone's number-two economy France saw a slower services sector decline, partly offsetting a sharper manufacturing slide, PMI sentiment was slumping faster than in number-one economy Germany. "France and Germany have now respectively seen five and four months of falling output, while the rest of the euro-zone as a whole has seen three straight monthly declines," S&P Global said. — AFP

High fossil fuel use putting UN climate targets out of reach

PARIS: The International Energy Agency warned Tuesday that energy policies must evolve if global warming is to be limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, saying fossil fuel use is still "far too high". "As things stand, demand for fossil fuels is set to remain far too high to keep within reach the Paris Agreement goal of limiting the rise in average global temperatures to 1.5 degrees C," or 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit, the agency said. "This risks not only worsening climate impacts after a year of record-breaking heat, but also undermining the security of the energy system, which was built for a cooler world with less extreme weather events," the IEA said in its annual report.

"Bending the emissions curve onto a path consistent with 1.5 degrees Celsius remains possible but very difficult," it said. Without substantive policy changes worldwide, global average temperatures could rise by around 2.4 Celsius this century, it said. The report comes just weeks from the COP28 summit beginning in November in Dubai, the latest of the global climate summits hosted by the United Nations since 1995 aimed at stabilizing greenhouse-gas emissions and climate change. — AFP

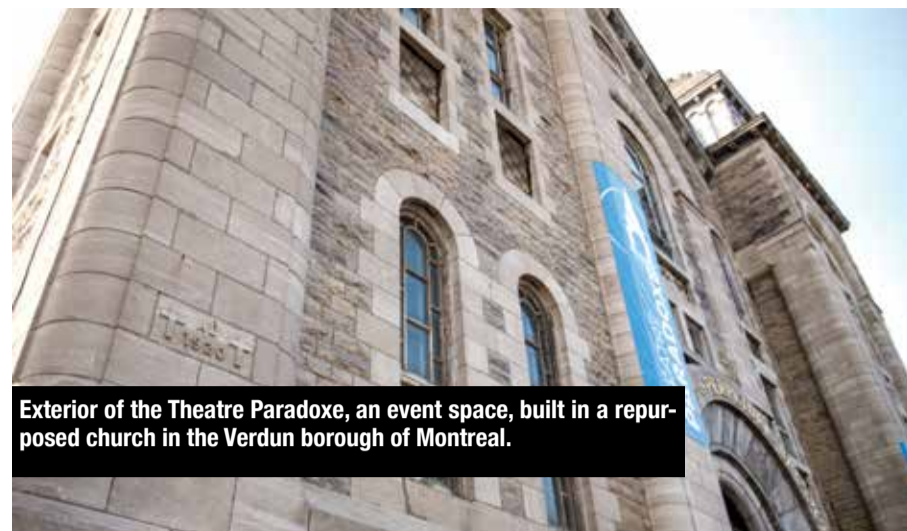
Lifestyle



People visit the Le Chic Resto Pop built in a repurposed church in the Hochelaga-Maisonneuve borough of Montreal. - AFP photos



An interior reads "This place is Holy" at the Theatre Paradoxe, an event space, built in a former church in the Verdun borough of Montreal.



Exterior of the Theatre Paradoxe, an event space, built in a repurposed church in the Verdun borough of Montreal.

Old Montreal churches get a second life

Inside a former Anglican church in central Montreal, crucifixes, prayer benches and candlesticks have been replaced by books and chessboards — part of an effort by developers and community groups to breathe new life into abandoned churches. "I really like coming here. I like the little church feel,

saved from demolition at the last minute and now houses a residence for the elderly, social housing and a daycare.

Outside, its imposing white concrete structure and its high-perched cross stand out in the urban landscape. Inside, seats and children's toys fill rooms with high ceilings and

couldn't throw a brick without breaking a church window."

Quebec used to be home to around 2,800 churches, but their number has been dwindling, explained Lucie Morisset, an urban heritage researcher. In Montreal alone, there were about 1,000 churches at the beginning of the 20th century, of which only 400 are left today. "There are no more priests, there are no more religious practices. Society has moved on to something else," said Morisset.

Over the past two decades, about 100 churches have been redeveloped, according to the Quebec Religious Heritage Council. About ten have been demolished and some forty have transitioned into synagogues, mosques or other types of places of worship.

Costly conversions

Conversions are not always easy, but they have become even more costly lately due to galloping inflation. Marc-Andre Simard, general manager of the Chic Resto Pop restaurant said it cost several hundred thousand dollars to convert an old church into a community cafeteria. The entire basement was repurposed into a kitchen and the grounds had to be decontaminated after an old heating oil tank leaked.

The restaurant now serves more than 300 meals each day to the neighborhood's needy while providing kitchen training for the unemployed — amid the original woodwork, multicolored stained glass windows and confessionals. For Simard, it is "essential that the entire religious heritage is not left to rot" because old churches can still serve as community spaces or residences. — AFP



People visit the Le Chic Resto Pop built in a repurposed church in the Hochelaga-Maisonneuve borough of Montreal.



This aerial view shows the exterior of the Theatre Paradoxe, an event space, built in a repurposed church in the Verdun borough of Montreal.



This aerial image shows the exterior of the abandoned Saint-Eusèbe-de-Verceil Catholic Church in the Sainte-Marie borough of Montreal.



A teacher prepares a classroom at the La Flute Enchantée daycare center, built in a church in the Pointes-aux-Trembles borough of Montreal.

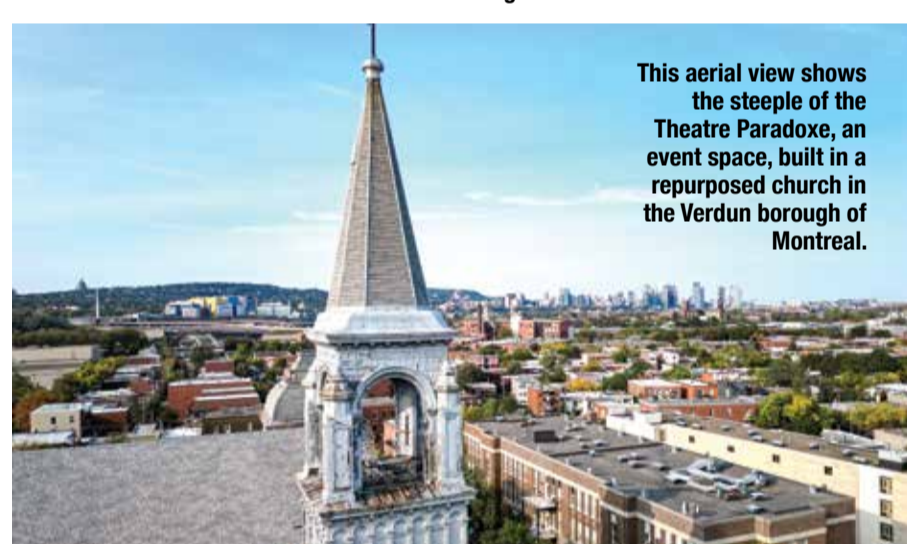
it is conducive for concentrating," university student Alexia Delestre whispered at the Mordecai-Richler library, which is housed in the old church building. Across the once highly religious French-speaking province of Quebec, dozens of churches have been transformed into daycare centers, spas, basketball courts, climbing centers and a cheese factory.

"In general, we do not want to destroy churches if we can preserve them because they are beautiful buildings which mark the urban space well," said Justin Bur, 58, a member of the local historical society Memoire du Mile-End. "They are important landmarks." Another 1960s church in Montreal was

large windows. "It's really the Rolls-Royce of daycare centers," boasted Isabelle Juneau, deputy director of La Creche daycare, highlighting the modernist architecture and the brightness of the place.

'City of 100 steeples'

The repeal in the 1960s — during Quebec's Quiet Revolution or secularization — of a tax that paid for the maintenance of churches contributed greatly to the abandonment and deterioration of places of worship. Many have been deserted, including in Montreal, which was nicknamed "the city of 100 steeples" by the writer Mark Twain who once famously said that "you



This aerial view shows the steeple of the Theatre Paradoxe, an event space, built in a repurposed church in the Verdun borough of Montreal.

Keep or cull? Romania divided over its bear population



A boy feeds shepherd dogs, on a mountain where cattle graze around Lazaresti village, Romania.



A bear descends towards a road to pick up food thrown by a truck driver on a road in Covasna, Romania.



A bear waits for passing cars that might provide food on a road in Covasna, Romania.



A bear eats a sandwich thrown by a passing driver on a road in Covasna, Romania.

It was a sight that stopped traffic. A brown bear seemingly asleep, its head on its paws, on a winding forest road in central Romania, some paper napkins by its side. "It's amazing," said Mike, a 72-year-old Zionist tourist. "I thought it might be dead." But the bear was just taking a rest after a sandwich, one of many thrown by tourists travelling Transylvania so they can get a great holiday snap. In Romania, home to Europe's largest brown bear population outside Russia, attacks are on the rise as the bears venture out of the forests looking for food, often brought by tourists or left in unsecured garbage cans.

The problem is pitting herders and farmers against conservationists, with authorities dramatically upping the number of bears that can be culled this year by 50 percent to 220. And some MPs want that number doubled. Those pushing for higher quotas paint the bears as a threat, and claim their numbers are surging, with the environment ministry estimating the population at 8,000.

But experts counter that outdated, inaccurate methods are used to count the species protected by an EU directive to ensure their conservation. Results of a census using DNA to ensure roaming bears are not counted several times are still pending. Conservationists argue it is

possible to better manage human-bear conflict rather than killing the animals.

'Not romantic at all'

But several locals in the Carpathian Mountains told AFP they were alarmed by increased bear sightings. Fourteen people have died and 158 were injured in attacks between 2016 and 2021, according to official figures. Herder Tibor Fekete, who tends 70 cows in mountain pastures near the road to Lake Saint Anne, wants bears to be shot. He said they killed three of his cows this year.

"Bears cause damage and put our lives at risk," said the 40-year-old, who complained of the cost of keeping six dogs to protect the herd. Last month a

bear also entered a schoolyard in Miercurea Ciuc, 30 kilometers (20 miles) away, and climbed up a tree.

An intervention team killed the animal rather than chasing it away or tranquilizing it, saying they were ensuring the safety of the school's 1,700-plus pupils. Bears can still attack when darted with a tranquilizer, said Miercurea Ciuc's mayor Attila Korodi, a three-time environment minister and advocate of more culling. "And who takes responsibility when someone is hurt?" He said more bears had been chased off the town's streets this year than last.

"I think Europe sees Romania not only as some sort of a sanctuary but as a museum where everything must stay as it is," Korodi told AFP. "Day-to-day life with bears is not romantic at all," he said. Trophy hunting of bears has been banned in Romania since 2016 and only "specialized technical personnel" are allowed to shoot the animals.

Lawmakers, led by Barna Tanczos — until recently environment minister and another proponent of bear culling — have tabled a bill to allow the killing of nearly 500 bears a year. Otherwise bears will end up roaming lowland areas, like the capital Bucharest, Tanczos claimed, or "bathing in the Danube Delta". His claims are challenged by conservationists, who fear the ever increasing

quotas could open the door to trophy hunting. They say bears that cause no trouble are being shot.

'Bear-smart community'

Not far from Miercurea Ciuc, the small touristy mountain town of Baile Tusnad is looking to become a "bear-smart community". "We have to understand bears won't disappear from this area. But if the bear doesn't feel safe, it doesn't stay in town," 36-year-old biologist Istvan Imecs told AFP. He was scathing of tourists — foreigners and Romanians alike — who fed bears, which is illegal.

With advice from Imecs and conservation groups like WWF, the town is testing bear-proof rubbish containers, and has installed 400 electric fences around houses and bins. There is also an app explaining what to do to avoid conflict with the animals.

From 50 damage complaints filed in 2021, the town has seen the number drop to zero in 2022 and 2023. Laci, a resident who only gave his first name, installed an electric fence years ago. "Anyone in Tusnad who says he's not scared of bears is either a liar or stupid," the 47-year-old said. "We just got used to living together. There's no other way." — AFP



Istvan Imecs, a biologist, demonstrates the proper installation of electric fencing against bear intrusion next to stuffed bears inside a visitor center.

Lifestyle



A worker sprays on some lettuce plants at the JoJo Acuaponics fish farming project.



Workers get down a pond from a truck at the JoJo Acuaponics fish farming project.



Red tilapias swim in a water tank at the JoJo Acuaponics fish farming project.

In Cuba, raising fish in plant-filtered ponds to tackle food shortage

Over the last two years, Cuban entrepreneurs Jose Martinez and Joel Lopez have used an innovative technique to raise 24 tons of tilapia — a critical source of food for an island nation surrounded by water but not enough fish. The pair, lawyers both aged 35, rely on a symbiotic method called aquaponics in which waste from the captive fish feeds plants grown not in soil but in pond water filtered through their roots to be reused for the tanks. Two years ago, Martinez and Lopez started their business in Barbosa, a suburb of the capital Havana, with a government loan and some private savings. They built 12 ponds of 20 cubic meters each.

In their ponds, the tilapia need six months to grow to the required size of 400 grams (14 ounces) for human consumption. "We sell them (the fish) here in the community as we are a local development project, but part of the production will be sold in the tourism sector so that we can earn the money we need to continue" with the project, said Martinez, co-owner of the enterprise called JoJo Aquaponico. When they have completed building their three greenhouses, the pair also hopes to be able to grow 36 tons of vegetables at a time.

'Viable and sustainable'
Projects like these are increasingly important for feeding Cuba's 11 million



A man feeds red tilapias in a water tank at the JoJo Acuaponics fish farming project.

inhabitants, under US sanctions for the last six decades. The communist nation is experiencing its worst economic crisis in three decades, with shortages of food, medicine and fuel. "Our idea is to bring this knowledge ... to everyone who wants to ... produce fish," said Lopez. "It is a viable and sustainable solution." Before the economic crisis of the 1990s brought on by the disintegration of the Soviet Union, an important ally, Cuba had a fleet that captured some 100,000 tons of fish in international waters every year — most of it sold at

home at subsidized prices.

Its own coast is shallow and low in nutrients, according to experts, and overfishing has further diminished stocks around the island. Another hurdle is a growing shortage of engines and fuel for fishing boats, Food Industry Minister Manuel Sobrino said on local television recently. For the last three years, Cuba has taken in less than 12,000 tons of fish per year. Last year, the country sold seafood worth some \$54 million to clients abroad as it desperately needs foreign currency.



A man puts red tilapia fingerlings into a water tank at the JoJo Acuaponics fish farming project.

Raise your own fish

Fish cultivation has also taken a hit. Official figures show that between 2018 and 2022, production of catfish — another freshwater species raised in captivity — dropped from 6,286 to 1,355 tons. Agriculture yields in general fell by as much as 35 percent from 2019 to 2023 in Cuba.

In July, deputy prime minister Jorge Luis Tapia proposed that Cubans start cultivating their own fish at home — a practice that was widespread in the

desperate times of the 1990s. The suggestion was met with incredulity. As the government scrambles to address the food shortage, it approved a law in 2019 to allow fishermen to sell their catches directly, without state intervention. Small businesses have increasingly been buying fish from individual fishermen but with the mark-up, ordinary Cubans cannot afford to buy it from them either. — AFP



A man feeds red tilapias in a water tank at the JoJo Acuaponics fish farming project.



A man shows a red tilapia before feeding it at the JoJo Acuaponics fish farming project.



World 'failing' on pledge to stop deforestation by 2030

The world is "failing" on a pledge to halt and reverse deforestation by 2030, with global losses increasing last year, a group of NGOs and researchers warned Tuesday. In 2021, leaders from over 100 countries and territories — representing the vast majority

of the world's forests — pledged to stop and reverse forest loss by 2030. But an annual assessment released Tuesday found global deforestation actually increased by four percent last year, and the world remains well off track to meet the 2030 commitment.

"That 2030 goal is not just nice to have, it's essential for maintaining a livable climate for humanity," warned Erin Matson, a lead author of the Forest Declaration Assessment. Forests are not only key habitats for animal life but serve as important regulators of the global climate and carbon sponges that suck in the emissions human activity belches out. However, deforestation last year was over 20 percent higher than it

should have been to meet the leaders' pledge, with 6.6 million hectares of forest lost, much of it primary forest in tropical regions. The assessment, overseen by more than two dozen environmental groups and research organizations, also warns that forest degradation remains a huge problem. Degradation refers to a wide range of harms, including wildfires and biodiversity loss, which affect a forest's overall health. "Data year over year does tend to shift. So one year is not the be-all, end-all," said Matson. "But what is really important is the trend. And since the baseline of 2018 to 2020, we're going in the wrong direction."

The assessment was not universally gloomy, with about 50 countries deemed

on course to end deforestation. In particular, Brazil, Indonesia and Malaysia saw "dramatic reductions" in forest loss. Those gains are at risk however, the report warns. Indonesia's success was linked in part to a moratorium on deforestation, but there are concerns new legislation on job creation could weaken that commitment.

And in Brazil, while there has been renewed interest in protecting the Amazon, another key ecosystem — the Cerrado savannah — has instead become a target. The report praised new rules introduced by the European Union intended to block the imports of commodities that drive deforestation. But it called for stronger global action, including more

money to protect forests, and the end of subsidies to sectors like agriculture that drive deforestation.

"The world is failing forests with devastating consequences on a global scale," said Fran Price, WWF's global forest lead. "Since the global pledge... was made, an area of tropical forest the size of Denmark has been lost." The report comes before countries meet for crunch climate talks next month. But deforestation is likely to take a backseat to discussions on renewable energy and the future of fossil fuels. "We want to see nature and forest high on the agenda. We're worried that they are not up there," Price said. — AFP



Aerial view of deforestation of the native Cerrado (savanna) in Sao Desiderio, west Bahia state, Brazil. — AFP photos

Lifestyle

Bobi, known as the oldest dog in the world, dies aged 31

Bobi, who was this year ordained the oldest dog in the world by Guinness World Records, has died at the ripe old age of 31, Portuguese media reported Monday. "We have better memories of a long life where he was happy and, above all, where he made a lot of people happy, especially his family," Bobi's owner Leonel Costa told local media

from the little village in central Portugal where he lives. A purebred Rafeiro, a Portuguese livestock guard dog whose normal life expectancy is between 12 and 14, Bobi was not supposed to make it beyond puppyhood.

He was born on May 11, 1992, along with three other pups in a wood storage shed owned by the Costa fami-

ly in the village of Conqueiros. Because the family owned so many animals, the father decided they could not keep the newborn puppies and the parents took them from the shed the next day, while the mother dog Gira was out, said Leonel Costa, who was eight years old at the time. But they didn't realize they had left one puppy behind, and that

puppy became Bobi. "He died at the age of 31 years and 165 days," according to the Guinness World Records. After he was declared the world's oldest dog in February, media and curious onlookers from around the world paid Bobi a visit. — AFP



Singer Britney Spears performs onstage during 102.7 KIIS FM's Jingle Ball 2016 presented by Capital One at Staples Center on December 2, 2016 in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

Toxic? Britney tells of troubles in new memoir

Britney Spears, the dewy-eyed child star who became a global pop phenomenon and then melted down in full view of the world, tells her story Tuesday with the release of her already bestselling memoir. "The Woman In Me" is the pop princess in her own, unvarnished words, shot through with the anguish of a family she believes has failed her at every step of the way, in an industry that mercilessly devours its talent.

From sharing daiquiris with her mother as a young teenager — two years after she became a regular on "The Mickey Mouse Club" — to the 13 years she spent as an adult in a conservatorship, the memoir details how she struggled to escape the influence of her controlling father. Until two years ago, when she got out from under the conservatorship legal relationship that she says dictated everything from her birth control choices to the set list at lucrative Las Vegas gigs.

In the intervening months, Spears has married a former dancer, announced then lost a pregnancy, and is now on the road to her third divorce. The book, whose pre-orders catapulted it to the top of the Amazon best-seller list, was produced too early to include that coda with husband Sam Asghari. But readers will still have plenty to chew on.

'Harlot'

Tidbits that have leaked ahead of

publication include news of an abortion Spears says fellow Mickey Mouse Club alum Justin Timberlake urged her to have after she became pregnant while the couple was together. When the pair split, and his hit "Cry Me A River" appeared to be about the way he felt she had betrayed him, Spears was painted as the "harlot who'd broken the heart of America's golden boy," she writes. In reality, he was "happily running around Hollywood" while she was "comatose in Louisiana."

Readers have also learned of a brief but intense affair with Irish actor and Oscar nominee Colin Farrell, what she calls "a two-week brawl." "Brawl is the only word for it — we were all over each other, grappling so passionately it was like we were in a street fight." The noughties brought fame and notoriety to Spears in equal measure, with a passionate fan base eager for every last scrap of news about her. That collided with an aggressive paparazzi culture that delighted in capturing her partying alongside hell-raisers like Paris Hilton and Lindsay Lohan.

Spears insists there were never hard drugs and that she did not have a drinking problem, but admits that she was taking Adderall, the ADHD medication. A publicly played out bust-up with second husband Kevin Federline, and an ensuing custody fight over their two children, presaged the emotional low watermark: shaving her head and attacking a photographer's car.

"Flailing those weeks without my children, I lost it, over and over again," she writes. "I didn't even really know how to take care of myself. 'I'd begin to think in some ways like a child.' A year later, courts appointed her father Jamie Spears to control her money and her personal life. Over the next 13 years, she was told who she could see, how much she could spend, and even ordered not to have more children.

Yet under Jamie Spears, she would still perform as a pop icon. "Too sick to choose my own boyfriend and yet somehow healthy enough to appear on sitcoms and morning shows, and to perform for thousands of people in a different part of the world every week." "From that point on, I began to think that (my father) saw me as put on the earth for no other reason than to help their cash flow."

Jamie Spears has always insisted that he had the best interests of his daughter at heart and was seeking to protect her from exploitation. The conservatorship was dissolved in 2021, but — aside from collaborations with Elton John and will.i.am — it has not heralded a return to creativity for Spears. "Pushing forward in my music career is not my focus at the moment," the now-41-year-old Britney writes. "It's time for me not to be someone who other people want; it's time to actually find myself." — AFP

Museum to fix Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson waxwork after skin tone complaints

A French museum said Monday it is working urgently to fix a much-decried waxwork of Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson after the US actor complained about its pale skin tone. Johnson, who is of Samoan and Black origin, took to Instagram this weekend to joke about the Grevin Museum's botched wax figure, which appeared to depict him with white skin, and bears only a vague likeness to his features. "For the record, I'm going to have my team reach out to our friends at Grevin Museum, in Paris, France, so we can work at 'updating' my wax figure here with some important details and improvements — starting with my skin color," wrote Johnson, best known by his stage name The Rock.

On Monday, the museum told AFP that staff were "reworking" the wax figure, and that an updated version would be reinstalled Tuesday morning. "They're going to work all night on it so that it's more in line with fans' expectations," Yves Delhommeau, the museum's director, said in a statement. "Crews will work through the night to ensure the likeness is more in keeping with the expectations of his fans.

"We're also going to reconfigure the lighting because there was a lighting issue that was having the effect of lightening his skin." Johnson "will come see us later on to see if there are other modifications that need to be made." The figure of Johnson was unveiled on social media last week by the Grevin Museum, which draws nearly 800,000 visitors a year. But a photo intended to promote the new statue drew an outcry from Johnson's fans, ranging from be-



US actor Dwayne Johnson attends the 95th Annual Academy Awards at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, California on March 12, 2023. — AFP

musement to anger.

One commenter said the figure looked like an "Eastern European plumber." "Why would you white wax (wash) him?" wrote another. Comedian James Andre Jefferson Jr. released an online video mocking the statue, prompting Johnson to respond. Jefferson said in the video that The Rock was being made to look like former England soccer star David Beckham or "part of the Royal family." "I'm low-key offended," said Jefferson. In 2018, the museum drew similar mockery for an unflattering figure of French President

Sony says 'Spider-Man 2' videogame sales set record

"Marvel's Spider-Man 2" videogame was snapped up so fast that it set a record for PlayStation Studios, Sony Interactive Entertainment (SIE) said Monday. The title, developed in collaboration with Insomniac Games, became the fastest selling PlayStation Studios game in the 24 hours after its release on Friday, with more than 2.5 million copies bought, according to SIE. "I want to say thank you to the fans," SIE global marketing vice president Eric Lempel said in a release. "With an epic storyline, two playable superheroes, a visually-stunning Marvel's New York, and so much more, this is a game you can get lost in for hours."



A cosplayer dressed as Spiderman poses for a photo during New York Comic Con at Javits Center on October 14, 2023 in New York City. — AFP

"Spider-Man" emerged as a superhero in the Marvel comics of the early 1960s and first appeared in video games in the 1990s, but without major success. Blockbuster superhero movies in the 2000s led to the character headlining a series of games developed from 2018 by Insomniac for Sony, which bought the studio the following year. Sony spent heavily developing "Marvel's Spider-Man 2", its graphics pushing the PlayStation 5's technical capacities to the max to battle Kraven the Hunter and other villains.

"Spider-Man" can be played in the "skin" of the original Peter Parker or in the guise of the Hispanic-African-American teenager Miles Morales created in 2011. "We are thrilled with how our characters are represented and the powerful, meaningful, new stories that emerge from their depictions in game," Marvel Games head Jay Ong said in a release. — AFP

Faster West Antarctic Ice Sheet melting unavoidable

The melting of West Antarctica's ice shelves is likely to substantially accelerate in coming decades even if the world meets ambitions to limit global warming, according to research Monday, warning it would drive rising sea levels. Researchers warned that humans had "lost control" of the fate of thinning ice shelves — frozen ridges floating on the fringes of the main ice sheet that play a stabilizing role by holding back the flow of glaciers into the ocean.

This region has already seen accelerating ice loss in recent decades and scientists have said that West Antarctica's vast ice sheet, which holds enough water to lift ocean levels by several meters, could be nearing a climate "tipping point". In the new study, researchers using computer modeling found that faster ice shelf melting is already inevitable in the coming decades as the ocean warms.

Their results were largely the same even in a scenario where greenhouse gas emissions are slashed and warming stays within the more ambitious Paris Agreement target of 1.5 degrees Celsius since pre-industrial

times. "It appears that we may have lost control of the West Antarctic ice shelf melting over the 21st century," said lead author Kaitlin Naughten, of the British Antarctic Survey.

The research, published in the journal Nature Climate Change, looked at the process of ocean waters melting the underside of the floating ice shelves in the Amundsen Sea. Even in the best-case scenario, ocean warming was found to be around three times as fast in the 21st century as the 20th century. "Our simulation suggests that we are now committed to a rapid increase in the rate of ocean warming and ice shelf melting for the rest of the century," Naughten told reporters.

'Wake-up call'

Although researchers did not simulate the exact implications for sea level rise, Naughten said they have "every reason to expect" that the finding would add to the phenomenon, already projected to be up to a meter by the end of the century. "West Antarctic ice shelf melting is one impact of climate change that we are probably just going to have to adapt to," she said. Many millions of

people across the planet currently live in low-lying coastal areas and she said some "coastal communities will either have to build around or be abandoned".

Alberto Naveira Garabato, professor in physical oceanography at the University of Southampton, said the research was "sobering". "It illustrates how our past choices have likely committed us to substantial melting of the

West Antarctic Ice Sheet and its consequent sea level rise — to which we will inevitably have to adapt as a society over coming decades and centuries," he told Science Media Centre.

But he stressed that it should also be "a wake-up call" to avoid other severe climate impacts — including the melting of the East Antarctic ice sheet, which is currently deemed more sta-



ble. "We can still save the rest of the Antarctic Ice Sheet, containing about 10 times as many meters of sea level rise, if we learn from our past inaction and start reducing greenhouse gas emissions now."

The study authors stressed that while ambitious emissions cutting would not make much difference to West Antarctica ice shelf loss in this century, they could have a bigger long-term impact. The ice sheet is likely to take centuries or even millennia to fully respond to climate change. Jonathan Bamber, a professor at the University of Bristol's School of Geographical Sciences, cautioned that the study is somewhat limited because researchers used just one ocean model and did not explicitly investigate the effect of warming waters on sea levels. "This part of West Antarctica contains sufficient ice to raise global sea level by more than a meter so it's important to understand how it will evolve in the future," said Bamber, who was not involved in the research. — AFP

Sports

Afghanistan send Pakistan crashing to shock eight-wicket World Cup defeat

Afghanistan's first-ever win over Pakistan in eight ODIs

CHENNAI: Afghanistan put on a superb batting and bowling display to hand Pakistan a stunning eight-wicket defeat in the Cricket World Cup on Monday. Chasing a 283-run target, Afghanistan were lifted by Ibrahim Zadran (87), Rahmat Shah (77 not out) and Rahmanullah Gurbaz (65) as they scored 286-2 in 49 overs.

Pakistan had made 282-7 in their 50 overs with 74 from skipper Babar Azam and 58 from opener Abdullah Shafique but the total did not prove tough enough for a clinical Afghanistan. Skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi, with a 45-ball 48 not out, hit the winning boundary as Afghanistan improved upon their highest ODI chase of 274 against the UAE in Dubai in 2014.

The win is Afghanistan's first-ever over Pakistan in eight ODIs and came eight days after their shock victory over defending champions England in Delhi. "This win tastes nice," said Shahidi. "The way we chased was very professional and the way we did that will help us going into our other games now."

"We are playing quality cricket. We have always had belief and at the start of the tournament I told my team I wanted to make it a historic one for our country and our people. We did that against England and now today against Pakistan."

The defeat leaves Pakistan's World Cup campaign in disarray with three defeats in five games and a formidable South Africa to face at the same venue on Friday. In contrast, Afghanistan's campaign is slightly revived with two wins in five matches and struggling Sri Lanka as their next opponents in Pune on Sunday. "That really hurt us. We got a good total. Our bowling is not up to the mark," said Pakistan skipper Azam.

The win was greeted with celebratory gunfire,

cheers and fireworks across the Afghan capital Kabul for at least 15 minutes after the match concluded. The victory for Afghanistan comes at a time of tense political and diplomatic relations between the two neighbours. Pakistan were sloppy in the field as they conceded easy boundaries with openers Zadran and Gurbaz taking their side to 100 in the 16th over.

The pair put on 130 by the 22nd over and it was only a miscued shot from Gurbaz off Shaheen Shah Afridi that brought Pakistan their first wicket. Gurbaz hit nine boundaries and a six in his 53-ball knock while Zadran scored 10 boundaries off 113 deliveries before handing a catch behind off Hasan Ali with 93 still needed.

Rahmat and Shahidi ensured Afghanistan did not collapse. Rahmat hit five fours and two sixes in his 84-ball stay at the crease. Earlier, Azam hit a stylish half-century to guide his team to a fighting total after he won the toss and batted first.

Noor shines on debut

Azam's 92-ball knock was complemented by Shafique's 75-ball 58 while Shadab Khan and Iftikhar Ahmed scored a valuable 40 runs apiece. On a spin-friendly Chidambaram Stadium pitch, Afghanistan fielded four slow bowlers with 18-year-old left-armer Noor Ahmad grabbing a career best 3-49 on his World Cup debut.

Shadab added a rapid 73 runs with Iftikhar for the sixth wicket as Pakistan took 61 off the last five overs, with Shadab falling off the last delivery. Iftikhar cracked four sixes and two fours while Shadab's innings featured a six and a four.

Pakistan enjoyed a strong start with a 56-run stand before Azmatullah Omarzai dismissed Immanuel-Haq for 17 in the 11th over. Ahmad struck his first



CHENNAI: Afghanistan's captain Hashmatullah Shahidi celebrates after winning the 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup one-day international (ODI) match between Pakistan and Afghanistan at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai. — AFP

blow when he trapped Shafique for 58 in the 23rd over. Shafique hit two sixes and five fours in his third half-century of the World Cup.

Ahmad then dismissed Pakistan's top scorer in the World Cup, Mohammad Rizwan, caught sweeping in his next over to leave Pakistan on 120-3. Azam also fell to Ahmad when the Pakistan skipper played

a tennis-like shot to a delivery that was seemingly out of his reach, ending up hitting it straight into the hands of Mohammad Nabi at extra cover.

Azam added 43 with Saud Shakeel who made 25. Afghan spinner Rashid Khan went wicketless in his 10 overs but conceded just 41 runs, while pacer Naveen-ul-Haq took 2-52. — AFP

Tele'a overcomes tragic loss to sparkle for All Blacks

PARIS: Mark Tele'a is back in the New Zealand fold after being forgiven by head coach Ian Foster for breaching curfew—but forgiveness is something the wing knows all about, following a family tragedy. The 26-year-old produced some magical running with twinkle-toed moves in the 44-6 destruction of Argentina in the All Blacks' Rugby World Cup semi-final having been forced to sit out the quarter-final win over Ireland due to breaching curfew.

He can now look forward to a likely start in Saturday's final against defending champions South Africa, the country of his father Maleko's birth. Tele'a had been one of their stars of the campaign up to his indiscretion, scoring the fastest try in a World Cup opener against hosts France and then two against Italy.

Bouncing back from a ticking off is small change to Tele'a as he has had to surmount the traumatic death of his brother Jerico, one of his 23 siblings—some by blood and others adopted—in 2019. Jerico died after being assaulted by Joseph Larson, who was drunk at the time, in Auckland.

However, even though Tele'a's Samoan mother Tuala suffered a heart attack as a result of the tragedy, the family forgave Larson, who pleaded guilty, and he avoided prison as a result. Larson—who is of Tongan heritage—obtained their forgiveness by undergoing the Samoan ritual of ifoga.

"You have experienced not just her family's grief but also the graciousness of their forgiveness," the judge told Larson, referring to the family's victim impact statement written by Tele'a's eldest sister Anita Fuimaono.

Tele'a himself would not be one for talking about the loss of Jerico. Despite his extrovert personality on the pitch, off it he jealously guards his privacy. "I'm a real private person, I'd like to keep it that way," Tele'a told 1News this year. "I have no social media, I like it like that!" He did concede, though, that it is good "growing up in a big family, you learn love early."

'Tears through their eyes'

Tele'a has also had to battle his way to the top and earn the right to don perhaps the most iconic shirt in rugby. He initially had to mix the pleasure of playing rugby with earning a living from the unglamorous making of spa pool filters.

"Here you are waking up at 4 o'clock in the morning, getting in the car and driving to training," he told 1News. "Then you just go have a shower, straight back to work and you do that like repeat and it kind of just builds that mental resilience."

Tele'a secured a coveted Super Rugby contract with The Blues in 2020 and despite his reluctance to speak to the media, within the squad he has emerged as a leader. "He didn't say a word the first few years but since then he's become a leader," said Blues assistant coach Dan Halangahu. "He talks straight." His Test debut followed two years later, Tele'a making an instant impact as he ran in two tries against Scotland in November last year. "He's a hard worker, and has the gifts to take it all the way," Blues captain Dalton Papali'i told Planet Rugby this year.

"I've seen him grow on and off the field. "He's already one of the best or if not the best winger in the game, and he's still getting better." Tele'a—who looked up to iconic Springbok winger Bryan Habana when he was a young boy—will forever treasure the moment he told his family he was going to make his All Blacks debut.

"I told my mum, my dad and my sister and they were overjoyed—tears through their eyes," he told Sportstak. "The old man was happy, he's been there from the beginning and seen all the hard work." The tears will be brimming come Saturday and become floods if he lifts the Webb Ellis trophy. — AFP

Pakistan's World Cup woe - what's gone wrong?

CHENNAI: Pakistan's chances of making the semi-finals of the Cricket World Cup are on a knife-edge after their eight-wicket defeat to Afghanistan. It was the team's third successive loss at the tournament after two opening wins. AFP Sport looks at three problem areas for Babar Azam's faltering team:

World class bowling looks ordinary

Pakistan's bowling was touted as world class before the Asia Cup and when they restricted a strong India side to 266 all out in a washed out game at Pallekele, commentators saw it as a major warning to World Cup rivals.

But two weeks before the show-piece event, key fast bowler Naseem Shah was ruled out with a shoulder injury. Spearhead Shaheen Shah Afridi has 10 wickets in five games in India but has failed to make an early impact—his 2-36 against India and 5-54 facing Australia came in losing causes. In the opening wins over Netherlands and Sri Lanka, he managed two wickets at a combined cost of 103 runs.

Haris Rauf has leaked runs, conceding 286 in five games for eight wickets

while the spinners have lacked bite on the slow and turning pitches of India. Shadab Khan, Usama Mir, Mohammad Nawaz and Iftikhar Ahmed have just six wickets in five matches between them, conceding 502 runs.

Captaincy in question

Babar Azam is one of the top batsmen in white ball cricket—he has two fifties at the World Cup—but his captaincy has been questioned and he has faced accusations of lacking aggression in field settings. Pakistan media have consistently accused him of favouring his friends in selection.

"As far as captaincy is concerned, I don't have much pressure on me or on my batting. I try to give my best in batting," Babar said after Monday's loss to Afghanistan. "During fielding, I think about captaincy and during batting I just think about the batting."

Babar has won some sympathy in India for his team having to play in front of crowds where Pakistan fans have been effectively banned. Tight security has also meant that the squad is virtually confined to their hotels once their playing and training commitments are completed.

Referee Barnes faces final test

PARIS: Wayne Barnes, the referee for the Rugby World Cup final, thought about retiring last year due to social media abuse which threatened his family sparked by tweets made by South Africa's director of rugby Rassie Erasmus. The 44-year-old Englishman decided not to hang up his whistle and focus on his successful legal career, and on Saturday he will take charge of what is likely to be his record-extending 111th and final Test.

It will see Barnes run the rule over Erasmus's defending champions Springboks and New Zealand with the winners lifting the Webb Ellis trophy for a record fourth time. Erasmus's sarcastic tweets taking Barnes to task over his refereeing of France's 30-26 victory over South Africa in November last year earned him a two-match ban—weeks after he had returned from a year-long suspension for other provocative tweets.

"I sacrifice, but it's a family sacrifice and you do think, 'I've got this other decent job to go to,'" Barnes told the podcast "The Good, The Bad and The Rugby" in December last year. "I'm a partner at a law firm and they're keen for me to come back full-time. "Of course you question it, and that's a constant conversation you have with your family."

His wife Polly had been threatened with "sexual violence" and she and their children also received death threats. "I've seen some things in the last few years, but receiving direct messages from rugby

'Comfortable at three' if Head is back: Marsh

NEW DELHI: Australia's Mitchell Marsh on Tuesday said he will be "comfortable" to bat at number three if opener Travis Head returns to the team for their World Cup clash against the Netherlands. Marsh

comes into Wednesday's contest in New Delhi fresh from his 121 in a 259-run opening partnership with David Warner against Pakistan last week. The in-form Marsh has opened the batting in Australia's four matches so far, contributing with a fifty and ton in the previous two victories. The five-time champions lost their opening two matches.

Head, who broke his hand at Centurion in South Africa last month, has rejoined the team after rehabilitation in Adelaide and had a hit at the nets at



CHENNAI: Afghanistan and Pakistan players greet each other during the end of their 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup one-day international (ODI) match. — AFP

Lack of planning

There have been frequent, unsettling changes in the the Pakistan Cricket Board set-up—three chairmen in the past year—which hurt planning for the World Cup. Former chairman Najam Sethi brought in Mickey Arthur as team director but he also kept his Derbyshire county job in England.

Directing the team from the UK, he was criticized in some media as a "Zoom coach." Pakistan officials have also been accused of failing to

manage the workload of their fast bowlers with Naseem and Shaheen playing all three formats.

Naseem's most obvious replacements, Ihsanullah and Mohammad Hasnain were also unfit, forcing Pakistan to recall Hasan Ali. "You were not able to find a coach and since you liked foreign ones you hired an online coach. We change our system frequently and that is showing in our performance in the World Cup," said former Pakistan great Wasim Akram. — AFP

'fans' threatening to kill your kids & burn your house down with your family in it over a few on-field decisions is a new low for me, my family & a plague for our entire game," tweeted Polly. Even the cool-headed lawyer in Barnes was shocked by the level and violence of the abuse. "When you've done 100 games, you think you can prepare for most things," he said. "You can't prepare for that."

"I don't mind people criticising my performance and, if they want to abuse me directly, that's their choice. "But that wasn't just a line that was crossed. You couldn't even see the line, it had gone that far."

'Financial situation'

Barnes said he did not know if Erasmus's tweets had been directly responsible but he made it clear people with senior roles had a duty to keep their opinions out of the public domain. "What I would say is that if people see people in positions who are meant to uphold the values of our game openly criticising referees then it allows others to say, 'People in positions of power can criticise, why can't I?'" he said.

Barnes, who refereed his first match aged 15 at the school where he was to go on to become head boy, has had plenty of happy moments too. He told Rugby World in 2018 how he and his assistants had been visited in their changing room by two players—Donnacha Ryan of Racing 92 and then Leinster's Tadhg Furlong.

Both were laden with beers after the Irish province had beaten the French team 15-12 in the European Cup final. "To have a winning and a losing player in our changing room speaks volumes about the game," Barnes said. "There's a nice relationship between all of us and Delhi's Arun Jaitley Stadium. "I think that decision (of having Head in the XI) will be made this afternoon/tonight," Marsh told reporters on the eve of the clash with the giant-killing Dutch. "He looked good, a bit of range hitting last night. He says the hand feels good. So, I'm sure if he's fit, he'll be available for selection in the team." On slipping down the batting order, Marsh said, "Yeah, I mentioned to David Warner, maybe he can bat three, but I got a firm no from him, so that's being sarcastic there guys!"



Wayne Barnes

we all work together—players, coaches and referees. "We can talk about how the game is changing and advancing." Whilst Barnes and his fellow referees are still quaintly addressed as "Sir" on the pitch he addresses the judges as "M'Lud".

Barnes at one point gave up on his legal career to focus on refereeing. "It was inevitable because of the financial situation. I was taking a great deal of time off from my work as a criminal law barrister, and being self-employed, something had to give," he told rugby365.com in 2007.

However, he managed in the end to find a balance and he sees both serving each other. "As a barrister you have to be able to pick out key facts, whether prosecuting or defending," he said. "It's attention to detail and picking out the relevant facts—that's transferable. "Analysing legal text is part of both jobs—knowing the law." — AFP

"But yeah, very happy to go back down to three. I've obviously batted there a lot over the last couple of years, so I feel really comfortable at three. And if and when Head comes back in, I think that's the best position for me to play for this team." The Netherlands stunned high-flying South Africa last week but lost to Sri Lanka in their next outing. Afghanistan's shock win over Pakistan in Chennai on Monday came after they had stunned defending champions England in New Delhi. — AFP

Sports

Texas Rangers stun Astros to reach World Series, Arizona-Phillies level

Rangers are one of six MLB teams never to win the World Series

PHILADELPHIA: The Texas Rangers booked their place in the World Series with a stunning 11-4 thrashing of the defending champion Houston Astros in Major League Baseball's playoffs on Monday. Adolis Garcia blasted two home runs, with Corey Seager and Nathaniel Lowe also grabbing homers as Texas romped to a victory that completed its 4-3 American League Championship Series win.

The result means Texas will advance to the World Series for the first time since losing back-to-back appearances in the Fall Classic in 2010 and 2011. The Rangers are one of six MLB teams never to win the World Series — but are now set to believe anything is possible after demolishing the Astros in ruthless fashion.

Houston had looked poised to return to the World Series for the fifth time since 2017 after overturning a 2-0 series deficit to lead 3-2 after game five last week. But Texas squared the series with a 9-2 victory on Sunday and then cut loose once more on Monday at Houston's Minute Maid Park, leaving home fans stunned.

Rangers star Seager said Texas had

never doubted their ability to win the final two games of the series in Houston to advance. "This team's tough," Seager said. "We were never out of it. We knew what we had in front of us and we took the opportunity."

Arizona sets up decider

Texas will face either the Philadelphia Phillies or the Arizona Diamondbacks in game one of the World Series on Friday. Arizona kept their National League Championship Series against Philadelphia alive earlier Monday after pitcher Merrill Kelly delivered a gem in a 5-1 victory to force a winner-take-all game seven.

Arizona right-hander Kelly struck out eight batters for just one run from a Phillies line-up that had not lost at home all postseason before Monday's defeat at Citizens Bank Park. Arizona will head into Tuesday's decider in a confident mood after producing a disciplined performance to frustrate the Phillies' attempt to wrap up the NLCS. "It's going to be fun," Kelly said of Tuesday's game seven.

"The fact that we're here — I don't think anybody thought we would even

take it to game six. I don't think anybody even thought we would make it to game one... We're going to enjoy it and take it all in, but we're definitely coming out competitive and trying to win."

The tone was set early with Arizona cutting loose in the top of the second inning after Tommy Pham and Lourdes Gurriel Jr. crushed back-to-back home runs off Aaron Nola to give the Diamondbacks a 2-0 lead before Evan Longoria's sharp line drive allowed Alek Thomas to score to make it 3-0. There were signs of a Phillies rally in the bottom of the inning when Brandon Marsh doubled for J.T. Realmuto to score to make it 3-1. But Kelly then extricated himself from the jam, striking out Trea Turner with two runners stranded on base to end the inning.

With the Phillies continuing to struggle against Kelly, the Diamondbacks kept the score ticking over with Ketel Marte's triple, allowing Corbin Carroll to score for a 4-1 lead. Marte then drove in another run in the seventh inning to send Geraldo Perdomo home, leaving Arizona 5-1 up heading into the late stages.



PHILADELPHIA: Former baseball player and coach Larry Bowa throws out the ceremonial first pitch before Game Six of the Championship Series between the Philadelphia Phillies and the Arizona Diamondbacks at Citizens Bank Park in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. — AFP

The Diamondbacks' bullpen continued to bottle up the Phillies offense, with reliever Kevin Ginkel wrapping up the eighth inning with a minimum of fuss

to preserve Arizona's four-run cushion heading to the ninth. Closer Paul Sewald then grabbed the final three outs to clinch the win. — AFP

Burgan Bank sponsors Kuwait Women's Football League for 2023 season

KUWAIT: In its continued efforts to bolster Kuwait's sports culture and empower young aspiring female athletes, Burgan Bank announced its gold sponsorship of the Kuwait Women's Football League (KWFL) for the 2023 season; in partnership with Kuwait Calma and in affiliation with the Kuwait Football Association.

This sponsorship comes as part of Burgan's commitment to championing diversity and inclusivity across all fields, including sports, in line with its environment, sustainability, and governance (ESG) commitment and its overarching social responsibility strategy. The Bank also continues to make sports a central part of its community engagement initiatives.

In light of this sponsorship, Hessa Hussain Al-Najadah, Senior Manager - Corporate and CSR Communications at Burgan Bank, said: "We are very proud of our national athletes, especially the women, who continue to challenge their own limits in pursuit of bigger athletic achievements and personal growth. Today, we can see women breaking many boundaries and earning their place in society through the brilliance they exhibit across all fronts and the passion they bring to their fields. As part of our mission to empower women and support rising talents, we are delighted to be sponsoring the Kuwait Women's Football League this year."

On her part, Sara Al-Azmi - Founder and Managing Partner at Kuwait Calma, commented on the



Kuwait Women's Football League team for 2023 season.

partnership with Burgan Bank saying: "It is a great honor to be partners with an impactful institution such as Burgan Bank and to build on our shared belief in the power of sports in community development and enrichment. Over the years, we have seen how sports can elevate people's quality of life and add more value to society. The field of sports stands for numerous values, from perseverance and tolerance to equality and fairness; and whenever we organize tournaments, we always approach the events with the intention of instilling these values and more into the fabric of our society to help shape the characters of young individuals and future generations."

It serves to note that the KWFL team has par-

ticipated in many tournaments and leagues over the past years, with the majority of the league's members having competed on the Kuwait Women's National Futsal team in a number of national and international games. Among their notable achievements is winning the Kuwait National Women's Futsal League in both 2020 and 2021.

In addition to its gold sponsorship of the KWFL, Burgan Bank has also sponsored a number of national athletic stars, including Kuwaiti Olympians Yaqoub Al-Youha, Mudhawi Al-Shammari, Ebrahim Al-Dhafeeri Amal Al Roumi, and Jude Tawfiq, in addition to Wheelchair Fencing Champion Tareq Al-Qallaf and the Kuwait Equestrian Federation (KEF) league.

both on and off the pitch they turned to an old experienced hand, former boss Louis van Gaal, to return in an advisory role at the start of the month.

The 72-year-old former Dutch national team coach, who has been recovering from prostate cancer, led the club to a Champions League title in 1995. Thirty-six times Dutch title winners and champions of European four times, Ajax will always be associated with Johan Cruyff, who gives his name to their stadium. But you have to go back to 1964/65, when Cruyff had just joined the Ajax youth team, to find a worse start to a season. Making life worse for the Ajax faithful, bitter rivals PSV Eindhoven top the table unbeaten, winning nine matches from nine.

Amongst Ajax's losses under Steijn was a humiliating 4-0 rout by their other main grudge team, Feyenoord. That game was abandoned 10 minutes into the second half when hardcore Ajax fans lobbed flares onto the pitch with their team 3-0 behind.

Ugly scenes ensued as fans fought mounted riot police and smashed the entrance to their own stadium. The match was completed days later behind closed doors. Former Sparta Rotterdam coach Steijn was only appointed in June as the replacement for ex-Dutch defender John Heitinga. — AFP

Milan's Maignan stands in way of old club PSG in Champions League

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's Champions League clash with AC Milan this week will see the French club come up against one of the many outstanding talents they have let slip away in recent years. In the Italian side's goal will be Mike Maignan, who was allowed to leave Paris for Lille in 2015 and has gone on to win a Ligue 1 title, Serie A and become France's first-choice 'keeper.

PSG, meanwhile, handed the gloves to a long list of goalkeepers before signing Gianluigi Donnarumma from Milan in 2021 and making him their undisputed number one a year later. But would the Qatar-backed club have ultimately been better off keeping faith in a young Maignan than going from Salvatore Sirigu and Kevin Trapp to Gianluigi Buffon, Alphonse Areola, Keylor Navas and then Donnarumma in their on-going quest to win the Champions League?

Now aged 28, Maignan has become one of the world's outstanding goalkeepers and will be Milan's last line of defence against his France teammates Kylian Mbappe, Ousmane Dembele and Randal Kolo Muani in a pivotal Group F match.

Having kept clean sheets in draws with Newcastle United and Borussia Dortmund so far in the group, Maignan is set to return for Milan after sitting out the 1-0 Serie A loss against Juventus on Sunday due to suspension. "It is always a strange feeling to go back home, whether that be to Lille or Paris," said Maignan while on France duty last week. He missed last year's World Cup with injury but has become France's first choice since Hugo Lloris retired.

"It brings back memories. I have already played against PSG for Lille. It's the Champions League. There will be a great atmosphere. My family will be there. I need to make sure I focus on my job and not let the emotions overwhelm me."

There has been much focus in recent months on PSG's lack of Champions League success while their Qatari owners have adopted a policy of spending huge money on superstar signings. Meanwhile they have rather neglected the young talent on their doorstep in the fertile football breeding grounds of the Paris region.

A conscious effort has been made to change the approach with the departures of Lionel Messi and Neymar and the arrivals of exciting French talents like Normandy-born Dembele and Kolo Muani, a native of the same Paris suburb as Mbappe.

It is not just Maignan they let go over the last decade, with Kingsley Coman, Adrien Rabiot, Christopher Nkunku and Moussa Diaby all choosing to pursue their careers elsewhere. As well as Maignan, the Milan side to face PSG could include Yacine Adli, a 23-year-old playmaker born in the Paris suburbs who left his hometown team after just one top-team appearance. — AFP

Crisis-hit Ajax split with coach Maurice Steijn

THE HAGUE: Ailing Dutch giants Ajax parted company with their coach Maurice Steijn on Monday just four months into his tenure. The split comes as the former heavyweights of Europe seek a reversal of fortune after their worst start to a league season in decades.

"Ajax and Maurice Steijn have parted company with immediate effect," the Amsterdam side announced. Steijn exits 24 hours after a 4-3 loss to Utrecht, the club's fourth defeat in seven games, left them in 17th place, one off the foot of the Eredivisie. "We came to the conclusion that this is for the best for Ajax, even if I regret it," said Steijn, 49.

"I did everything to lead Ajax back to where they belong, but I wasn't able to accomplish that," he added. Ajax's caretaker director Jan van Halst noted: "We've worked very intensely and professional-



AMSTERDAM: In this file photo Ajax Amsterdam's Dutch coach Maurice Steijn addresses a press conference in the Johan Cruyff Arena in Amsterdam. — AFP

ly over the past few months but the results and the team's progress were lagging behind.

"Together we decided it was best if we separated." Assistant coach Hedwiges Maduro will assume the role of manager "for the moment", added Van Halst. Such is the sense of crisis enveloping the club

Classifieds

Clinics & Hospitals

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804

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

Hospitals

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

Change of Name

I, SAHHUL HAMEED SALAIM-AAN GANI holder of Passport No. R2316512 do hereby change my name to Shahul Hameed as (given name) Sulaiman Batcha as (surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name Shaul Hameed Sulaiman Batcha and i also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. 24-10-2023

I, OSMAN BIN SALAM, holder of Indian Passport No. M9886038 having permanent address 23-1-915 Moghalpura inside Dowdi Kalyani Hyderabad, Pin 500002, Telangana, India, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby de-

clare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) OSMAN BIN SALAM and (surname) BIN MAHFOOZ. #4249 - 23-10-2023

I, CYCLEWALA SAIFUDDIN FAKHARUDDIN, holder of Indian Passport No. M2288188, having permanent address 786/03, Al-Husen Apartment, near Chunnawala compound, Thakkar Faliya, Dahod, Gujarat-389151, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (surname) SAIFUDDIN and (given name) SAIFUDDIN FAKHRUDDIN. #4250 - 23-10-2023

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Son, Maddison star as Spurs go top of Premier League

Postecoglou has astutely guided Tottenham to calmer waters'



LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur's English midfielder #10 James Maddison (C) shoots past Fulham's German goalkeeper #17 Bernd Leno (R) to score their second goal during the English Premier League football match between Tottenham Hotspur and Fulham at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London. — AFP

LONDON: Tottenham surged to the top of the Premier League as Son Heung-min and James Maddison sealed a 2-0 win against Fulham on Monday. Ange Postecoglou's side extended their unbeaten start to nine league games thanks to Son's opener and Maddison's first goal at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium since his close-season move from Leicester.

Tottenham leapfrogged Manchester City, Arsenal and Liverpool to go two points clear at the top of the table. Fulham are the only team to beat Tottenham this season, knocking them out of the League Cup on penalties in August.

But they avenged that loss by recording a third successive league victory to strengthen their unexpected title challenge. Saluting Son and Maddison, Postecoglou said: "They are both quality players. They are both leaders at the club.

"They work hard for the team and it is a credit to them." The north Londoners' superb start to Postecoglou's debut season have awoken dreams of the club's first top-flight title since Bill Nicholson's 1961

double winners. While that ambitious target may yet prove beyond Tottenham, who haven't won a major trophy since 2008, the Australian has undoubtedly had a huge impact on a club that was in turmoil when he arrived from Celtic.

A toxic combination of Tottenham's poor results and dour displays under Antonio Conte last term, combined with Harry Kane's close-season move to Bayern Munich, left many expecting another year of turmoil.

Yet Postecoglou has astutely guided Tottenham to calmer waters, winning over doubters with his down-to-earth personality and attacking game-plan. "It was a good result against a tough opponent. We maintained our patience and our pressing was really strong," Postecoglou said.

"Both our goals came from our press to be honest. Our work off the ball was excellent. It has been first rate all year and that is what got us the result." Monday's victory gave Postecoglou the record for most points gained by a new manager

in their first nine Premier League matches, with his 23 surpassing the mark previously held by Mike Walker and Guus Hiddink.

Postecoglou's next challenge is ensuring his players are ready for a quick turnaround, with their London derby at Crystal Palace scheduled for Friday.

Dynamic duo

In keeping with their vibrant form under Postecoglou, Tottenham made an enterprising start and Son was denied an early goal by Bernd Leno's smart save from his close-range shot. Heading into this weekend, no player had provided more assists in the competition this term than Maddison's five.

The playmaker nearly added to that tally when his free-kick was volleyed over by Micky van de Ven. Fulham almost snatched a shock lead through Joao Palhinha, whose header was brilliantly clawed to safety by Guglielmo Vicario.

Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg tested Leno with a fierce strike before Richarlison side-footed just wide from

the edge of the area. Tottenham's pressure was rewarded in the 36th minute as Calvin Bassey carelessly surrendered possession and Richarlison flicked a pass to Son on the edge of the area.

Son's deft touch took him away from two flat-footed Fulham defenders, giving him time to curl a fine finish into the far corner for his seventh goal this season. Dejan Kulusevski's goal-bound strike was deflected wide for a corner as Tottenham pushed for a second.

They had to wait just nine minutes after half-time before delivering the knockout blow, with a hearty assist from Fulham's lacklustre defence. Kane's departure was expected to destabilize Tottenham, but Son and Maddison have formed a dynamic duo almost as effective as the South Korean's prolific partnership with the England captain.

Hojbjerg intercepted a miscued Bassey clearance and picked out Son, who laid a composed pass into Maddison to apply the finishing touch with a low strike from 10 yards. — AFP

Barca forward Torres 'ready to step up' in big week

BARCELONA: Barcelona winger Ferran Torres said Tuesday he is ready to step up a gear in a vital week for the Spanish champions, who are missing several players through injury, including striker Robert Lewandowski. The Catalans face Shakhtar Donetsk on Wednesday in the Champions League, aiming for a third victory in three games in Europe, before hosting rivals Real Madrid on Saturday in the season's first La Liga Clasico.

Torres, who has struggled for form since joining Barca from Manchester City in 2022, says he is confident he can keep improving to help the team



SANT JOAN DESPI: Barcelona's Spanish forward #07 Ferran Torres holds a press conference at the Joan Gamper training ground in Sant Joan Despi, near Barcelona, on October 24, 2023, on the eve of their UEFA Champions League 1st round Group H football match against Shakhtar Donetsk. — AFP

at a difficult time. "We've got a lot of injuries, I think that I am ready to take this step forward, I'm very confident and I'm prepared for what's coming," Torres told a news conference ahead of the clash with Shakhtar.

"I don't need to gain more confidence, I have enough, I have what I need — but I can improve a lot of things. "I'm 23 and at the start of my career even though I've been going for a lot of years already."

Torres said he was grateful to coach Xavi Hernandez for bringing him to Barcelona and sticking with him through difficult spells. "The coach has always been there, he's always given me good advice, he's played me when he's decided to," added the winger.

"I'll always be grateful because it was him who gave me the confidence to come to Barca when they signed me and I learn a lot from him." Although Torres is still young, he is one of the more experienced players at the club, with plenty of youngsters coming through from the La Masia youth academy.

Striker Marc Guiu, 17, scored 33 seconds into his debut to earn Barca a 1-0 win over Athletic at the weekend that pulled his side within a point of La Liga leaders Madrid. "I feel like an old guy but I try to give the advice that I can," said Torres, of the emerging teenagers.

"They're footballers who are coming through strong, they're finding their places, getting plenty of starts ... they have enormous potential." Xavi said he thought Torres, who has scored four goals in 11 games across all competitions this season, is coming into his own. "Forwards live from goals, they generate so much confidence... Ferran has confidence, he plays with more ease, calmer, without tension," said the coach. Barcelona have failed to progress from their group in each of the past two seasons but wins over Royal Antwerp and Porto have put them top of Group H at the start of this season's campaign. — AFP

Vikings rookie bags two touchdowns as Niners stumble again

LOS ANGELES: Rookie receiver Jordan Addison scored two touchdowns to lead the Minnesota Vikings to an upset 22-17 victory over the San Francisco 49ers on Monday in the NFL. Addison connected with Vikings quarterback Kirk Cousins twice in the first half in a wire-to-wire win for Minnesota at US Bank Stadium in Minneapolis.

"It's just team football," Cousins said after the win. "Lot of guys making plays. "We found a way. This league's tough — one play here, one play there. We found a way tonight, and we've got to keep stacking them up," added Cousins, who finished with 378 passing yards from 35-of-45 attempts with two touchdowns.

The 49ers — tipped by many observers as Super Bowl contenders — slumped to a second straight defeat following their loss to Cleveland the previous week. San Francisco fell to 5-2 after the defeat while Minnesota improved to 3-4.

The 49ers arrived in Minneapolis determined to bounce back from their loss to the Browns, but were missing receiver Deebo Samuel and left tackle Trent Williams through injury. San Francisco looked to have made a dream start after an interception on Minnesota's opening drive.

But the Vikings responded in kind to force a fumble from Niners running back Christian McCaffrey, launching a 10-play, 89-yard drive that ended with Cousins finding Addison for the opening touchdown. A Greg Joseph field goal from 21 yards put Minnesota 10-0 up early in the second quarter before Mc-



Jordan Addison

Caffrey atoned for his earlier blunder with a touchdown to cut the deficit to three points.

The Vikings hit back just before half-time though when Addison outmuscled Niners cornerback Charvarius Ward to score his second touchdown of the night to make it 16-7 at the break. Two more Joseph field goals either side of a McCaffrey touchdown left the Vikings 22-14 ahead going into the final quarter.

Niners kicker Jake Moody cut the gap to five points with a 55-yard field goal to start the fourth quarter, setting up a tense finale. Minnesota then squandered the chance to give themselves an eight-point advantage with just over one minute remaining when a Joseph field goal attempt from 50 yards drifted wide right.

That gave the 49ers a final chance to mount a game-winning drive. But 49ers quarterback Brock Purdy's attempt to find Raymond McCloud instead fell into the grasp of Vikings safety Camryn Bynum, who snaffled his second interception of the game to ice the contest. — AFP