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West's 'double standards' slammed

Queen Rania raps 'silence' • Qatar, Turkish FMs concur • Erdogan calls Hamas 'liberators'

Crown Prince meets King Charles



LONDON: Britain's King Charles III welcomes HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Buckingham Palace on Oct 25, 2023. — AFP

LONDON: HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met King Charles III of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on Wednesday at Buckingham Palace on the occasion of the invitation extended to him. HH the Crown Prince conveyed the greetings of HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to King Charles III and his invitation to him to visit his second country, the State of Kuwait. They exchanged cordial talks that reflect-

ed the depth of the good historical relations between Kuwait and the United Kingdom and stressed the continuation of work to strengthen the frameworks of joint cooperation between the two friendly countries at all levels and fields. King Charles III expressed his sincere thanks to HH Sheikh Mishal for accepting the invitation, which reflects the depth of historical relations between the two friendly countries and peoples. — KUNA

AMMAN: Jordan's Queen Rania accused Western leaders of a "glaring double standard" for not condemning the Zionist entity's killing of Palestinian civilians in its bombardment of Gaza, in an interview aired Wednesday. The royal, born to Palestinian parents in Kuwait, blasted Western nations for opposing a blanket ceasefire and said their silence gave the impression they were "complicit" in the Zionist entity's attacks on the Gaza Strip.

"The people all around the Middle East, including in Jordan, we are just shocked and disappointed by the world's reaction to this catastrophe that is unfolding. In the last couple of weeks, we have seen a glaring double standard in the world," she told CNN's Christiane Amanpour. "When October 7 happened, the world immediately and unequivocally stood by (the Zionist entity) and its right to defend itself and condemned the attack," she said of the day when Hamas fighters began a rampage that killed more than 1,400 people and abducted more than 220 others, Zionist officials say.

"But what we're seeing in the last couple of weeks,

we're seeing silence in the world." The Zionist entity has responded with relentless air strikes on the tiny Palestinian territory which Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry says have killed 6,546 people, mostly civilians and many of them children. It has also imposed a total siege on Gaza's 2.4 million residents who are facing a "catastrophic" humanitarian crisis, the United Nations says.

"Are we being told that it is wrong to kill a family, an entire family, at gunpoint, but it's OK to shell them to death?" Queen Rania asked. Many Western governments have repeatedly and publicly voiced their support for the Zionist entity while also urging it to respect international law. Queen Rania said of the West's refusal to back a ceasefire that "the silence is deafening and, to many in our region, it makes the Western world complicit through their support and through the cover that they give (the Zionist entity)".

UN chief Antonio Guterres on Tuesday spoke of "epic suffering" in Gaza, and said there had been "clear violations of international law".

Continued on Page 6

Kuwait calls to end Zionist war, sends more aid

NEW YORK: Kuwait's permanent envoy to the UN Tareq Al-Bannai reiterated the necessity to end the Zionist war on Gaza immediately. This came during his speech on Wednesday in an open session of the UN Security Council titled "Situation in the Middle East, Including the Palestinian Issue". The Kuwaiti ambassador stressed on the need to work with the international community for immediate effective action in accordance with international law.

Continued on Page 6



KUWAIT: Workers load humanitarian aid bound for Gaza through Egypt into a military aircraft at the airport on Oct 25, 2023. — KUNA

Gaza hospitals in crisis as Zionists kill 700 in a day

GAZA: Gaza's hospitals were facing "complete collapse", Palestinian medics warned Wednesday as the UN said supplies were running critically low and the Hamas-run health ministry reported 700 deaths in Zionist strikes in 24 hours. Alarm is growing over the spiraling humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, which the Zionist entity has been bombing since Oct 7.

UN figures show over a third of the narrow Palestinian territory's 35 hospitals have closed due to damage or insufficient fuel, and one doctor said he was forced to perform surgeries without anesthetics. "The hospitals are in a state of complete collapse," said Mohammed Abu Selmeya, head of Shifa, Gaza's biggest hospital. He told AFP "more than 90 percent of medicines" had run out and "we urgently need fuel to run the generators and to operate hospital departments and operating theatres".

His words came as the UN agency for Palestinian refugees UNRWA warned it could be forced to halt its operations by nightfall if it didn't receive any deliveries of fuel.

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More than 100 Palestinians killed in West Bank

JENIN: More than 100 Palestinians have been killed across the occupied West Bank since war erupted between the Zionist entity and Gaza's Islamist rulers Hamas on Oct 7, the health ministry said Wednesday. Violence had already spiraled in the West Bank before the Gaza war, with the highest death toll in the Palestinian territory since at least 2005.

Many of the Palestinian deaths came in raids by Zionist troops but there has also been a rise in clashes between Palestinians and Zionist settlers. Since Oct 7, tensions and bloodshed have surged in the West Bank, including annexed east Jerusalem, with the Palestinian death toll reaching 102, according to the Ramallah-based health ministry. Over the same period, the Zionist military has reported one member of the security forces killed while taking part in a raid. — AFP

Hezb, Hamas, PIJ meet as Zionists kill 11 Syria troops

BEIRUT/DAMASCUS: Senior officials of Palestinian militant groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad had held talks with Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah about achieving "real victory" in their war with the Zionist entity, the Lebanese group said Wednesday. The Hezbollah statement did not specify when or where Nasrallah met with Hamas number two Saleh Al-Aruri and Islamic Jihad leader Ziad Nakhaleh beyond saying that it was at an undisclosed location in Lebanon. News of the meeting comes as Hezbollah and



JENIN: Mourners attend the funeral procession of three Palestinians - Mohammed Fayed, Mohammed Sabah and Mahmud Abu Kutneh - killed by Zionist fire - at the Jenin refugee camp on Oct 25, 2023. — AFP

allied Palestinian factions exchange daily fire with the Zionist army across the Lebanon-Zionist entity border, raising fears of a new front in the Zionist entity's war with Hamas in Gaza. The three groups are part of the "axis of resistance" — Palestinian, Lebanese, Syrian and other Iran-backed armed groups opposed to the Zionist entity.

They discussed what "the axis of resistance must do at this critical stage to achieve real victory... in Gaza and Palestine and stop" the Zionist entity's "brutal aggression", the statement said. They also discussed "recent events in the Gaza Strip since the start of Operation Al-Aqsa Flood" — the unprecedented Oct 7 Hamas attack.

Nasrallah and the Palestinian militant leaders "agreed to keep coordinating and daily following up on developments," the statement added. Hezbollah and Hamas have long been part of a "joint operations room" with the Quds Force — the



Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah meets Ziad Nakhaleh of Islamic Jihad and Saleh Al-Arouri of Hamas at an undisclosed location in Lebanon. — AFP

foreign operations arm of Iran's Revolutionary Guards — a source close to Hezbollah previously told AFP on condition of anonymity. The meeting also touched upon the cross-border fire on

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Local

Crown Prince's visit to UK opens new chapter in Kuwait-British ties

High-level bilateral visits reflect keenness to strengthen friendship

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's visit to the United Kingdom, which started earlier on Tuesday, opens a new chapter in the distinguished and deeply-rooted relations between the two friendly countries. This is the fourth visit HH the Crown Prince pays to the United Kingdom since his assumption to post on October 7, 2020. HH Sheikh Mishal visited the UK for the first time on September 18, 2022 as a representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to pay tribute to the late Queen of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth States Elizabeth II.

During this visit, HH the Crown Prince met King Charles III. HH Sheikh Mishal visited Britain for the second time on May 6, 2023 to attend the coronation ceremony of King Charles III as the new King of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth States. On August 28, 2023, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal visited Britain for the third time upon an official invitation from the UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. During his visit, HH Sheikh Mishal sponsored and attended a ceremony held to mark the 70th anniversary of opening the Kuwaiti Investment Office in London.

On the other hand, King Charles III visited Kuwait for the first time on March

12, 1989 when he was the Crown Prince of Britain and the Prince of Wales and he was accompanied by his late wife Prince of Wales Diana Spenser. During this visit, he held talks with the then HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on bolstering bilateral ties.

On November 9, 1993, the then Crown Prince Charles III visited Kuwait for the second time. HH Sheikh Jaber decorated him with the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Medal in recognition of the United Kingdom's honorable role in the liberation of Kuwait from the Iraqi occupation. On February 21, the Crown Prince Charles III visited Kuwait and held talks with Kuwaiti officials over bilateral ties and several issues of common interest. Prince Charles III's fourth visit to Kuwait was on January 17, 2006, to pay tribute to the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. He visited Kuwait also on February 19, 2007, accompanied by his wife Duchess of Cornwall Camilla Parker Bowles. During this visit, he discussed with the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah strengthening bilateral ties.

On October 30, 2011, Prince Charles III visited Kuwait for the sixth time. On February 6, 2015 Prince Charles headed a delegation on a two-day visit to Kuwait. On October 4, 2020, Prince Charles III visited

Kuwait and met HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to pay tribute to the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

These visits reflected the peculiarity of relations between the two countries which extended over 124 years and underwent several milestones: The signing of the Anglo-Kuwaiti Agreement of 1899 by the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah in 1899; The signing of the Kuwait independence agreement in 1961; and the United Kingdom participation in the liberation of the State of Kuwait from the Iraqi occupation in 1990. The first visit paid to the UK by a Kuwaiti official was in October 1919 when Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah visited London as a representative of the then Kuwaiti ruler Sheikh Salem Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah to congratulate King George V on the victory of Britain and Allies in the World War I.

In mid-1935, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber, who became the Amir of Kuwait, paid the second visit to the United Kingdom. The first official visit to Kuwait by a UK official was on February 12, 1979 when Queen Elizabeth II and her husband Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, visited Kuwait upon an official invitation from the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA



Official visits between Kuwait and Britain
Common keenness to further cement bilateral relations

As camping season nears, municipality launches campaign

KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality on Wednesday launched its awareness campaign regarding the establishment of spring camps under the slogan "The camp is yours and the righteousness is for your family, preserve it" on the occasion of the approaching start of this year's camping season. The season begins from Nov 15 until March 15, 2024. The Director of Public Relations and the official spokesman for the municipality, Muhammad Al-Mutairi, said in a press statement that the campaign aims to educate citizens and residents by introducing the places in which camping is permitted, which was officially approved by a committee to study and update camp sites and identified them in 15 distributed locations.

There are eight sites in the northern mainland areas and seven in the southern sites, he said stressing that camping is not allowed outside them. Al-Mutairi called for the necessity to be aware of the steps for reserving and issuing a camp license via QR code through the official website of the municipality to receive requests. Camp owners are required to pay a fee of KD 50 and a deposit of KD 100 to obtain a temporary license and place in a prominent place in the camp.

He added that the campaign is intended to create awareness in the streets of the governorates showing the importance of maintaining the cleanliness of camping sites, not harming the environment and wildlife, adhering to the conditions and regulations of camping and educating citizens and residents through various visual media.

It was reported that 183 advertisements were installed in various governorates, 17 of which were in Al-Jahra governorate, 22 in Mubarak Al-Kabeer, 24 in Farwaniya, 32 in Al-Ahmadi, 42 in the capital, and 46 in Hawally. — KUNA



RIYADH: Saudi Arabia Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Mohammad bin Salman with Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



RIYADH: Kuwait's Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah visits the headquarters of a Saudi-led Islamic military alliance to fight terrorism. — KUNA photos

Saudi Crown Prince meets Kuwait DM

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Mohammad bin Salman received on Tuesday visiting Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Min-

ister Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. During the meeting, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad conveyed greetings from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, expressing best wishes for the kingdom.

The two sides also tackled bilateral cooperation, regional and international developments. Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Sabah also discussed on Tuesday with Saudi Defense Minister Prince

Khalid bin Salman bilateral cooperation relations and regional international developments. Al-Fahad praised bilateral relations and keenness between the two countries to boost relations in various areas and all levels. Earlier, Al-Fahad arrived in Riyadh and was received by the Saudi Minister of Defense and the Ambassador of Kuwait to the Kingdom Sheikh Sabah Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and the Secretary-General of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, Jaseem Al-Budaiwi.

Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah on Wednesday paid a visit to the headquarters of a Saudi-led Islamic military alliance to fight terrorism, where he was briefed of its latest plans and endeavors. The Kuwaiti defense minister praised the alliance's determination to clamp down on the scourge of terrorism, while the military coalition's secretary general Air Vice Marshal Mohammed Al-Mughaidi expressed his appreciation for the visit, acknowledging Kuwait's contributions towards counter-terrorism efforts. — KUNA

Al-Mane convenes meeting to discuss shortage of teachers

KUWAIT: Minister of Education Dr Adel Al-Mane directed officials to expedite the procedures for transferring male and female teachers to schools experiencing a shortage of educational staff. This directive is to be carried out in accordance with the latest appointment standards and while considering the annual plan approved for academic subjects.

This decision was made during a meeting held by Al-Mane with the directors of all educational regions and the coordination and information systems departments. The primary topic of discussion was the process for distributing teachers across various educational levels to address the actual deficit in teaching positions in schools.

The minister emphasized the necessity for collective effort, teamwork, heightened commitment and the shared responsibility of all officials. This collaborative approach is essential for the success of the ministry's efforts in overcoming challenges and resolving the difficulties that hinder the progress of the educational process, ultimately promoting further success in education. — KUNA



Minister of Education meets with the general directors of educational districts.

KISR hosts EU officials at Shagaya complex

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) organized on Tuesday a visit to the Shagaya Renewable Energy Complex for ambassadors and chargé d'affaires from the European Union member states in Kuwait.

Acting Executive Director of the Energy Research Center at the Institute Dr Ahmed Al-Mulla said that the visit comes as part of preparations for the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) which will start in Dubai at the end of November. Al-Mulla added that the visit also comes in the context of Green Diplomacy Week 2023, an initiative organized by the European Union with the aim of promoting just transition in relation to the energy sector globally. He explained that the Shagaya Renewable Energy Complex is an ambitious plan developed

by the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research. The plant has a capacity of 70 megawatts in the first phase of the project, which consists of three technologies: solar thermal energy, photovoltaic and wind energy. He predicted that the production capacity of the plant will reach 4,500 megawatts when the second and third phases of the project are completed.

Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Kuwait, Anne Koistinen, said that this visit reflects the Union's commitment to addressing climate change and the urgent need to shift to renewable energy sources.

Koistinen added that the European Union aims to generate 45 percent of its energy from renewable energy sources by 2030, noting that Kuwait has a huge potential in the field of solar energy and is characterized by a geographical location in terms of economy and investment. Kuwait can meet the growing global demand for green and stable energy, she said, noting that the European Union can help it in this area.

For his part, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain to Kuwait, Miguel Aguilar, expressed his happiness with this visit at this



KUWAIT: The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) officials with ambassadors and chargé d'affaires from the European Union member states in Kuwait at Shagaya Complex.

important moment when countries are preparing for the United Nations Climate Change Conference, stressing the need to unite ranks and coordinate efforts among all in order to

achieve positive results. "European companies have been present since the beginning of Kuwait's plans to diversify the economy away from dependence on fossil fuels," Aguilar said

stressing his country's readiness to continue this cooperation during the next stage in order to help promote renewable energy initiative in the country. — KUNA

Local

Zain FinTech, Al-Ansari Financial Services ink MoU to advance region's digital ecosystem

Zain aims to expand its suite of innovative fintech services

Bader Al-Kharafi: A key part of Zain's '4Sight' growth strategy focuses on maximizing the enormous opportunities in the digital financial arena on the back of our footprint, customer base and leading technologies.

KUWAIT/DUBAI: Zain FinTech, the financial services arm of Zain, (BK Premier:ZAIN), a leading regional telecom group operating in seven markets across the Middle East and Africa, entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Al-Ansari Financial Services PJSC, one of the leading integrated financial services groups headquartered in the UAE with operations across the region. The strategic alliance marks the beginning of a promising collaboration between the two organizations, focused on harnessing technology to enhance financial services for their customers across markets.

The MoU was signed by Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO and Rashed A Al-Ansari, Board Member and Group CEO of Al-Ansari Financial Services, setting the stage for an exciting partnership that will leverage the strengths of both companies to drive innovation and improve financial services delivery across the region.

Al-Kharafi commented, "A key part of Zain's '4Sight' growth strategy focuses on maximizing the enormous opportunities in the digital financial arena on the back of our footprint, customer base, and leading technologies. We aim to expand our innovative fintech service offerings to advance

the region's digital ecosystem and will continue pushing the boundaries, leveraging on the vast network of strategic partners in each of our markets."

Al-Ansari added, "We are excited to join forces with Zain, a company that shares our passion for innovation and our commitment to delivering exceptional financial services. Through this collaboration, we aim to revolutionize the financial landscape and provide our customers with the latest technology-driven solutions."

By investing in financial technology and other contemporary tools, and harnessing the power of these solutions, both Zain FinTech and Al-Ansari Financial Services aim to redefine the remittance experience and enable convenient and secure transfer of funds. The partnership will enable both entities to effectively advance financial services and technological solutions in the region, ensuring improved customer experiences for the markets in which both entities operate.

The Zain FinTech umbrella

As the financial services arm of Zain Group, operating fintech services across its Middle East and African footprint, Zain FinTech offers an appealing and much-needed range of innovative



Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi (left) and Board Member and Group CEO of Al-Ansari Financial Services Rashed A Al-Ansari during the signing of the MoU.

products and services related to payments, remittances, credit cards and micro-finance within the Zain ecosystem and beyond. Zain FinTech's B2B SAAS solution provider 'FOO' specializes in empowering businesses providing innovative fintech solutions, built entirely in-house, which optimize digital capabilities for clients across diverse industries and enables them to deliver an unparalleled user experience. As one of the leading integrated finan-

cial services groups in the region with its headquarters in the UAE, the company empowers its operating subsidiaries, Al-Ansari Exchange, Al-Ansari Exchange Kuwait, Worldwide Cash Express, Cash-Trans and Al-Ansari Digital Pay (under incorporation in the UAE), to unlock their growth potential through synergy. The Group's global platform provides cross-border payments, foreign currency exchange solutions, access to the Wage

Protection System (WPS) in the UAE, and other services such as bill collection and prepaid cards, as well as payment technology solutions to consumers and businesses in the large and growing payments and foreign currency exchange and remittance market in the UAE. The Group delivers its products and services through a comprehensive global network underpinned by its proprietary technology and relationships with third parties.

Sharjah ruler stresses strong ties with Kuwait

SHARJAH: Sharjah ruler Sheikh Sultan Al-Qasimi stressed Wednesday the ties between UAE and Kuwait were rock-solid, highlighting the shared social, historical, cultural, and scientific connections between the two countries. According to a statement released by Sharjah government media office, Sheikh Sultan made the remarks while receiving Consul General of the State of Kuwait in Dubai, Ambassador Ali Al-Thaidi where the two sides discussed shared issues and interests and how to bolster them.

They discussed means of further cementing cultural, scientific, health and literary cooperation. On his side, Al-Thaidi conveyed Kuwait's best regards of the political leadership and government to Sheikh Sultan. He also emphasized the long standing scientific and cultural cooperation between the two countries which started in the 1960s and still growing. — KUNA



SHARJAH: Sharjah ruler Sheikh Sultan Al-Qasimi receives Consul General of the State of Kuwait in Dubai, Ambassador Ali Al-Thaidi on Wednesday. — KUNA

KU signs MoU with KOC on healthcare

KUWAIT: The Medical Sciences Center of Kuwait University (KU) on Wednesday signed a memorandum of understanding with Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), aiming to exchange expertise and boost partnership in the healthcare field. In a press statement after signing the MoU, Acting University Director Dr Fayez Al-Dhefiri said that Kuwait University supports interests of medical, service and research value in the healthcare field to best serve the society, noting that the agreement will allow joint cooperation within a research and academic framework.

In a similar statement, Acting Vice Director of the University for Medical Sciences Center Dr Osama Al-Saeed said the MoU aims to develop the healthcare system through exchanging expertise and providing the best community services.

On his part, KOC's Executive Vice President for Administrative and Financial Affairs Qusay Al-Amer affirmed that the medical agreement reflects Kuwait University's commitment to supporting and enhancing joint cooperation and developing healthcare systems, noting that experts will be recruited from KU according to the agreement. — KUNA



Kuwait University signed a memorandum of understanding with KOC to cooperate in the healthcare sector on Wednesday. — KUNA

DDI awareness campaign in schools begins

KUWAIT: Dasman Diabetes Institute launched its awareness campaign in schools in cooperation with Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Science (KFAS), in order to carry out tests and medical consultations, in addition to enrich scientific culture with students.

DDI Public Relations Director Tarek Aleryan said the campaign began at Daeya Joint Girls School where a mobile clinic was stationed. He said DDI participated through its mobile clinic that is medically equipped to carry out basic medical tests such as blood sugar levels and vital signs, etc in order to help people detect the disease at an early stage and how to prevent diabetes and its complications.

He said booklets and pamphlets about the topic including healthy nutrition and diabetes prevention and the importance of physical activity were distributed.



KUWAIT: DDI Public Relations Director Tarek Aleryan during the launch of its awareness campaign in schools in cooperation with KFAS. — KUNA

Kuwait proposal on Palestine receives 607 votes in IPU

KUWAIT: Member of Kuwait's National Assembly's Caucus MP Hamad Al-Obaid has said an emergency proposal submitted by Kuwait and other countries regarding the Palestinian issue received 607 votes from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) members. Al-Obaid described the voting result as "an achievement and a clear message that the peoples of the world stand against the fierce attacks of the Zionist aggression on Gaza and occupied Palestinian territories."

This came in a statement by the Kuwaiti Member of Parliament to Kuwait Television late on Tuesday following the 147th Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference held in the Angolan capital, Luanda, which witnessed a vote on the proposals presented as emergency items.

We have just finished voting on the emergency proposal submitted by the State of Kuwait, along with Algeria, which includes a cessation of war, shooting, and human rights violations in Gaza and occupied Palestine," he added. The representative went on to say, "the Arab Group adopted this proposal and it was submitted to the Islamic Group, and the Islamic Republic of Iran, Indonesia, and South Africa joined it," adding that Pakistan and Malaysia withdrew their proposals they had submitted. Due to the coordination, "we managed to gather votes for our proposal," Al-Obaid noted, adding that this is a clear message to the world that parliamentarians support cease-fire on the Gaza Strip and the suspension of attacks." The proposal gained 607 votes, compared with 507 votes for the European suggestion, but it did not qualify as an emergency item because the IPU regulations stipulate that emergency proposals must obtain a two-third majority.

Al-Obaid said the proposal presented by Kuwait was a clear message to the world that the countries and peoples of the world stand against the ferocious attacks on children and the defenseless in occupied Palestine." This is a message that we, as peoples, conveyed to the world, and there are other messages and steps to deter the brutal Zionist aggression," he added. — KUNA

Preparations to launch 'Sahel Lab' to boost e-services

KUWAIT: Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Communications Affairs Fahad Al-Shula said Wednesday that there are plans to develop "Sahel" application through preparations to launch "Sahel Lab", a testing space to receive ideas, experiences, and suggestions that would develop the quality of electronic services.

In a statement to KUNA, following the meeting of the Ministerial Coordination Committee supervising "Sahel" and "Sahel Business" applications, the minister stressed importance of proceeding with plans to develop the application to achieve user's aspirations, by providing more electronic services that citizens and business owners need and through strengthening the cooperation of government agencies.

The government digital applications, channels and platforms are considered an essential tool in achieving digital development in the modern state and represent an important part in improving the quality of services provided to citizens, residents, business owners and entrepreneurs, Al-Shula said. The government is very interested to reach the best possible means of simplifying the administrative procedures for government services to be available easily and effectively, he added. The committee seeks, through its meetings, to follow up on the steps and procedures that are being taken to achieve the state's development vision, which confirms the serious desire of government leaders to develop plans in this aspect. Al-Shula praised the efforts of government agencies in enhancing cooperation regarding the development of these national projects in order to achieve the well-being that the Council of Ministers seeks for the Kuwaiti citizen. — KUNA

Assailant arrested

KUWAIT: The Criminal Security department, represented by the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation, arrested a man who appeared in a video clip being circulated on some social media sites showing him beating another person on the public road. He was referred to the competent authorities to take legal action against him. The Ministry of Interior calls on everyone to cooperate with security officials and respect the rules and regulations.

Photo of the day



KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti craftsman finishes a model of a traditional Kuwaiti boom Sfar sail ship during the Expo 965 exhibition in Kuwait. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Zionist entity targeting social media influencers in Palestine

Desperate and barbaric actions to obscure truth and hide heinous crimes

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: If you are a social media user following the situation in Gaza, you have likely come across several Palestinian bloggers who provide real-time updates on the ongoing massacres and genocide that the Palestinian people have been enduring at the hands of the Zionist entity since Oct 7.

These bloggers encompass a diverse range of individuals, including photographers, journalists, actors, human rights activists and even children. Shockingly, the Zionist entity has been targeting them with ruthless actions, ranging from murdering them while they document events to launching airstrikes on their family homes, resulting in the cold-blooded killing of these individuals. Medical personnel and doctors have not been spared either.

These barbaric actions carried out by the Zionist entity have one sole purpose: To obscure the truth and prevent these bloggers from exposing the live criminal activities. However, these efforts have inadvertently helped raise awareness about the Palestinian cause and unveil the true face of this occupation.

Motaz Azaiza, a Palestinian press photographer,



Awni Al-Dous



Rushdi Sarraj



Motaz Azaiza

received a recorded threatening phone call from the occupation army, warning him to stop covering the genocide in Gaza or face grave danger. Just two days later, his home was bombed, resulting in the loss of many family members.

In less than a week, the news of the murder of Rushdi Sarraj, a renowned Palestinian press photographer, went viral, as he was martyred in a Zionist attack. The issue doesn't stop there; it extends to a point where any Palestinian child who survives a criminal attack and garners global attention is targeted. In less than 24 hours, these children are murdered in a display of power and an attempt to maximize the brutality of the genocide. A recent heartbreaking incident occurred on Tuesday when 12-year-old Palestinian child Awni Al-Dous, who had shared his dream of becoming a YouTuber on social media, was killed, tragically realizing that dream in death.

Simultaneously, these threats and eliminations have also extended to influencers worldwide and to those who support the Palestinian people and call for an end

to the occupation. Even non-Arabs who sympathize with the innocent Palestinians, like actor Jackson Hinkle, have become targets of the Zionist entity on social media for daring to speak the truth.



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Mohammed Al-Zanki receiving a shield of honor from Razen Events.

Burgan Bank concludes platinum sponsorship of 10th eGovt Forum

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank concluded its sponsorship of the 10th eGovernment Forum (EGOV10), which was organized by Razen Events in conjunction with the Kuwaiti Federation of Engineering Offices and Consultant Houses and patronized by Fahad Ali Zaid Al-Shula, Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Communications Affairs. Held in cooperation with the Central Agency for Information Technology, the forum witnessed the participation of major domestic and international cloud computing companies, in addition to the attendance of many prominent IT leaders in government agencies across Kuwait.

On this occasion, Mohammed Najeeb Al-Zanki, General Manager - Corporate Banking at Burgan Bank, said: "We are delighted to have participated in the 10th

edition of the Forum, especially considering the vital role of banks in advancing the economy by seizing investment opportunities that contribute to local growth and prosperity. Driven by our fundamental social responsibility to the community, we strongly believe that technological developments and the opportunities they create not only help generate a financial return on our investments that benefit our bank and shareholders, as well as allowing us to support local initiatives that help in the development of society and achieve sustainable growth. In addition, we always strive to develop Kuwaiti cadres and equip them with qualifications to lead the country toward an era governed by technological development, especially artificial intelligence."

On his part, Taher Abdul Aal, Managing Partner - Razen Events, thanked Burgan Bank for its sponsorship and participation in the forum. He said: "EGOV10 has become a point of convergence for both local and international technology companies. To this end, the Forum has been receiving continuous support from many governmental institutions and private sector organizations, which view it as a gateway to everything new in the field of cloud computing and fintech."



Climate change, polluted water drive disease in Iraq

Sudan army to resume talks on ending war

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KHAN YUNIS: People search for survivors and the bodies of victims through buildings that were destroyed due to Zionist bombardment on Oct 25, 2023. — AFP

Gazans endure loss, starvation as Zionist bombing nears 20 days

Families divide children, use bracelet IDs in case they die

RAFAH: Eight sleeping children killed in one strike, doctors fighting but failing to save an unborn child — such were the stories recounted by Gaza medics as Zionists continued their air strikes on the besieged enclave. According to the health ministry in Gaza, children made up more than 2,704 of the 6,546 killed by the Zionist occupation's relentless bombing of Gaza following Hamas' attack on October 7.

Grief-stricken parents carrying the bodies of children in white shrouds through Gaza streets have become a familiar sight since the war started. Eight children aged between two and five were among 10 people from the same family killed in an air strike on a house in the city of Khan Yunis, in southern Gaza, last Wednesday, relatives said. "The children were asleep when they destroyed the house," their 67-year-old grandfather, Abu Mohammad Wafi al-Bakri, said.

Diyala, Ayman, Hamada, Zaher, Uday, Jamal, Nabil and Acil all came from one extended family and all slept on the ground floor. It took an hour after the raid to find their bodies, rescuers said. "None of my chil-

dren were linked to Palestinian organizations and no men were in the house at the time," said Jihad al-Bakri, father of three of the children. He had left his home an hour before the missile hit to try to find water.

ID bracelets

Families in Gaza are now wearing ID bracelets so they can identify loved ones in case they die. The ID bracelets are also helpful as mass graves are becoming more common in the enclave, due to the high death count. Ali El-Daba, 40, told Reuters that he had seen bodies ripped apart by the bombing and were unrecognizable.

He said he decided to divide his family to prevent them from all dying in a single strike. His wife Lina, 42, kept two of their sons and two daughters in Gaza City in the north and he moved to Khan Yunis in the south with three other children, he added.

El-Daba said he was preparing for the worst. He bought blue string bracelets for his family members and tied them around both wrists. "If something happens," he said, "this way I will recognize them." Other Pales-

tinian families were also buying or making bracelets for their children or writing their names on their arms.

No safe place

Gazans continue to suffer due to the full siege imposed by the Zionists since October 9, with the risk of starvation and dehydration running high. Aid efforts have also been hindered by the occupation's bombing of the Rafah crossing. People in Gaza have not had access to fuel, electricity, food or water for over two weeks. Journalists on the ground say that families queue up for up to ten hours to get bread, and often there isn't any left. "There's no bread ... we have two loaves of bread for the family, the bread is stale, a family of ten people receives only two loaves ... and one bottle of water," she says in a video posted on the Middle East Eye's account on social platform X.

There's no safe place to hide in Gaza, with the Zionist occupation bombing schools known to shelter those who have been displaced from their homes. On Wednesday evening, a school in Gaza's southern city of Rafah run by the United Nation Relief and Works

Agency (UNRWA) has "sustained severe collateral damage due to a close strike," the organization said. The school was sheltering 4,600 forcibly displaced people, it said. One person was killed and 44 others wounded, including nine children.

Palestine's Ministry of Health says that 65 percent of those killed in Gaza this week died in the south of the enclave, which the Zionist occupation has said is safe. Last week, the occupation ordered at least 1.1 million residents in north Gaza to leave their homes and head towards the south, with no guarantee of return. Now, survivors of the ongoing bombings have found themselves targeted in the south.

Unicef, the UN children's rights agency, called the situation in Gaza "a growing stain on our collective conscience". Unicef Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa Adele Khodr said that the death rate was "staggering" and that "even more frightening is the fact that unless tensions are eased, and unless humanitarian aid is allowed, including food, water, medical supplies and fuel, the daily death toll will continue to rise". — Agencies

Russia and China hope to turn tables on US

WASHINGTON: Since Russia invaded Ukraine, the United States has sought to isolate Moscow and pressure China to keep its distance. With war in the Middle East, Russia and China are seeking to turn the tables. The United States has cast Russia as the disruptor of the international order at the Security Council, with President Joe Biden promising the world body that Washington would use its veto only sparingly.

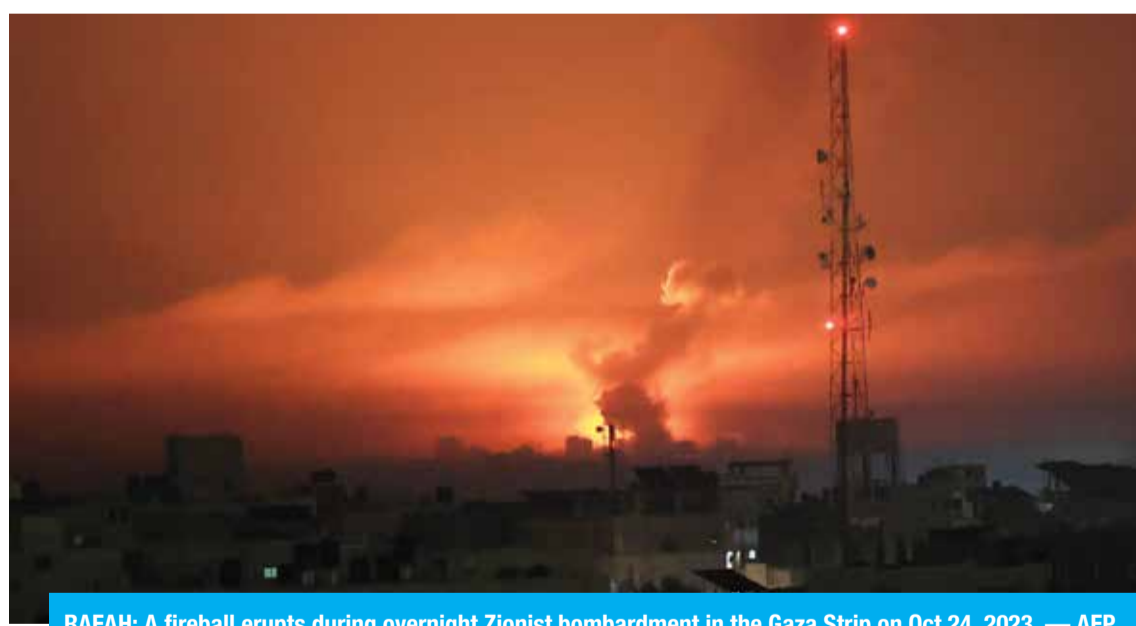
But the United States went ahead and vetoed a draft resolution last week it deemed insufficiently supportive of its ally. In comments likely aimed at consumption in the Islamic world, Russia has accused the United States of escalating the conflict through military reinforcements, while China has lashed out at the US veto and the occupation's actions.

The Chinese and Russian reprimands ring hollow for US officials, who doubt the rival powers will engage in painstaking diplomacy along the lines of Secretary of State Antony Blinken's recent trip to the region. But the United States has historically stood out as a lonely voice in its close embrace of the Zionist occupation, even if for now European allies are largely joining Biden in backing the occupation.

Biden on taking office had aimed to shift from the complexities of the Middle East, seeing China as the greatest long-term challenge to the United States. "This is not a region where the US has wanted to have a heavy footprint and be actively engaged. At the same time, this president in particular is deeply committed to (the Zionists)," said Leslie Vinjamuri, director of the US and Americas program at Chatham House. China "is quite willing to see the US pulled sideways in its strategic focus into a region that it hasn't wanted to be absorbed by, but now is willingly," she said.

Shift of focus for Russia

Russia returned in force in 2015 to Syria to back Bashar al-Assad, although Russian President Vladimir Putin has also maintained ties



RAFAH: A fireball erupts during overnight Zionist bombardment in the Gaza Strip on Oct 24, 2023. — AFP

with the Zionist occupation. "Nobody is expecting Russia to produce any results here — any kind of ceasefire or any role in trying to negotiate the release of hostages," said Eugene Rumer, director of the Russia and Eurasia program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

"Since 2022, it has all been about Ukraine, so when this tragedy occurred, it was a gift for Putin because suddenly the attention is diverted away," Rumer said. Biden has tried to link Putin and Hamas, charging in an Oval Office address last week that both were "tyrants" seeking to "completely annihilate a neighboring democracy." Russia denounced the remarks. At the Security Council on Tuesday, Russian envoy Vassily Nebenzia accused the United States of failing to respond to global demands for a full ceasefire.

China scores points

China and the United States have both sought diplomatic advantage in the crisis, including through a call between Blinken and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. The United States has repeatedly pressed China to play a greater role in the Middle East crisis commensurate with its global aspirations and urged

it to use its influence over Iran's clerical rulers, who back Hamas.

Beijing has sent an envoy to the region who has highlighted support for the Palestinian cause. Jonathan Fulton, an expert at the Atlantic Council on China's role in the Middle East, said that Beijing in its messaging saw the crisis "as an opportunity to score points on the US." He said China likely hoped in turn to win support in the Arab and Islamic world for its priorities — sidelining Taiwan, the self-governing democracy claimed by Beijing, and rejecting US-backed allegations that Beijing is committing genocide against Uyghur Muslims.

But Fulton said that Beijing's foremost interest in the Middle East remained economic, with the world's second largest economy heavily dependent on imported oil. With its limited security and diplomatic resources in the Middle East, China has a two-fold interest in keeping the United States focused on the crisis. "Obviously for China, it is better if the US is bogged down in the Middle East and the Gulf," Fulton said. "But if the US keeps providing the security architecture that maintains the Middle East, China is not going to have to do heavy lifting on its own." —AFP

Record 114 million people displaced worldwide: UN

GENEVA: The number of people worldwide living in forced displacement from their homes is estimated to have exceeded 114 million, the United Nations said Wednesday — a record figure. "The number of people displaced by war, persecution, violence and human rights violations globally is likely to have exceeded 114 million at the end of September," UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, said in a statement.

The main drivers in the first half of 2023 were the conflicts in Ukraine, Sudan, Myanmar and the Democratic Republic of Congo; a prolonged humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan; and a combination of drought, floods and insecurity in Somalia, UNHCR said. "The world's focus now is — rightly — on the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. But globally, far too many conflicts are proliferating or escalating, shattering innocent lives and uprooting people," said UN refugees chief Filippo Grandi.

"The international community's inability to solve conflicts or prevent new ones is driving displacement and misery. We must look within, work together to end conflicts and allow refugees and other displaced people to return home or restart their lives," he said in a statement.

In its Mid-Year Trends Report, which analyses forced displacement during the first six months of 2023, UNHCR said that by the end of June, 110 million people had been forcibly displaced worldwide. That figure was up 1.6 million from the end of 2022.

A UNHCR spokesman confirmed to AFP the new figure was a record since the agency began collecting data in 1975. The number of people internally displaced within Gaza due to Zionist bombardment is estimated at about 1.4 million, according to the UN humanitarian agency OCHA. More than half of all people who are forced to flee never cross an international border, UNHCR said. Its mid-year report said that globally, almost one-third of all forcibly displaced people originated from just three countries: Afghanistan, Syria and Ukraine. — AFP

International

Sudan army to resume talks on ending war

Army says negotiations don't mean 'halt of national battle of dignity'

WAD MADANI: The Sudanese army said Wednesday it has accepted an invitation to resume US- and Saudi-brokered talks aimed at ending more than six months of conflict with the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces. The war between forces loyal to army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his former deputy, RSF commander Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, has killed more than 9,000 people and displaced over 5.6 million since it erupted in April.

Previous mediation attempts have only succeeded in brief truces, and even those were systematically violated. In a statement, the army said it had accepted an invitation from Saudi Arabia and the United States to travel to the Saudi city of Jeddah "out of a belief by the armed forces that negotiations is one of the means that may end the conflict". "The resumption of negotiations does not mean a halt of the national battle of dignity, for the defeat of the rebel militia," the statement added.

The war in Sudan has decimated already fragile infrastructure, shuttered 80 percent of the country's hospitals and plunged millions into acute hunger. "For six months, civilians — particularly in Khartoum, Darfur and Kordofan — have known no respite from bloodshed and terror," said UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths.

In the western region of Darfur, ethnically motivated attacks by the RSF and allied militias have triggered a new investigation by the International Criminal Court into possible war crimes. According to the UN, Sudan — where many had fled their homes in previous conflicts — is now "the largest internal displacement crisis in the world with over 7.1 million people displaced within the country".

The UN's Griffiths said that six months into the conflict, "basic services are crumbling", disease outbreaks are "stalking the country" and "aid workers continue to be stymied in reaching people in need". A projection by the US's Johns Hopkins University indicated that "at least 10,000 children under five years of age may die by the end of 2023".

Diplomatic attempts to end the fighting have repeatedly floundered, as the rival generals continued to seek a decisive military advantage. The first round of talks was adjourned in June after yielding little success and a series of repeatedly violated ceasefires. Two years ago, Burhan and Daglo led a coup on October 25, 2021 that derailed a fragile transition to civilian rule. They later fell out in a power struggle that erupted into all-out war on April 15. — AFP



ADRE, Chad: Women who fled the war in Sudan await the distribution of international aid rations at a refugee camp in this file photo. — AFP

Hong Kong to introduce national security law

HONG KONG: Hong Kong leader John Lee said Wednesday the semi-autonomous city would create its own national security law in 2024, four years after Beijing imposed sweeping legislation aimed at silencing dissent. In a three-hour-plus policy address, the Beijing-anointed leader unveiled measures aimed at revitalizing Hong Kong's COVID-ravaged economy and flagging population growth, while asserting the need to protect the Chinese city from "external forces".

"Some countries are undermining China and the implementation of 'one country, two systems' in Hong Kong for their own benefits," he said, referring to the governance model agreed by Britain and China under which the city would keep some autonomy and freedoms following the 1997 handover. "External forces continue to meddle in Hong Kong affairs," he said.

"We must guard against those seeking to provoke conflict... and remain alert to acts of 'soft resistance' in different forms," said Lee, using a phrase that China and Hong Kong officials have started deploying in speeches to denote anti-government actions.



HONG KONG: Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee delivers his annual policy address to the Legislative Council on Oct 25, 2023. — AFP

Massive pro-democracy protests rocked the city in 2019, bringing hundreds of thousands of people to the streets to call for greater freedoms and more autonomy from mainland China. In response, Bei-

jing imposed a national security law with sentences ranging up to life in prison. As of the end of September, 280 people have been arrested and 30 convicted under the security law.

Security chief-turned-leader Lee — who is under US sanctions for his role in stamping out the protests — said Hong Kong would "continue to safeguard national security". "The government is pressing ahead to draw up effective legislative options and will complete the legislative exercise in 2024 to fulfil our constitutional duty," Lee said.

Under the Basic Law — the city's mini-constitution — Hong Kong is required to implement its own law combating seven security-related crimes, including treason and espionage. The task, often referred to as "a constitutional responsibility" by the city's government, has yet to be fulfilled more than 25 years after Hong Kong's return to Chinese rule.

The last legislative attempt in 2003 was shelved after half a million people took to the streets in protest. Lee told reporters his administration would avoid a repeat of 2003 by "ensuring" that people will understand what the eventual legislation will do to protect them.

Thomas Kellogg, executive director of the Center for Asian Law at Georgetown University, said the new legislative push was a "deeply disturbing development". A new homegrown security law "would give the Hong Kong government the chance... to threaten an even broader array of individuals with legal penalties merely for exercising their basic rights," Kellogg said. Lee also said Hong Kong would "roll out patriotic education to enhance national identity". — AFP

West's 'double standards'...

Continued from Page 1

Guterres sparked a furious reaction from Zionist diplomats when he said that the Hamas attack "did not happen in a vacuum". That sentiment was shared by Queen Rania, who told CNN that it was wrong to say the conflict started on Oct 7. "This is a 75-year-old story: a story of overwhelming death and displacement to the Palestinian people. It is a story of an occupation under an apartheid regime," she said. When pressed on that claim, Rania cited international human rights organizations which have previously accused the Zionist entity of apartheid. The foreign ministers of Turkey and Qatar also accused the international

community of "double standards" Wednesday in its reaction to the escalating conflict between the Zionist entity and Hamas in Gaza. Qatar's top diplomat Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani said the two governments — both Western allies — "reaffirm our complete rejection of responding to the crisis with double standards when it comes to human life".

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said: "The failure of some American and north European countries to condemn and prevent the destruction and disaster

in Gaza constitutes a very serious double standard and plays a destabilizing role. The operation in Gaza should be stopped as soon as possible. Humanitarian corridors should be opened."

Both Turkey and Qatar have been strong supporters of the Palestinian cause and have open channels of communication with Hamas, the Islamist rulers of Gaza. The wealthy Gulf emirate, which hosts the largest US military base in the Middle East, also hosts Hamas' political office and is the main residence of the Islamists' self-exiled leader Ismail Haniya.

It has used its channels with Hamas, established with US blessing, to play a lead role in the release of four of the more than 200 hostages held by the militant group in Gaza. The Qatari minister said the only way to restore peace in and around Gaza was to keep channels of communication open. He said Doha and Ankara would continue to coordinate with each other and regional partners to de-escalate the conflict. He condemned criticism of Qatar's position, saying that such comments "undermine existing efforts, risk lives and cannot be understood except in the context of political blackmail".

Meanwhile, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Wednesday he was cancelling plans to visit the Zionist entity because of its "inhumane" war against Hamas militants in Gaza. The Turkish leader added that he did not view Hamas as a terrorist organization but as "liberators", fighting for their land, drawing a swift and angry condemnation from the Zionist government. — Agencies

bombed in the southern town of Rafah.

According to UN figures, 12 of Gaza's 35 hospitals and nearly two-thirds of its 72 primary healthcare clinics have shut down after being damaged by the Zionist air strikes or due to fuel shortages. Fuel is used to power vital services such as hospitals in Gaza which rely on generators, and aid agencies have warned that more people will die if medical equipment, water desalination plants and ambulances stop running. Once the generators stop running, hospitals will "turn into morgues", the Red Cross has warned.

Hospitals are also struggling with a dramatic shortage of medicines and equipment. "There's not enough anesthetic," said Ahmad Abdul Hadi, an orthopedic surgeon working at Nasser hospital in Khan Yunis. "The wounded are in severe pain but we can't wait for the procedure so we're forced to do the operation. — AFP

Kuwait calls to end Zionist war...

Continued from Page 1

He said Kuwait appealed to the international community to support the steadfastness of the Palestinian people on their land and warn against any attempts to displace them, within the framework of a final comprehensive solution to the conflict in line with international legitimacy. The dangerous military escalation witnessed today against Palestinians through targeting unarmed civilians with air raids and cutting off electricity, water and food is "something unacceptable to any religion, law or even human nature," said Bannai.

"This council has been a safe haven for small, peace-loving countries," recalling that the Security Council was the UN organization that restored international and legal legitimacy to "a country small in size and as great in its giving as my country Kuwait, when it was invaded in 1990". Furthermore,

Hezb, Hamas, PIJ meet as Zionists...

Continued from Page 1

the Lebanon-Zionist entity border, the statement said. At least 52 people have been killed in Lebanon according to an AFP tally, mostly Hezbollah combatants but also four civilians, including Reuters journalist Issam Abdallah. Four people have been killed in the Zionist entity, including one civilian.

Meanwhile, Zionist strikes killed eight soldiers in southern Syria on Wednesday, later returning to bomb Aleppo airport for the fourth time in a fortnight, the defense ministry in Damascus said. The Zionist entity said the first strike was in response to earlier rocket fire. Hours later, Zionist forces struck Aleppo airport in the north, the Syrian defense ministry said as regional tensions simmer over the Zionist-Hamas war in Gaza.

Persistent rocket fire and artillery exchanges across the Zionist entity's northern border with Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah militia and allied Palestinian factions, have raised fears of a new front in the war.

Bannai pointed out that the Security Council has failed to have a clear stand against the continuous human violations against the Palestinian people, and affirmed that the current situation does not require ordinary speeches.

He renewed Kuwait's call for comprehensive peace through the resolutions approved in this council according to the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002 to establish an independent, sovereign State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital. In his conclusion, he pointed out that Kuwait is a pioneer in supporting the fair Palestinian cause and their people's needs politically, humanitarially and morally. He expressed his pride in Kuwait's announcement in creating an air bridge to Palestine, carrying tons of humanitarian aid and relief as per the directions of H.H. the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The third Kuwaiti Gaza relief aid plane landed in Al-Arish international airport in Egypt on Wednesday carrying 40 tons of urgent humanitarian aid and medical supplies for Palestinians in Gaza. The shipment includes medical supplies such as solutions, medicine, ultrasound devices as well as others, said member of Kuwait Red Crescent Society Dr Ahmad Al-Shami. — KUNA

Pro-Hezbollah fighters in Syria's south have also exchanged cross-border fire with the Zionist entity several times since last week.

"Around 1:45 am (2245 GMT Tuesday), the (Zionist) enemy carried out an aerial aggression from the occupied Golan Heights," the defense ministry said of the strikes that killed eight soldiers and wounded seven others. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based monitor with a wide network of sources on the ground in the war-ravaged country, put the number of dead soldiers at 11, including four officers.

The strikes "destroyed arms depots and a Syrian air defense radar" and also targeted an infantry unit, it said. On Tuesday evening, the Observatory had said "fighters loyal to Hezbollah," which fights alongside government forces in the Syrian conflict, had "launched two rockets towards the occupied Syrian Golan" from Syria's southern province of Daraa.

After the strike, residents in Daraa province told AFP Zionist planes dropped leaflets warning the Syrian army and Palestinian factions not to attack. "Syrian commanders... bear full responsibility for operations... from Syrian territory," they read warning that every attack "on (the Zionist entity) will be met with an iron fist". — Agencies

Gaza hospitals in crisis as Zionists...

Continued from Page 1

The Zionist entity has cut off Gaza's usual water, food and other supplies, and fewer than 70 relief trucks have entered the impoverished territory since the war began. But none have contained fuel.

Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry says Zionist strikes since Oct 7 have killed more than 6,500 people, an increase of over 700 since Tuesday. "They're not waging war on Hamas, they're waging war on children... It's a massacre," raged Abu Ali Zaarab, after his family home was

International



AL-AYYACH: A girl carries her brother, who suffers from intestinal colic, for examination by the medical staff in the province of Al-Diwaynah, southern Iraq.



AL-ZAWIYAH: Najeh Farhan carries his son Ali, who is suffering from jaundice, past their mud brick home.—AFP photos

Climate change, polluted water drive disease in Iraq

Cholera, skin infections spread as sewage, droughts exacerbate country's health crisis

AL-AYYACH: A worried Iraqi father points at a blister on the face of his one-year-old daughter, the result of a parasitic infection carried by sandflies in her remote village. "It's a skin disease, the 'Baghdad boil,'" Najeh Farhan said of the pustule on Tiba's mouth as the toddler played with a pacifier at their home in the drought-hit province of Al-Diwaynah.

Like countless other children in Iraq — a country battling the effects of war, entrenched poverty, water stress and a heating planet — Tiba is sick but has no access to good health care. "There is no medical center, we have nothing," Farhan, a father of seven, said of his small village of Al-Zuweiya.

Tiba has been infected with an illness called cutaneous leishmaniasis, endemic in Iraq for decades. By 2022, the World Health Organization said 8,000 infections had been registered in the country. But this year, in a "surprising development", it reported the first confirmed case in what had been a "traditionally sand fly-free" province in northern Iraq.

The UN agency has pointed to "inadequate access to medical treatment in remote areas" as a driver of the disease — but a senior WHO official also highlighted the effects of climate change. "The

sandfly, like any other insect, thrives at a specific temperature and humidity level," Wael Hatahit, the WHO's acting representative in Iraq, told AFP. He pointed to Iraq's "temperature rise and the change in the water fall pattern" and said the northward spread of the disease the sandfly carries "cannot be explained unless there is climate change".

'Rising temperatures'

Tiba and one of her brothers, who suffers from jaundice and a skin rash, are victims of Iraq's broader public health crisis. From cholera to chronic diarrhea and sandstorm-triggered asthma attacks, the list of health problems confronting disadvantaged communities is long.

The Iraqi Red Crescent has been running a campaign in nine provinces across the country's south and center where soaring heat and drought have badly hit farming communities. It has sent 25 doctors, 150 volunteers, five mobile clinics and 10 ambulances on a campaign to provide free medical care and raise awareness on a range of health threats.

On a recent stop, women dressed in black were waiting alongside ambulances to have a child exam-

ined, in Al-Ayyach, another Diwaynah village, as aid workers sorted through their medical supplies. Ragha Ihsane, a pharmacist, listed the most common cases the team was treating: "Intestinal infections, dermatological diseases, skin rashes resulting from poor water quality, inflamed urinary tracts."

Dirty and unsafe water is a prime health threat in Iraq, one of the five countries worst hit by climate change impacts and now gripped by its fourth consecutive year of drought. The scarcity is compounded by reduced Tigris and Euphrates River flows because of upstream dams, and damage done by conflict and neglect to treatment plants and water infrastructure.

'Contaminated water'

An environment ministry official recently admitted that "sewer pipes in Baghdad discharge wastewater directly into the Tigris River", in comments quoted by the state-run Al-Sabbah daily. Cholera is raging in the north, particularly in Sulaimaniyah, Iraqi Kurdistan's second city, where the WHO had registered 152 confirmed cases by September 12. "The principal cause is the use of non-potable water," said Sabah

Hourami, director of Sulaimaniyah's health authority.

Officials were taking action, he insisted, by testing the chlorine content of public water supplies and tightening controls on water tankers, restaurants and mosques. As patients have flocked to local hospitals, he said, "we no longer screen people. Those suffering from diarrhea and vomiting are automatically treated as cholera cases."

Water stress is at the core of the health threats, said medical anthropologist Mac Skelton, who heads the Institute of Regional and International Studies at the American University of Iraq-Sulaimani. "Decreased water flow means higher concentrations of sewage and industrial pollutants in the water supply, which Iraq's water treatment facilities typically cannot process adequately," he said.

This, he said, was "associated with a range of conditions such as cholera, gastrointestinal diseases, skin diseases and diarrhea". Looking ahead, Skelton said, Iraq needs "improved public health systems to warn the populace of heightened contamination and to monitor outbreaks". He added that "enhancing Iraq's seriously deteriorated water treatment infrastructure is also essential". — AFP

US states sue Meta for harming children's health

SAN FRANCISCO: Dozens of US states on Tuesday accused Facebook and Instagram owner Meta of profiting "from children's pain," damaging their mental health and misleading people about the safety of its platforms. "In seeking to maximize its financial gains, Meta has repeatedly misled the public about the substantial dangers of its Social Media Platforms," argued a joint lawsuit filed in federal court in California. In total more than 40 states are suing Meta, though some opted to file in local courts rather than join in the federal case. Meta has exploited young users by creating a business model designed to maximize time they spend on the platform despite harm to their health, the legal filing argued.

"Kids and teenagers are suffering from record levels of poor mental health and social media companies like Meta are to blame," said New York Attorney General Letitia James in a statement announcing the suit. "Meta has profited from children's pain by intentionally designing its platforms with manipulative features that make children addicted to their platforms while lowering their self-esteem." The suit accuses Meta of deceptive and unlawful conduct harming vulnerable youth for financial gain. The suit urges the federal court to order Meta to stop manipulative tactics and pay hefty financial penalties along with restitution, according to James. "Social media companies, including Meta, have contributed to a national youth mental health crisis and they must be held accountable," James said. US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy early this year urged action to make sure social media environments are not hurting young users. "We are in the middle of a national youth mental health crisis, and I am concerned that social media is an important driver of that crisis — one that we must urgently address," Murthy said in an issued advisory. A few states have passed laws barring social media from allowing minors without parental permission.

Industry issue?

Meta said it was "disappointed" by the suit and that the states were not working with the array of social media companies to create age-appropriate standards. Meta maintained that it has developed more than 30 tools in its apps to support teenage users and made it easier for parents to "shape" online activity. The Silicon Valley tech firm contended it is disappointing that attorneys general have singled out Meta instead of seeking industry-wide solutions given the popularity of rivals including TikTok, YouTube and Snap. Social media can also be a place where young people struggling with other issues in their lives go to find support or community, Meta maintained.

The legal complaints resulted from a nationwide investigation announced in November of 2021, according to California attorney general Rob Bonta. "Our bipartisan investigation has arrived at a solemn conclusion: Meta has been harming our children and teens, cultivating addiction to boost corporate profits," Bonta said in a release. "With today's lawsuit, we are drawing the line." The investigation was launched after Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen leaked more than 20,000 pages of internal documents to the media that sparked criticism that the social media giant had put profit before the security of its users.—AFP



BANJUL: Ebrima Sanyang (center), 44, the chairperson of the grieving families leaves the High Court in Banjul on Oct 24, 2023. — AFP

Gambia trial opens over children's cough syrup deaths

BANJUL: A trial opened Tuesday in The Gambia's capital Banjul over the deaths last year of small children who took a cough syrup made by the India-based Maiden Pharmaceuticals. Some 70 children aged 5 and under died in 2022 after taking the over-the-counter medicines, leading to a national outcry in the West African nation of about 2.5 million people.

Justice Ebrima Jaiteh of the High Court in Banjul adjourned the proceedings until November 7 after finding that three state defendants who had failed to appear "lacked diligence". Nineteen plaintiffs representing family members who died filed the civil suit in July, according to Salieu Taal, president of The Gambia Bar Association and one of the lawyers representing them.

The families are suing five defendants — Maiden Pharmaceuticals, local distributor Atlantic Pharmaceuticals, the Medical Controls Agency (MCA), the Ministry of Health and Attorney General Dawda A. Jallow — to demand they admit that the children were killed by consuming contaminated medicines. They are also suing for an admission that the MCA failed in its statutory duty to regulate the quality and safety of medicines. They are demanding 15 million Dalasis (about \$230,000) per child in damages.

Motion dismissed

None of the five defendants were present on Tuesday. The health ministry, MCA and attorney general requested a delay to the start of the trial, a motion the judge dismissed. He ordered the three to pay 10,000 Dalasis to the plaintiffs. The trial had already been delayed in July after the attorney general and health ministry claimed they had not been

served subpoenas with adequate time to familiarize themselves with the lawsuit.

Beginning in September last year, The Gambia ordered a recall of several cough and cold medications, as well as all products manufactured by the Indian laboratory Maiden Pharmaceuticals from which the adulterated syrups originated, after the deaths from kidney failure of at least 70 young children. It subsequently banned all products from the Indian firm.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), lab tests found "unacceptable amounts" of diethylene glycol and ethylene glycol, which are commonly used as antifreeze and can be fatal when ingested. The toxic impact from these substances includes "acute kidney injury which may lead to death", the agency has said.

'Want justice'

Speaking to AFP in October 2022, grieving parents called on President Adama Barrow's government to take action. "President Barrow should sack the health minister, but instead of sacking him, he was praising the minister," said Wuri Bailo Keita, whose two-year-old daughter Fatoumatta was among the victims. "We want justice for these children."

In July, a government taskforce announced its finding that four cough syrups imported from India were responsible for the deaths. At the time, Health Minister Dr Ahmadou Lamin Samateh said there were failings in regulatory and import checks of the medication, beginning with the products not being registered with the MCA. He said the agency's head had been dismissed.

The Gambian government also said it was exploring options to take legal action against the Indian manufacturer. In the aftermath of the scandal, India launched an investigation and shut down the Maiden Pharmaceuticals plant last October.

In January, the WHO announced a call for "immediate and coordinated action" to eradicate non-compliant and falsified medicines, in particular tainted cough syrups linked to the deaths of 300 children in Gambia, Indonesia and Uzbekistan. — AFP

US medical workers face mental health crisis: CDC

WASHINGTON: American health workers are facing a mental health crisis intensified by rising harassment that spiked during the COVID pandemic, according to an official report published Tuesday. Between 2018 and 2022, more than double the number of doctors, nurses and others reported harassment at work either from patients or coworkers, which increased rates of anxiety, depression and burnout, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said.

Documented incidents of harassment including threats, bullying, and verbal abuse rose sharply during the pandemic, with health professionals being 50 percent more likely than other community members to be targeted, according to a prior study in BMJ Open, a medical journal. "We depend on our nation's health workers and they must be supported," said CDC Chief Medical Officer Debra Houry in a statement about the new study, which surveyed more than 500 health workers.

The analysis showed 46 percent, or nearly half of all health workers reported often feeling burned out in 2022 -- an increase from 32 percent in 2018. Nearly half of health workers also reported they were likely or very likely to apply for a new job, in contrast to other worker groups who reported a decrease in job turnover intention.

Among those health workers who experienced harassment, 60 percent reported feelings of depression, compared to 31 percent who had not experienced harassment. "Positive working conditions, such as trust in management and supervisor help, were associated with lower odds of poor mental health symptoms and burnout," the report said.

While the initial public reaction to the COVID pandemic was to recognize and honor health workers, they later found themselves on the frontlines of public frustration and fatigue with the virus. The pandemic has since faded, but the issue of workplace violence against medical professionals remains in focus.

"In the ER, there's a certain level of resignation that violence is just part of the job, like getting bloodstains on our shoes," Helen Ouyang, an emergency room physician and a professor at Columbia University wrote in an opinion piece on the same topic for the New York Times Tuesday. "We have come to endure racist, sexist and homophobic slurs, choosing silence over confrontation, to fulfill our duty to care for human life."

A 2022 American College of Emergency Physicians survey found 55 percent of ER doctors had been assaulted, nearly all by patients. Among ER nurses, the figure rises to 70 percent, according to the Emergency Nurses Association. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, a federal agency tasked with recommendations for the prevention of workplace illness and injury, is preparing to launch a national mental health campaign for health workers this fall. — AFP

Business

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2023

Boursa Kuwait, KCC hold roadshow in London with Jeffries Financial Group

Strategic initiative to raise profile of Kuwaiti capital market to global investment community



KUWAIT: As part of its efforts to support the Kuwaiti capital market and in a strategic initiative to improve its standing in the international investment community, Boursa Kuwait and the Kuwait Clearing Company (KCC) collaborated with Jeffries Financial Group, a world-renowned global investment banking and capital markets institution, to organize a non-deal roadshow held in the UK capital of London from October 23 to 25, 2023.

The London roadshow presented a unique opportunity for Boursa Kuwait and KCC to engage in one-on-one discussions with prominent investment management firms and advisors. The aim was to spotlight the latest updates of the Kuwaiti capital market, its investment opportunities and the latest products and services it has to offer to institutional investors, including the developments in the central counterparty system (CCP) and the upcoming launch of the fixed-income platforms. The roadshow

also gave the companies an opportunity to exchange ideas and viewpoints and receive feedback about their perception of Kuwaiti capital market and what they require from it.

"Kuwait plays a pivotal role in attracting institutional investors to the capital markets of the region, and we are constantly looking to build strong and sustainable relationships with the international investment community, keeping them updated about the latest developments in the market and what it has to offer in terms of opportunities as well as products and services that fulfill their needs," said Boursa Kuwait Head of Markets Sector Noura Omar Al-Abdulkareem.

She added, "During this roadshow we had a series of meetings with global investment management organizations, listening to their comments and experiences in the Kuwaiti capital market. We've also received feedback about their perception of our market and what they require from



Noura Omar Al-Abdulkareem

it. We will continue working to adopt some of these requirements in ways that benefit both the market and its participants."

Boursa Kuwait and the KCC also made an exhaustive presentation about their achievements in the past few months, which included a series of stress tests to

the CCP system to ensure its ability to adapt to the system and that brokerage firms can fulfill its settlement requirements with the Central Bank of Kuwait as well as with local banks. Additionally, Boursa Kuwait is also working on launching several products like exchange traded funds (ETFs) and a platform for bonds and sukuk, to be launched simultaneously with the CCP.

Boursa Kuwait and the KCC play a pivotal role in the development of the Kuwaiti capital market and the diversification of the national economy and have remained steadfast in their dedication to establishing a transparent, efficient and advanced exchange platform, which has led to the creation of a liquid capital market. Boursa Kuwait and the KCC's unwavering commitment to promoting the Kuwaiti capital market and its participants through a series of Roadshows and Corporate Days has also helped provide prospective institutional investors

worldwide with profound insights into the market's opportunities.

Since Boursa Kuwait took over operations of the Kuwaiti stock exchange, the Kuwaiti capital market has undergone an unprecedented development thanks to the diligent efforts of the capital market apparatus. Their focus on empowering participants and raising standards has resulted in several key initiatives, including the diversification of products and services, establishing an appealing investment platform, expanding the issuer base, and adapting rules and regulations to meet market demands.

The apparatus has also significantly enhanced the market's infrastructure and fostered an attractive investment environment, which resulted in the Kuwaiti capital market's reclassification to an Emerging Market by three prominent global index providers, and solidified Kuwait's position as a leading financial center in the region.



RIYADH: Attendees attend a panel at Saudi Arabia's annual Future Investment Initiative (FII) conference in Riyadh on October 25, 2023. — AFP

Mideast war already hitting regional economies: IMF chief

RIYADH: The raging war between Zionist entity and Hamas is already battering the economies of nearby countries, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund told a Saudi investor forum on Wednesday. Zionist entity's neighbors are feeling the effects, especially those that rely on tourism, Kristalina Georgieva said at the Future Investment Initiative (FII) in the Saudi capital Riyadh.

"You look at the neighboring countries — Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan — there the channels of impact are already visible," Georgieva told an audience that included global banking elites. The Palestinian group Hamas mounted a shock attack on Zionist entity on October 7, killing more than 1,400 people and taking 222 hostages, according to Zionist entity authorities. Zionist entity has responded with relentless air strikes and a near-total land, sea and air blockade of Gaza, where the Hamas-run health ministry says 5,791 people have been killed in the war so far.

Georgieva spoke one day after Wall Street titans told the forum that the war could deal a heavy blow

to the world economy, especially if it draws in other countries. "What we see is more jitters in what has already been an anxious world," Georgieva said.

"You have tourism-dependent countries — uncertainty is a killer for tourist inflows," she said, describing the potential economic cost for countries in the region before listing specific risks. "Investors are going to be shy to go to that place. Cost of insurance — if you want to move goods, they go up. Risks of even more refugees in countries that are already accepting more."

Peace derailed?

The annual FII event, dubbed "Davos in the Desert", has typically served as a chance for Saudi Arabia to showcase domestic economic reforms whose success Saudi officials say partly hinges on regional stability. While several high-profile speakers have addressed the current regional turmoil, FII attendees have highlighted the capacity for Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, to withstand shocks and finance reforms using its deep-pocketed sovereign wealth fund, the Public Investment Fund.

The Vision 2030 agenda of the kingdom's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman aims to transition the economy away from fossil fuels by turning Saudi Arabia into a tourism and business hub marked by so-called giga-projects, including a \$500 billion futuristic megacity known as NEOM. — AFP

UN: Gaza has lived through 16 years of de-development

GENEVA: The Gaza Strip has lived through 16 years of de-development, the United Nations said Wednesday, adding that the economic consequences of the Zionist entity-Hamas war were "impossible to determine". "Gaza has experienced 16 years of de-development and suppressed human potential and the right to development," the UN's UNCTAD trade and development agency said in an annual report on the Palestinian economy. While the report focused on 2022, during a press conference UNCTAD officials could not ignore the current conflict.

Zionist entity bombing has now killed more than 5,800 people in Gaza, many of them children, according to the Hamas-run health ministry. "The economic consequences of the current and ongoing

humanitarian crisis in Gaza are impossible to determine," Richard Kozul-Wright, the director of UNCTAD's globalization and development strategies division, told a press conference.

"What the report does document is the profound economic challenges facing a community under occupation, which in the case of Gaza is compounded by an economic blockade which began in 2007, along with intermittent military operations." The report on the state of the Palestinian economy in 2022 said the Gazan economy had been "hollowed" out, with 80 percent of the enclave's population dependent on international aid.

"With heightened political tensions and a long-stalled peace process, 2022 was one of the worst years for Palestinians in recent history," the report said. It said the Palestinian economy had also been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. "Even though the Palestinian GDP grew by 3.9 percent in 2022, per capita real GDP was still 8.6 percent below its 2019 pre-pandemic level. In Gaza, real GDP per capita was 11.7 percent below the 2019 level and close to its lowest level since 1994," the report said. — AFP



KHAN YUNIS: An excavator clears rubble as people search for survivors and the bodies of victims through buildings that were destroyed during Zionist bombardment, in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on October 25, 2023. — AFP

Business



Salah Al-Fulaij, Mohammed Al-Othman, Mohammed Al-Kharafi and Mohammed Al-Dakhil receiving awards.



Mohammed Al-Othman receiving awards.

NBK the most innovative globally

Bank wins 11 titles in Global Finance's 'Best Consumer Digital Bank Awards'

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has received a bundle of awards from Global Finance magazine in its annual "Best Consumer Digital Bank Awards, 2023", totaling 11 awards on Kuwait, the Middle East, and globally. NBK monopolized all the seven awards on Kuwait level, shared recognition with regional banks with three awards on Middle East level, and made a unique achievement by receiving one award as the best in the world.

The annual awarding ceremony held by Global Fi-

Commenting on these numerous recognitions, Mohammed Al-Othman, CEO of Consumer and Digital Banking Group at NBK said, "We are so delighted to receive these prestigious awards outperforming regional and international banks. This recognition undoubtedly reflects the amount of effort put by all NBK team, the innovation-friendly work environment, and the forward-looking strategy and vision of setting a digital roadmap, and implementing it by creative leaders in all business units."

the region, which uses cutting-edge huge data analysis software," he added.

Global excellence

Commenting on NBK's winning the award of "Best Innovation and Transformation" in the World, outperforming a large number of banks worldwide, Al-Othman said: "When excellence reaches global heights, the achievement is far beyond just an award. NBK has gone a long way in innovation, beginning with local excellence, and a firm belief for all our innovative team that our innovation ambitions are limitless."

"NBK's rich record of excellence and innovation over long decades made it imperative to maintain the course of endless innovation in consumer digital banking," he added. Concluding his speech, Al-Othman mentioned: "The award of Best Innovation and Transformation in the World should be an inspiration to the people of Kuwait, not just NBK or the banking sector, as it proves that our national cadres and governmental and private institutions are capable of competing and excelling on the global level."

The real champions

"If it were not for the protocol, I would have invited all the members of Consumer and Digital Banking Group to stand on the podium, as they are the real champions of this success, and I always feel lucky to be part of this unique group of high-caliber, innovative, and achievement-driven professionals," Al-Othman mentioned. "NBK's excellence in consumer digital banking is attributable to the work team, who represent our key strength, being highly skilled, experienced, responsible, initiative-taking, and determined to excel," he elaborated.

Well-deserved leadership

Al-Othman underscored that NBK's excellence and leadership in consumer digital banking is constantly increasing and advancing, as reflected in facts and figures. Speaking on digital channels, Al-Othman highlighted the high demand for NBK's digital channels, which represent more than 97 percent of total transactions, mainly the NBK Mobile Banking App, which accounts for over two-thirds of transactions, and sees a significant increase in the number of users, with year-on-year growth exceeding 72 percent last year.

Regarding payment solutions, Al-Othman said:

Prestigious awards

Global Finance, founded in 1987, is one of the most reputable magazines specialized in finance and economics. It has a circulation of 50,000 readers in 187 countries, including senior corporate and financial officers responsible for making investment and strategic decisions at multinational companies and financial institutions. The magazine conducts various surveys annually about innovation and profitability for banks and financial institutions all over the world, based on which it selects top performers on the regional and international levels.

Mohammed Al-Othman

- This recognition reflects our forward-looking vision of setting a digital roadmap and implementing it by an innovative team
- "Best Innovation and Transformation" in the World is an inspiring award and proof of Kuwait's ability to compete globally

"NBK is always the trailblazer of cutting-edge payment solutions in the Kuwaiti market, as we got ahead of everyone in focusing on providing contactless payment solutions prior to the pandemic, and continued to offer our customers the latest and most advanced world-class solutions."

Commenting on delivering the best banking experience, Al-Othman said: "As we offer all new top-notch services, the keyword in perfectly meeting our customers' needs lies in being closer to them, and carefully aware of their needs, and always quick to keep pace with their changing expectations." Al-Othman indicated that the integration between NBK's top-notch products and services, exceptional offers, and cutting-edge payment solutions largely contributes to delivering our customers with the best banking experience in Kuwait and among the best in the region, and now among the best globally.



Salah Al-Fulaij, Mohammed Al-Othman, Mohammed Al-Kharafi and Fawzi Al-Dajjani during the Global Finance Awards ceremony.

nance in London was attended by Salah Al-Fulaij, CEO of NBK-Kuwait, Mohammed Al-Othman, CEO of Consumer and Digital Banking Group at NBK, Mohammad Al-Kharafi, Chief Operating Officer - Head of Group Operations & Information Technology, as well as Fawzi Al-Dajjani, General Manager of NBK London.

The list of awards received included the following:

- Best Consumer Digital Bank - Kuwait
- Best Mobile Banking App (Consumer - Middle East)
- Best Innovation and Transformation (World)
- Best Product Offerings (Consumer - Middle East)
- Best Bill Payment and Presentment (Consumer - Kuwait)
- Best User Experience (UX) Design (Consumer - Kuwait)
- Best in Social Media Marketing and Services (Consumer - Kuwait)

Best positioned for the future

"The way to the top in consumer digital banking was never easy, but as said "It is more difficult to stay on top than to get there". Therefore, we worked to lay solid foundations to maintain NBK's digital leadership, far ahead of closest competitors," Al-Othman continued.

"We built a tremendous technological infrastructure, embedded the digital culture in all activities and at all levels, set a mechanism to attract talent, and created an innovation-friendly work environment to motivate and retain creative individuals," he noted.

"We were not content with laying solid foundations to sustain success, but rather led modern banking trends and prepared for a future of rapid and massive development, as we are well aware. We succeeded in quick automation of our operations, and establishing one of the largest data centers in



Germany business morale up

FRANKFURT: German business sentiment improved slightly in October, a survey showed Wednesday, but analysts warned the Zionist entity-Hamas conflict posed new risks as Europe's top economy struggles to emerge from a downturn. The Ifo institute's closely watched confidence barometer, based on a survey of 9,000 companies, rose to 86.9 points from 85.8 in September, the first increase in six months.

Analysts surveyed by financial data company FactSet had expected a smaller rise to 85.9.

"Sentiment in the German economy has improved," said Ifo president Clemens Fuest, adding there was a "silver lining ahead". Companies were less pessimistic than in September about the outlook for the months to come and more satisfied with their current business situation, the survey found.

There were improvements in the manufacturing sector, the service sector, and construction. But when it came to trade, the confidence index fell. The increase in the Ifo "confirms the im-

pression that the cyclical low point has finally been passed", said Fritz Koeher-Geib, chief economist at public lender KfW. She noted in particular that wages were rising again, which could boost private consumption, a key pillar of the economy.

However she warned: "Besides the immeasurable human suffering... the violence that has flared up in the Middle East means a new risk to the economy." The possibility that the Zionist entity-Hamas conflict, which started earlier this month, could spiral into a broader Middle East war has already caused jitters in stock markets and pushed up oil prices.

And despite signs of slight improvement, "the bigger picture remains that the German economy is struggling", said Franziska Palmes from Capital Economics. After being buffeted by surging inflation and an energy crisis, Germany fell into recession around the turn of the year and then stagnated in the second quarter. The German government earlier this month downgraded its forecasts for this year, predicting the economy will shrink 0.4 percent in 2023. The International Monetary Fund has forecast that Europe's traditional growth engine will be the worst performing major economy this year, shrinking by 0.5 percent. - AFP

Kokusai Electric becomes biggest Japan IPO since 2018

TOKYO: Kokusai Electric, a Japanese builder of tools for making semiconductors, went public on Wednesday in Tokyo's largest public offering in five years. The listing was set to be worth at least 108 billion yen

(\$721 million), with its parent US investor KKR selling 58.8 million of the firm's shares for the initial offering price of 1,840 yen each. On Wednesday morning, shares were trading at 2,281 yen, up 24 percent from the offering price. It was Japan's biggest share offering since the 2.65-trillion-yen listing of SoftBank Corp in 2018.

IPO proceeds this year are about three times higher than the same period in 2022, according to Bloomberg. Private equity group KKR in 2018 paid around 260 billion yen for Kokusai, the former

unit of Japanese engineering conglomerate Hitachi.

The IPO comes as Japan follows the United States in seeking to tighten exports of semiconductor-related products to China. Machines for deposition and heat treatment are included in the list, potentially affecting the 34 percent of sales Kokusai gets from China, Bloomberg reported.

KKR had tried to sell Kokusai to US semiconductor firm Applied Materials, but Chinese anti-trust authorities blocked the move, which was dropped in 2021. - AFP

Kenya CB chief says currency overvalued

NAIROBI: Kenya's central bank chief has said that the country's currency, currently trading at record lows, has been overvalued for several years. The Kenyan shilling this week slipped to more than 150 to the dollar, a decline of almost 24 percent over a year, and compared to around 100 in October 2018.



Kamau Thugge

"I think for several years now we have had an overvalued exchange rate," Central Bank of Kenya governor Kamau Thugge told a parliamentary committee on Tuesday. He said that five or six years ago, financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank had considered the shilling overvalued by 20 to 25 percent. "We tried to maintain a fairly artificially strong exchange rate but also at a cost of a loss of international reserves," said Thugge, who took office in June this year.

He said Kenya's foreign exchange reserves had dropped to the equivalent of about 3.7 months of import cover. "It is still sufficient to address any emergencies but there has been that decline in the level of reserves trying to defend perhaps an overvalued exchange rate," he added.

The shilling's sharp depreciation has added to the economic hardship of Kenyans who have been suffering a cost-of-living crisis and the imposition of a range of new or increased taxes.

Anger over rising prices, particularly for basics such as food and fuel, led to a series of sometimes deadly protests against the government of President William Ruto earlier this year. - AFP

كيبكو
KIPCO

CONDOLENCES

The Management and Staff of
Kuwait Projects Company (Holding)

wish to offer their heartfelt condolences to

Mr. Nazir Mukadam

on the sad demise of his

Sister

May her soul rest in peace and may

God grant comfort and strength to the

bereaved family members

Japan auto show returns, playing catchup on EVs

China looks set to overtake Japan as the world's biggest car exporter

TOKYO: Tokyo's rebranded auto show returns this weekend just as China looks set to overtake Japan as the world's biggest car exporter after Toyota, Nissan and others got stuck in the electric vehicle slow lane.

Since the last edition in 2019, the EV market in Japan has been sluggish and the country's automakers have been late to tap a growing appetite elsewhere. Just 1.7 percent of cars sold in Japan were electric in 2022, compared with around 15 percent in western Europe, 5.3 percent in the United States and nearly one in five in China.

Japanese firms fared badly in a recent Greenpeace ranking on phasing out internal combustion engines, with Suzuki last and Toyota—the world's biggest carmaker by revenue—third from bottom.

Fewer than one in 400 Toyotas sold are EVs, the environmental group said. Japanese manufacturers have long bet instead on hybrids that combine battery power and internal combustion engines, an area they pioneered with the likes of the Toyota Prius.

Foreign EVs "feel like products from the previous generation", Chinese car industry employee Gao Yulu, 32, told AFP at a recent auto show in Beijing. "For Japanese brands, there are very few products to begin with. And their product strength isn't strong in terms of price and performance," she said. For Mitsubishi Motors, the debacle in China is such that this week it announced it was halting production there. Like in Europe and North America, Chinese EV makers are now even trying to gain a foothold in Toyota and Nissan's backyard.

Teaming up with 'Godzilla'

One of the only three foreign auto firms exhibit-

ing in Tokyo will be BYD, which is vying with Elon Musk's Tesla to become the world's top-selling EV maker. Although export figures are skewed by Japanese companies having major factories abroad, becoming number-two to China this year, as expected, will still hurt for an industry that itself was once the disruptor, experts said.

"It's kind of reminiscent of what happened to Japan in the 1980s, when they started exporting a lot of automobiles," said Christopher Richter, an auto analyst at CLSA. Japanese automakers have vowed to up their game, with Toyota aiming to sell 1.5 million EVs annually by 2026 and 3.5 million by 2030. It has invested heavily in battery technology.

On show in Tokyo will be a number of new Japanese EVs, although they will mostly be concepts such as a car and motorbike from Honda made of recyclable acrylic resin. The show has also been reborn as the Japan Mobility Show to expand its scope beyond cars to include areas such as robots, software and batteries. This has more than doubled the number of exhibitors in the show, which opens to the public on Saturday, to 475 including an armada of start-ups.

The trade show will also feature a special "Emergency and Mobility" zone devoted to transport solutions after natural disasters, with displays of robots, drones and self-propelling stretchers.

To hammer home the point, organizers have teamed up with the new "Godzilla" movie. "In Japan, we have... many natural disasters in Japan, and people's lives and towns have been destroyed," said Jun Nagata from the organizing committee. "Because of global warming this year, it's like Godzilla coming to cities," he said. — AFP



TOKYO: The Cruise Origin, a self-driving vehicle with no steering wheel or pedals, is displayed at the Honda Motor's booth during the press day of the Japan Mobility Show in Tokyo on October 25, 2023. — AFP

Huawei 'Light Up Your Rings' challenge goes live globally

KUWAIT: Huawei has launched the "Light Up Your Rings" global challenge on Huawei smartwatches and Huawei Health App as part of the Fashion Forward wearable launch globally to motivate users towards better health every day. Launched together with Huawei Wearable Product Ambassadors Sir Mo Farah and Pamela Reif, Light Up Your Rings brings exclusive challenges and fitness content to inspire users to start the journey to be healthier and fitter selves.

Starting from 16 October 2023, the "Light Up Your Rings" challenge invites users from 20 countries across Europe, Latin America, Asia Pacific, and Middle East Africa, to consistently complete the Activity Rings and share their journey. Users can set their daily goals when they first access Activity Rings on their Huawei smartwatch, such as the latest Huawei Watch GT 4 and Huawei Watch 4 Series, or through the Huawei Health App. Completing all three rings earns them a Perfect Day, and achieving five Perfect Days in a week rewards them with an Active Week Medal. The Active Week Medal can then be displayed on their Huawei smartwatch to showcase their dedication to health and fitness through the Light Up Your Rings challenge.

The "Light Up Your Rings" aims to motivate users to live a healthier lifestyle through personalized goals and gamification elements like the medal system. With the comprehensive health features and upgraded software algorithms on Huawei smartwatches, users can pursue their fitness goals.

Powering the campaign is the new and upgraded Activity Rings, introduced on the recently launched Huawei Watch GT 4. Activity Rings helps users visualize their fitness goals and develop healthy exercise habits by providing a clear and motivating indicator of their progress through three progress rings: Move, Exercise, and Stand. The Move ring calculates the number of calories burnt daily through different activities such as walking or workouts. The Exercise ring tracks exercise duration, showing the total time spent working out. The Stand ring shows how long the user has stayed active within the day, including simple actions like standing up. Activity Rings brings a combination of careful scientific study with the user-centric design ethos Huawei is known for. Developed by the Huawei Finland Research Center, Activity Rings employs an upgraded calculation algorithm. This algorithm ensures consistent and accurate metrics and offers users a detailed breakdown of calories burnt across various daily activities, comprehensive tracking of exercise durations, and a holistic view of a user's active hours, even accounting for seemingly mundane actions like standing.

Activity Rings also introduce an element of gamification through new challenges and medals. The Huawei Milan Aesthetic Research Center designed these medals to be symbols of achievement. Each medal is meticulously designed, incorporating diverse material effects like metal, enamel, and textured ceramic. They're interactive, with a 3D design allowing users to virtually "flip" them. Besides Huawei wearable devices, users can also access Activity Rings via the Huawei Health App.

Gulf Bank highlights expertise in optimizing social media channels

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank actively participated in a regional conference organized by social media management expert, Sprinklr, at the prestigious Conrad Hotel, Dubai. The event witnessed representatives from renowned international companies and platforms, including Meta, TikTok, WhatsApp, and LinkedIn.

During the conference, these global entities unveiled their latest platform updates and features, providing valuable insights for businesses and entrepreneurs seeking meaningful and appealing ways to engage their audiences. Sprinklr, in particular, provided an in-depth overview of its solutions and services, incorporating advanced artificial intelligence technologies in social media management. The focus was on highlighting the diverse range of advantages it delivers to its clients.

Gulf Bank stood out by highlighting its innovative use of social media as a way to connect with the community and engage with customers effectively. The bank's outstanding content across various events and occasions played a pivotal role in solidifying its position and enhancing its societal impact.

As the keynote speaker, Ahmed Al Amir, Deputy General Manager of Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank, expressed contentment with Gulf Bank's comprehensive achievements. He particularly praised the bank's vibrant



Ahmed Al-Amir speaks during the conference.

community engagement, accomplished through the strategic use of social media. He highlighted the crucial role of social media, emphasizing its power to influence and connect with diverse sectors of society. Al-Amir also brought attention to Gulf Bank's unique skills in delivering top-notch and compelling content, positioning the bank's channels at the forefront of audience views and interactions. Moreover, Al-Amir shared valuable insights on enhancing and developing social media content, stressing the importance of tailoring content for specific platforms while ensuring its quality, speed, accessibility, and reach. He concluded by expressing Gulf Bank's pride in actively engaging with the community, and its eagerness for continuous interactions. He also recognized social media's pivotal role in connecting with diverse audiences and accomplishing the bank's objectives.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as



Ahmed Al-Amir and Duaa Shashtari at the conference.

part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience. Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining robust developments in sustainability at environmental, social and governance levels through diverse sustainability initiatives, strategically selected to benefit the Bank both internally and externally. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various parties to achieve it.

stc introduces ground-breaking '5G New Calling'

KUWAIT: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced the successful completion of its pilot test to launch a new technology called '5G New Calling', becoming the first telecom operator in Kuwait and the whole region to achieve this remarkable milestone. The 5G New Calling technology represents the next generation of telecommunication services, offering features that are set to enhance communication for individuals, businesses, and industries.



Fahad Al-Ali

The new technology, soon to be introduced by stc, will bring users a new experience. Users will be able to break away from conventional, static conversations through interactive HD video communication, paving the way for enhanced collaboration and engagement. Moreover, leveraging the cutting-edge 5G calling technology, stc aims to enrich the digital terrain for its users. They are set to introduce features such as video calls with real-time translations, speech-to-text capabilities, screen sharing, an interactive visual menu, and Enterprise ID cards.

The pilot test reflects stc's unwavering commitment on expanding its service offerings and maintaining its competitive pioneering position within the telecommunications industry. As the first telecom operator in Kuwait and the whole region to achieve this milestone, stc strengthened its position as a leader in offering transformative solutions to businesses and individuals.

Eng Fahad Al-Ali, CTO of stc, expressed his enthusiasm about the accomplishment, stating, "At stc, we consistently strive to introduce and integrate innovative solutions to our customers with the core objective of elevating their user experience. Our successful 5G new calling pilot test represents our effort to leverage the latest technology in the market to provide new, value adding services to our customers. The new technology is expected to have a significant change

stc

on the calling experience in Kuwait, which brings a range of benefits including improved connectivity, as well as a more efficient and diversified calling experience. Considering our role as a telecom and digital solutions pioneer, this new technology will transform the way our customers interact, communicate, and conduct their daily activities."

Al-Ali added, "The potential of 5G goes beyond just speed, it is about creating an interconnected world where information flows seamlessly, with reduced latency and enhanced reliability. Following the success of the 5G new calling pilot test, stc is primed to transform the telecom industry, providing superior user experiences, enhanced security, and cost-effective solutions for enterprises across various verticals. Having said that, we are deeply committed to staying ahead of the curve, investing in research and development, and pushing the boundaries of what is possible in the telecom sector."

from dispute settlement reform to agriculture and food security.

"We are on the right path to delivering some solutions at 13th Ministerial Conference in Abu Dhabi next February," she told reporters at the end of the two days of talks. "It was clear to me from the discussions that negotiators in Geneva have the political mandate now to try to achieve breakthroughs," she added, citing issues such as e-commerce and fisheries subsidies.

The Nigerian-American economist pointed to talks on fisheries and dispute settlements that particularly "lifted my spirits". WTO member countries reached an agreement on fisheries subsidies at their previous ministerial meeting in Geneva in June 2022, but discussions are continuing on issues that remain unresolved, namely aid contributing to overcapacity and overfishing.

Okonjo-Iweala said there had been a "clear signal" in the Geneva talks to complete the fisheries negotiations by the end of the year, with a view to formally concluding the agreement in Abu Dhabi.

She also welcomed the "collaborative" approach of the United States in the discussions on the reform of the WTO dispute settlement system. The body that examines appeals to the WTO in the event of trade disputes has been inoperative since December 2019 because Washington has systematically blocked the renewal of its judges. At the 2022 ministerial meeting, however, the WTO nations committed themselves to setting up a fully operational dispute settlement system "by 2024", with the aim of reaching an agreement on this at the meeting in Abu Dhabi which will take place from February 26-29. — AFP

WTO negotiations on 'right path' on key issues: Chief

GENEVA: The World Trade Organization's 164 member states are "on the right path" towards reaching agreements on a string of key issues at their next ministerial meeting in February, the WTO's head said Tuesday. The international trade body's director-general Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala held talks in Geneva on Monday and Tuesday with senior officials from the member countries to take stock on several issues ranging



A group of older women calling themselves the "Happy Grandmas" work on weaving Shyrdaks - traditional Kyrgyz woollen rugs, at the House of Culture of the Metallurgists of Kadamjay - a city built in the 1930s around a huge metals factory that is now shut down, in Kyrgyzstan's remote region of Batken. - AFP photos



'Happy Grandmas': Women weave to protect Kyrgyzstan's ancient shyrdak rug



A group of older women calling themselves the "Happy Grandmas" work on weaving Shyrdaks.



Tashkan Khakimova, 77, a member of a group of older women calling themselves the "Happy Grandmas", teaches a girl on how to weave a Shyrdak .

Tashkan Khakimova, 77, crouched over a wooden weaving machine, wool speeding through her fingers, using a traditional rug-making technique in Kyrgyzstan's remote mountainous region of Batken. A young schoolgirl held the remaining wool next to Khakimova, dressed in a white headscarf and a velvet jacket with traditional embroidery on it. After several hundred hours of work, the wool will be transformed into a shyrdak — a traditional Kyrgyz rug.

Khakimova is one of a shrinking number of mostly elderly people living in the Central Asian country's mountainous areas who know how to make a shyrdak. Many worry the ancient art will die out. "Our parents taught us the technique, but people are forgetting it," Khakimova told AFP. She is part of a group of older women calling themselves the "Happy Grandmas" who meet in the small town of Kadamjay — nestled between the Alay mountains — to preserve the endangered craft and boost their meagre pensions.

UNESCO has warned that the skill of making the unique rugs is "in need of urgent safeguarding", with an abundance of synthetic carpets and the young being mostly disinterested. The "Happy Grandmas" have a mission: to attract Kadamjay's youngsters to learn the ancient technique.

The group of around 20 women meet several times a week in the local Soviet-era house of culture, encouraging school children to learn how to weave. "We come here so that this craft can be passed on from generation to generation, to teach it to young people," Khakimova said.

'Attract the young'

Rakhat Dzhoroyeva, another woman in the group, said it was important to preserve the rugs as "these are customs



that we inherited from our ancestors." "We don't want to sit at home with our arms crossed," she said. "We decided to continue the tradition." The women use wool from their own animals to make the rugs. "Production costs nothing," Dzhoroyeva said, adding that wool is collected from cattle, sheep and goats and that "nothing goes to waste."

She energetically lifts threads with a comb to strengthen the knots of the brown carpet she is making. The shyrdak will then be decorated with colorful traditional patterns recalling the nomadic culture of the Kyrgyz people, before being cut out and quilted to make it more resistant. The pensioners meet at the "House of Culture of the Metallurgists" of Kadamjay — a city built in the 1930s around a huge metals factory that is now shut down. Hoping to "attract the

young", the women take centre stage in the building, with their traditional singing reverberating around the marble hall. Curious schoolgirls walk past, with a six-year-old soon crouching down to examine the work done by the retirees.

'A lot of orders'

Living in Kyrgyzstan's poorest region, the "Happy Grandmas" also hope selling the home-made rugs will boost their pensions. "I get around 6,000 som in pension (around 64 euros a month)," said Saliya Bozhoyeva, another woman in the group. "We can sell rugs for several hundred euros, it allows me to compensate (for) my pension." The rusty, abandoned metals factory — which used to employ many of the women — towers over Kadamjay. Its bankruptcy has led to unemployment and an exodus

of the working population.

"My husband and I used to work at the factory, but today young people are forced to look elsewhere," Khakimova said. Like many families in Kyrgyzstan, her children have gone to Russia — a traditional place of employment for Central Asians — to look for work.

But the "Happy Grandmas" have some hope: there has been a renewed interest in traditional Kyrgyz carpets. Easing tensions with neighboring Uzbekistan have raised the possibility of attracting tourists to this remote region and the chance to strengthen the local economy — with some orders even coming from abroad. "We have a lot of orders, mainly from Bishkek," said Dzhoroyeva. She added, joyfully: "And soon, we will send a rug to Japan." — AFP



Tashkan Khakimova, 77, a member of a group of older women calling themselves the "Happy Grandmas", weaves a Shyrdak.



A member of a group of older women calling themselves the "Happy Grandmas" teaches girls on how to weave Shyrdaks.



Tashkan Khakimova, 77, a member of a group of older women calling themselves the "Happy Grandmas", teaches a girl on how to weave a Shyrdak .

Lifestyle



A visitor walks past the painting "Encounter 2 (The Man who Laughs)" by Austrian-Irish artist Gottfried Helnwein, famous for his hyperrealistic paintings, in the Albertina art museum on the eve of his exhibition in Vienna, Austria. - AFP photos



Austrian-Irish artist Gottfried Helnwein, famous for his hyperrealistic paintings, poses for a picture with his painting "Head of a child 14 (Anna)".



Austrian-Irish artist Gottfried Helnwein poses for a picture with his painting "The Child Dreams 7".



Austrian-Irish artist Gottfried Helnwein poses for a picture with his painting "Pink Mouse 2".

'NO LIMIT' TO HELL PEOPLE CAN INFLICT ON CHILDREN, SAYS ARTIST HELNWEIN



A visitor sits on a bench beside the painting "Grey Mouse 4" by Austrian-Irish artist Gottfried Helnwein.



Austrian-Irish artist Gottfried Helnwein speaks during an interview with AFP in the Albertina art museum on the eve of his exhibition in Vienna, Austria.



Austrian-Irish artist Gottfried Helnwein poses for a picture in front of his painting "The Murmur of the Innocence 39".

Art is "probably the only help one has to cope" in a world being traumatized by the wars in Gaza and Ukraine, one of Austria's most famous artists told AFP. "What is taking place is depressing," said Gottfried Helnwein as a retrospective of his work opened Wednesday at Vienna's Albertina gallery. The provocative artist — who has worked with Marilyn Manson and the Rolling Stones — is known for his haunting photo-realistic paintings which depict violence, power and abuse inflicted on defenceless children.

"There is no limit to what people are capable of doing against someone who cannot defend themselves," said the 75-year-old, whose work has often evoked his homeland's dark Nazi past. "When I see a child, in the current wars, wounded, crying or dying, it affects me."

"The question (of) whether it is a Zionist or a Palestinian, a Ukrainian or a Russian child becomes superfluous" since it is "a human being who certainly does not deserve this", he said. The defenceless child is a "central figure" in Helnwein's works. For the artist, the child is also a metaphor for both human vulnerability and strength that is "completely at the mercy of the fairness of adults". His oeuvre also includes performances, photography and collaborations with controversial US shock rocker Manson — who married Dita Von Teese in his Irish castle — and German metal band Rammstein.

Painting Hitler in blood

Born in Vienna in 1948, Helnwein grew up in the shadow of two lost world wars, the Holocaust and the Nazi era weighing heavily on people's minds. "Vienna was a s*** city after the war. Everything was grey and black, people were unfriendly," he said of the smothering atmosphere he struggled to comprehend as a child. "It was an appalling climate, because history is simply not without consequences."

As a response, "very aggressive, rebellious art" emerged in Vienna in particular as a post-war generation of



A visitor looks at paintings "Righteousman 1, 2 and 3" by Austrian-Irish artist Gottfried Helnwein.

artists revolted against their parents' legacy. Through researching the horrors of the Nazi past and the Holocaust, Helnwein zeroed in on the topic of violence against the defenseless — espe-

cially children and women. "I knew that the only way out for me to approach this subject was art," he said. Only when people are "emotionally touched" by his works does he consider them fin-

ished, the artist said.

Helnwein's early pieces in the 1960s provoked public outcry when he used his own blood to paint Adolf Hitler. His subsequent paintings would also frequently be confiscated and damaged. "Over the past decades the attacks have decreased more and more. But there are always people who attack you," Helnwein said, as he has learned to live with criticism. Asked about his alleged links to the controversial Church of Scientology, Helnwein — who divides his time between Ireland and the US since leaving Austria in the 1980s — declined to comment. The Vienna retrospective features more than 40 of Helnwein's works from the past three decades and runs until 11 February 2024. — AFP



A visitor walks past the painting "Without a title" by Austrian-Irish artist Gottfried Helnwein.

Iraq dig unearths 2,700-year-old winged sculpture largely intact

A dig in northern Iraq has unearthed a 2,700-year-old alabaster sculpture of the winged Assyrian deity Lamassu, which was found largely intact despite its large dimensions. Only the head was missing and that was already in the collection of the Iraq Museum in Baghdad after being confiscated by customs officers from smugglers in the 1990s, the dig's French leader Pascal Butterlin said. "I never unearthed anything this big in my life before," Butterlin said of the 18-tonne sculpture measuring 3.8 by 3.9 meters (about 12.5 by 12.8 feet). "Normally, it's only in Egypt or Cambo-

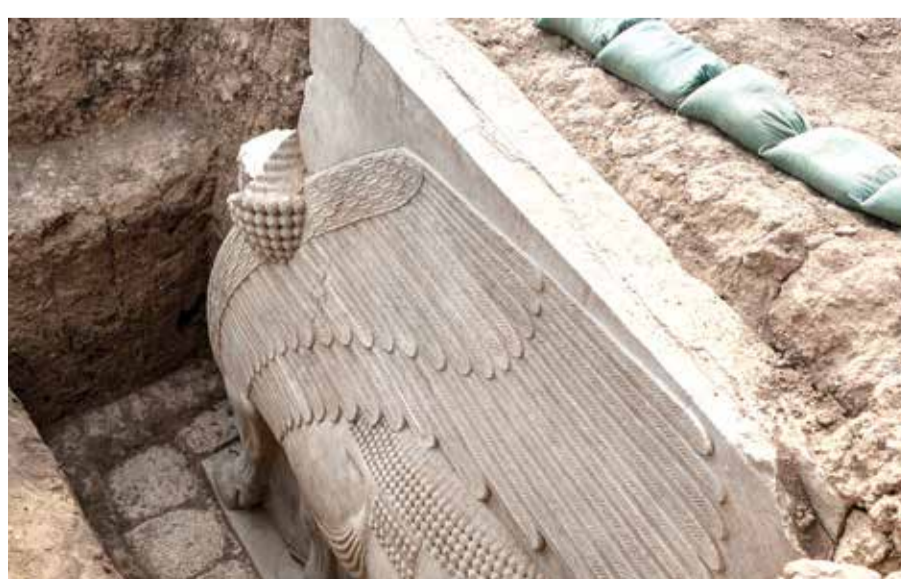
dia that you find pieces this big.

"The attention to detail is unbelievable," said the professor of Middle East archaeology at the University of Paris I Pantheon-Sorbonne. Erected at the entrance to the ancient city of Khorsabad, some 15 kilometers (10 miles) north of the modern city of Mosul, the sculpture shows the Lamassu, an Assyrian deity with a human head, the body of a bull and the wings of a bird.

It was commissioned during the reign of King Sargon II who ruled from 722 to 705 BC and erected at the city's gates to provide protection, Butterlin said. First mentioned in the 19th centu-

ry by French archaeologist Victor Place, the relief dropped from public records until the 1990s when Iraqi authorities earmarked it for "urgent intervention".

It was during this period that looters pillaged the head and chopped it into pieces to smuggle abroad. The rest of the relief was spared the destruction wreaked by the Islamic State jihadist group, which overran the area in 2014, because residents of the modern village of Khorsabad hid it before fleeing to government-held territory, Butterlin said. — AFP



A view of a newly-unearthed Assyrian Lamassu (human-headed winged bull) alabaster sculpture.



Journalists film at the site of a newly-unearthed Assyrian Lamassu (human-headed winged bull) sculpture discovered with its entire wings.

Iran bans 12 actors from work over hijab violations: Minister

Iranian authorities have banned a dozen women actors from working for failing to observe the Islamic republic's strict dress code which includes mandatory headscarves, an official said Wednesday. "Those who do not follow the law, will not be allowed to work," Iran's Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Mohammad Mehdi Esmaili told reporters after the weekly cabinet meeting.

On Tuesday, Iranian media reported that a dozen actresses who were found to be violating the hijab law — among them Taraneh Alidoosti, Katayoun Riahi and Fatemeh Motamed-Aria — "will not be allowed to play roles in movies". Alidoosti and Riahi were among the public figures who were briefly detained during last year's widespread protests over the death in custody of 22-year-old Iranian Kurd Mahsa Amini. Amini had previously been arrested for allegedly violating Iran's strict dress code for women.

Her death triggered months-long demonstrations which the authorities labeled as "riots" fomented by foreign governments. Since last year's mass protests, women have been increasingly flouting the dress code which requires head coverings and modest clothes. Covering the neck and head has been compulsory for women since 1983, following Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution. — AFP

Lifestyle



Palestinian musician Jawaher Al-Aqraa sits with children on the floor in her home in Deir Al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip. — AFP photos



Jawaher Al-Aqraa inspects the bow of a violin as she holds it out of its case in the kitchen.



Jawaher Al-Aqraa holds a violin out of its case as she sits on the floor at her home.

Palestinian sings to 'block out' roar of Zionist strikes

Jawaher Al-Aqraa says it will be a "miracle" if she survives the Gaza war but in the meantime she is singing to "block out" the roar of the Zionist fighter jets over the Palestinian territory. The 28-year-old English teacher is one of hundreds of thousands of Gazans who have fled or lost their homes as Zionist's air raids have intensified since the October 7 Hamas attacks.

Now she is with her brother in the Deir Al-Balah refugee camp where thousands of families live in fear of air strikes. "I have survived wars and a million escalations," she said. "With this war, I have the impression that all I do is await my turn to die. If I survive, it will be a miracle."

AFP first spoke with Aqraa last year as part of a project on young people across the Middle East and how they use culture to counter crisis. Then she said that music was her "escape route" from the daily trials faced by the 2.4 million inhabitants of the coastal enclave blockaded by the Zionist entity and Egypt. The Zionist entity has mounted hundreds of air strikes in Gaza on October 7 leaving thousands dead, mostly civilians. The Hamas-run health ministry



Jawaher Al-Aqraa holds a violin out of its case as she stands in the kitchen of her home.

says more than 5,750 people have died in Gaza since then. "Sometimes I try to block out the noise of the shelling and drones by singing, but the strikes become louder so I stop," she said. "I recite the shahada (the Islamic profession of faith) and then I start again."

'Mental balance'

Aqraa said the scenes she has witnessed in Gaza "have filled me with anger". "All I can do is sing to express my feelings and those of people who have lost their families and their homes. My mental balance comes from music and singing." The young woman said three of her friends had been killed in the Zionist air strikes.

"This war cannot be described with words. It cannot be compared to what happened before." Gaza is a conservative Muslim society in which it is normally frowned upon for a young woman to sing or play music in public. But surrounded by applauding children and her brother, Aqraa played the violin and sang a song in English composed by friends.

"I am invincible, unbreakable, unstoppable. They knock me down and I get up again," she sang. "I was born to be free. I am Palestinian." Speaking afterwards, she said she wanted to travel and sing to "spread the Palestinian cause". "The bombing has not affected my determination," she said. — AFP



Jawaher Al-Aqraa sits with her violin next to children on a staircase in her home.



Jawaher Al-Aqraa stands with a violin case in the kitchen of her home.

Filipino listeners cheered by last surviving radio dramas

Standing in front of a microphone, voice actor Phil Cruz pretends to wield an amulet to defeat the Devil for the latest installment of one of the Philippines' few surviving radio dramas. Cruz is part of a small team of voice actors and technicians producing shows that are broadcast in Tagalog by DZRH, one of the oldest radio stations in the country. Radio dramas were the main source of entertainment for Filipino families after World War II, just like the rest of the world, but their popularity faded with the rise of television, social media and video livestreaming.

Many longtime listeners, including retirees, farmers, factory workers and taxi drivers, still tune in to catch the latest episode of their favorite horror or drama. "We're the only ones left," Cruz, 64, said during a break in recording at a modern studio incongruously located in a Manila theme park. Cruz followed his father into voice acting in 1979, back when DZRH aired 18 drama programs over nine hours a day in stiff competition with other broadcasters. Now it produces seven.

Among them is "Night of Horror", the station's oldest series that has been terrifying audiences for 66 years with tales of devils, vampires and murderous skeletons. Love, family and poverty are among the themes tackled in other long-running dramas, such as "You're My Only Life" and "This Is Our Life". Gerry Mutia produces the sound effects that help listeners visualize the stories and, while many can be computer-generated, he still prefers "the old way".

Mutia keeps a box of objects in the



In this photo Gerry Mutia shows his sound effects equipment during the recording of a radio drama at a studio of a radio station in Manila. — AFP photos

studio to simulate sounds: coconut shells for galloping horses, a door bolt for the cocking of a gun, and stamping his feet in a box of leaves for footsteps in a forest. He even uses his own voice for a cat's meow. "The computer can replicate the sound of a slap but it is more realistic doing it the old way," said Mutia, demonstrating by striking together a pair of old rubber shoe soles.

'Our only entertainment'

The beauty of radio was that it reached "everyone, even the poor", said Rosanna Villegas, 63. She, like Cruz, followed her radio actor father into the industry. "It's a means of entertainment, which comes on top of what they watch on TV or the movies," she said. "They (fans) tell us their stress disappears." Among the DZRH team's loyal fans is Henry Amadure, who lives by himself on a farm about



This photo shows voice actors recording their part for a radio drama at a studio of a radio station in Manila.

60 kilometers (40 miles) south of Manila. Amadure listens to "The Promise of Tomorrow" on a small radio that he always takes with him to the field as he slashes weeds around taro plants. The series is about a friendship between a poor university student and his rich classmate. "It makes me happy and keeps me company because I work alone," said Amadure, 58, who was introduced to radio dramas by his grandfather as a teenager. "Sometimes you pick up life lessons from it." Amadure, who is separated from his wife, spends 74 pesos (\$1.30) a week on batteries to keep the radio playing all day while he works on his four-hectare (10-acre) farm. Like other farmers in the area, he has no electricity. His neighbor Cristitea Arpon, 35, said radio dramas were "our only entertainment".

"We will be sad if it disappears. It's our everyday companion and the only

thing that makes us happy," the mother of four said. "We don't have to waste money" buying internet access for social media or YouTube. Food caterer Nerissa Julao, 52, is a member of a radio drama fan club that boasts 17,000 members on Facebook. Julao tunes in while preparing dishes with two assistants in Guagua municipality, about 80 kilometers northwest of Manila. "Listening to radio dramas sharpens my imagination. The scenes take shape in my mind because the acting is very convincing," she said. But Julao also said, "drama fanatics like us are increasingly becoming a rare breed".

'Radio is forever'

The DZRH voice actors told AFP they have no formal training for radio dramas and had picked up their skills by observing their predecessors. Most of them hold down other jobs such as dubbing Mexican and Korean television dramas or doing voice-overs. The challenge for the remaining radio dramas is to attract a new generation of listeners. DZRH has branched out to social media, uploading episodes to YouTube and sharing the links on Facebook, X and TikTok.

"We have a varied audience but it's true many of them are also growing old," said Cruz. "We need to produce material targeting younger people." Villegas is optimistic that the dramas will survive. "For me, radio is forever," she said. "It will not disappear because it has such a wide audience." — AFP



This photo shows farmer Henry Amadure cutting grass on his farm while listening to a radio drama at a village in Silang, Cavite province.



This photo shows voice actors recording their part for a radio drama at a studio of a radio station in Manila.

Richard Roundtree, America's 'first black action hero,' dies at 81

American actor Richard Roundtree, heralded as "the first black action hero" for his starring role in the iconic 1971 hit "Shaft," died Tuesday at 81, US media reported. Hollywood publication Deadline said that the actor, known for opening doors for other black artists in the industry, died with his family at his bedside, "after a brief battle with pancreatic cancer." "Shaft," in which Roundtree played the eponymous private eye John Shaft, sparked a series of sequels and a TV spinoffs.



US actor Richard Roundtree attends the premiere of "Shaft" at AMC Lincoln Square in New York City. — AFP

Five decades later, Roundtree was still acting, appearing in the television romance drama "Cherish the Day" and film comedy "Moving On" just last year. "Richard's work and career served as a turning point for African American leading men in film," his manager Patrick McMinn said in a statement to Variety. "The impact he had on the industry cannot be overstated."

Roundtree's major debut, "Shaft" was hailed as a founding classic in the "Blaxploitation" genre the 1970s were known for—which boosters say tackled race relations while critics blast the style for trafficking in stereotypes. Either way, the genre was critical to pushing Hollywood to finally cast black Americans in starring roles.

"I used to look at it as a double-edged sword. But I've had so many people from all over the country—and all over the world actually—come up and say what that film meant to them back in '71," Roundtree told broadcaster NPR in 2019. "It's heavy." "The other side of it is I got typecast for quite some time, and then I've gone out of my way to establish a different side of my acting," he said. He was largely successful in that endeavor, with "his trailblazing career (changing) the face of entertainment around the globe," his agency told Deadline. — AFP

Sports

'Dazzling' finish to new-look Tour de France route

There are series of stages for one-day specialists and sprinters

PARIS: High altitude, an Italian debut in Florence and a finale on the French Riviera are on the itinerary of the 3,492km route for the 2024 Tour de France unveiled on Wednesday. The route embarks from Florence on June 29 and features four high altitude finishes as the race crosses the Alps twice and squeezes in two time-trials, including a potential high drama final day run from Monaco to Nice on July 21.

It is the first time the race does not finish in Paris which is off limits as it prepares to host the Olympic Games. As spectacular as it is atypical, the route was revealed at a Gala overseen by Christian Prudhomme, president of the organizers ASO in front of almost 4000 guests and many of the expected competitors, mayors from along the route and a large press pack at a conference centre in Paris.

The Florence start and Nice finish were already known, prompting much excitement about not only the first ever Grand Depart in Italy, but the race's first ever finale outside Paris.

"It's difficult to replace Paris, so what better scenery could we give than a dazzling Monaco to Nice time-trial," said Prudhomme. Instead of the traditional last day parade along the Champs Elysees, fans can instead anticipate a potentially decisive individual time trial down the Riviera coastline and in the hills between Monaco and Nice.

The scenario brings to mind the 1989 edition when American rider Greg LeMond beat Laurent

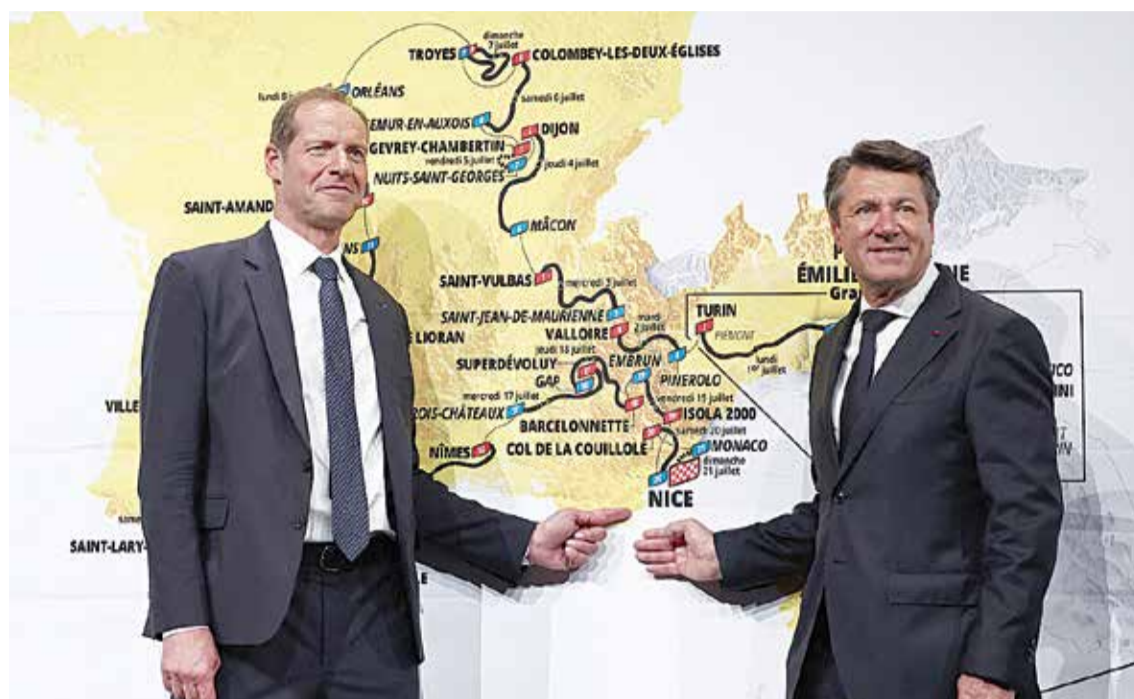
Fignon by eight seconds on a last day dash. After the Florence start, the race takes in Rimini on the Adriatic coast before cutting across Italy via Bologna and Turin and into France via the Alps on stage four.

"The Tour has never climbed so high, so early," said Prudhomme. "The panoramas in the high Alps are just splendid." Stage six will catch the eye of wine lovers as it takes in the "Route des Grands Crus" between Macon and Dijon while stage seven goes through the vineyards of Nuits-Saint-Georges in Bourgogne.

There are a series of stages for the one-day specialists and for the sprinters, but the southern Alps will likely mark the start of the final battle for the yellow jersey. "Could this herald a duel playing out between two, three, or – let's dream a little here – even four contenders," Prudhomme said after the 2023 Tour was marked by the two way duel between Jonas Vingegaard and Tadej Pogacar.

A more generous than usual 60km total over the two time-trials will please the fast men such as Remco Evenepoel or Primoz Roglic. The seven mountain stages, meanwhile, and four high altitude finales with the highest at 2802m on stage 19, will be very much to the liking of defending champion Vingegaard.

After Troyes in the Champagne region the race swoops south-east toward Pau and the Pyrenees, then heads west through Nimes back to the Alps and and the mouthwatering finale on the Riviera.—AFP



PARIS: Tour de France General Director Christian Prudhomme and Mayor of Nice Christian Estrosi (R) pose in front of the map, showing the men's route, during the presentation of the official routes of the 2024 edition of the men's and women's Tour de France cycling races in Paris on October 25, 2023. — AFP

No 'gambles' from Martin as Bagnaia takes MotoGP lead

BURIRAM: Jorge Martin has pledged no more "gambles", beginning with the Thailand MotoGP this weekend, after two ruinous races saw the Spaniard fall behind Francesco Bagnaia in the championship fight. Martin took a chance with a soft rear tyre in Australia last weekend and it backfired spectacularly.

The Pramac ace led from the start at Phillip Island until his deteriorating rear rubber allowed four riders on a harder compound, including Bagnaia who finished second, to swoop past on a dramatic final lap as the Spaniard slumped to fifth behind winner Johann Zarco.

"For sure, from now on, I won't take any gambles," said Martin. "We have to go at least with the same tyre as our opponents. I have learned that when you are fighting for a world championship, you have to fight with the same weapons as your rivals."

The tyre blunder came just a week after Martin, who was then top of the standings, crashed while leading the Indonesian MotoGP to gift Bagnaia a sixth victory of 2023 and an 18-point lead in the championship. The Italian stretched that to 27 points in Australia with four races of the 20-leg season to go.

It leaves Bagnaia in pole position to retain his title as the riders head to the Buriram International Circuit. "Absolutely. But feet on the ground," cautioned Bagnaia after being asked whether Australia had been good for his championship defence.

'Things can change'

"We know how things can change. I was 66 points gap after the Barcelona (sprint) and we lost the leadership in a moment," added the factory Ducati rider. "So, it's very easy to start having problems."

Fabio Di Giannantonio took a maiden podium by finishing third at Phillip Island. It gained welcome points for the 25-year-old Italian who is trying to save his MotoGP career, having found out 10 days earlier that he had been replaced at Gresini Ducati for 2024 by former world champion Marc Marquez.

"The thing is, sometimes you just need to be patient. You need to, not be lucky, but be in the right place at the right time," said the rider dubbed "Digi", who is now looking for a new seat for next season.

"It happened so fast the thing with Marc and maybe without a bit more patience and without this thing, everything could have been a bit easier. Sometimes you just need time. Rome is not built in one day."

Last year's race in Thailand saw Bagnaia finish third in treacherous conditions after the start was delayed almost an hour by heavy rain. Martin came home ninth. Rain could again play a part with a chance of thunderstorms on Saturday afternoon, when the 13-lap sprint will take place, and again on Sunday for the 26-lap grand prix around the 4.55-km Buriram International Circuit. — AFP

Maxwell hit record 40-ball WCup century

NEW DELHI: Glenn Maxwell admitted he "wasn't expecting" to hit a record 40-ball Cricket World Cup century on Wednesday. Maxwell, nicknamed 'The Big Show' for his flamboyant hitting, clubbed eight fours and eight sixes in his run blitz as Australia piled up 399-8 against the Netherlands in New Delhi.

Shakib accepts Bangladesh WCup dream all but over

MUMBAI: Shakib Al Hasan conceded Bangladesh's hopes of reaching the World Cup semi-finals were all but over after a crushing 149-run defeat by South Africa in Mumbai on Tuesday.

The Proteas piled up 382-5 after winning the toss, with Quinton de Kock making 174 -- his third century of the tournament—and Heinrich Klaasen a rapid 90. South Africa, briefly wobbling at 36-2, ran riot with 144 runs off their last 10 overs.

Bangladesh then collapsed to 58-5, with only Mahmudullah's 111 preventing an even larger margin of defeat. As it is, Bangladesh have now suffered four defeats in five games and sit rock-bottom of the 10-team group. "We'd still like to finish up the table, if not semi-finalists then fifth or sixth," said Shakib, returning from a thigh injury that forced him out of a defeat by India.

Bangladesh, who'd won three of their four previous one-day internationals against South Africa, made a decent start. "Yes, I thought we bowled well for the first 25 overs, got three wickets and they were going at five-an-over," said Shakib.

"Then they kicked on, I thought Quinton de Kock batted really well and the way Heinrich Klaasen finished it off, we didn't have any answers to it." Shakib, now in his fifth World Cup, had a match to forget, the left-arm spinner returning expensive figures of 1-69 in nine overs before falling for just one.

"We should have bowled better but we lost our plans in the last 10 overs," said the 36-year-old all-rounder. "That's where we lost the game." As for

'Everything is must-win now' for faltering England, says Moeen

BENGALURU: Moeen Ali said Wednesday that "everything is a must-win now" as faltering defending champions England face a Cricket World Cup day of reckoning. England tackle Sri Lanka in Bengaluru on Thursday knowing that a fourth defeat in five games will shatter any realistic hopes of sneaking into the quarter-finals.

"We know we've been in this position before although probably not to this degree, but we know everything is a must-win," said Moeen. "We have to get our confidence and perform well and bat and bowl and field better than we have done so far in this tournament."

England's lone win came against equally hapless Bangladesh. They have lost to New Zealand, suffered a shock defeat to Afghanistan and then slumped to a 229-run thrashing at the hands of South Africa, conceding their highest total in a one-day international of 399.

Injury-hit Sri Lanka have been just as underwhelming, also having just one win and three defeats. Moeen is England vice-captain but the 36-year-old veteran was dropped after the opening defeat to New Zealand and has been sidelined.

The stunning assault bettered the record of South Africa's Aiden Markram who blasted a century off 49 balls against Sri Lanka at the same venue 18 days ago. "It feels pretty good. I have been pretty cooked today so I wasn't expecting much but it probably cleared my head a little bit to be able to go out there and play," said Maxwell.

It was also the fourth fastest century in all ODIs. South Africa's AB de Villiers leads the way with his 31-ball century against the West Indies in Johannesburg in 2015. New Zealander Corey Anderson reached three figures off 36 balls against the West Indies at Queenstown in 2014 while Shahid Afridi of Pakistan made a century from 37 deliveries facing Sri Lanka in Nairobi back in 1996.



MUMBAI: Bangladesh's Mahmudullah celebrates after scoring a century (100 runs) during the 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup one-day international (ODI) match between South Africa and Bangladesh at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai. — AFP

whether Mahmudullah and fellow middle-order veteran Mushfiqur Rahim should be promoted up the order, Shakib said: "They're doing their roles well but our top four or five are not scoring runs, need to score more runs so we can get more out of them."

The 37-year-old Mahmudullah added: "I have seen a lot of ups and downs throughout my career. (Batting down the order) is fine. Yesterday the coach (Chandika Hathurusingha) told me that I was batting

at No 6. I went out there and played my game".

Shakib, looking at the tournament as a whole, said: "South Africa, India and New Zealand are the three teams that look like they can win the title. But anything can happen...There's still a long way to go. There is a lot to learn and a lot to play for. For the (2025) Champions Trophy, we have to be in the top eight (in the ODI standings) and that's important." — AFP



BENGALURU: England's Adil Rashid (R) and teammate Moeen Ali attend a practice session at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru. — AFP

cricket has probably cost us a little bit in this tournament.

"We haven't been playing that way in my opinion and I think we need to play that way, but without slogging the ball, but just be that really aggressive side that we know we can be." The M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru is familiar territory for Moeen as it is where he plays franchise cricket for Royal Challengers Bangalore in the IPL.

"It's one of those grounds where scoring is quick and batting deep makes a big difference. If I get the nod, then I'm really looking forward

to playing." How much longer Moeen, as well as his senior colleagues in the England team, continues in the international set-up could hinge on Thursday's result.

However, he warned against making drastic, knee-jerk changes to the squad. "I think there's still a lot of players that can play for a long time. There's obviously a few of us who are a bit older, more than likely won't make the next World Cup," he admitted. "I don't think it's the end of anything. I think it could potentially be the start of something else." — AFP



Glenn Maxwell

Sports

Inter squeeze past Salzburg to move top of Champions League Group D

‘Our performance will push us forward to keep playing our own game’

MILAN: Inter Milan took provisional lead of Champions League Group D on Tuesday after winning a tough contest with Salzburg 2-1 at a packed San Siro. Goals in each half from Alexis Sanchez and Hakan Calhanoglu were enough for Inter to move up to seven points, three ahead of Real Sociedad who are at bottom side Benfica later on Tuesday.

Simone Inzaghi's side were good value for their win but were made to sweat for the three points as Salzburg caused the hosts problems and were briefly level when the Zionist teenager Oscar Gloukh stroked home a classy finish in the 57th minute.

“There wasn't really any sign that they might equalize because apart from the first 15 minutes we didn't feel in danger,” Inzaghi told reporters. “But we stayed in the game, went close and then ahead. That's obviously a very positive sign.”

A four-point gap between Inter and third-placed Salzburg makes qualification for the knockout stages more likely regardless of how Sociedad do in Portugal. The two team's face off in Austria in a fortnight in a match which will have a huge say on both teams' chances of reaching the last 16.

“Inter are a great side, we did well to not be overawed by the atmosphere here at the San Siro, the boys demonstrated from first to last minute their worth against a really good team,” said Salzburg coach Gerhard Struber.

“Our performance will push us forward to keep playing our own game, what we showed tonight. We're a young team which needs to gain a bit of experience.” Sanchez's finish also cheered Inzaghi as it showed he can drop one of star strike pairing Lautaro Martinez and Marcus Thuram without

losing goal threat. The Chile forward was a surprise pick in place of Thuram from Inzaghi, who also dropped star left-back Federico Dimarco and Nicolò Barella to the bench with a big Serie A clash with Roma coming up at the weekend.

“We all know about Sanchez, he's a player fully capable of playing like he did tonight and who can score on any occasion,” Inzaghi added. “I'm happy he scored tonight because it's a reward for all the work he puts in every day at Appiano (Gentile, Inter's training centre).”

Inter triumph

Salzburg had if anything had the better of the play in the early stages but Sanchez pounced on Inter's first real chance of the game to put the hosts ahead in the 19th minute. Henrikh Mkhitaryan tried to feed Davide Frattesi who had made a burst into the box but his misplaced pass instead found Sanchez, who calmly stroked home his first Inter goal since returning from Marseille.

Sanchez, 34, is now the highest scoring Chilean in Champions League history with 16 goals. That goal took the wind out of Salzburg's sails and Inter pressed for a second, but the closest they came in the first half was in the 32nd minute when Denzel Dumfries' cross was almost turned in by Amar Dedic.

Inter almost doubled their lead in the 56th minute when Carlos Augusto flashed just wide but seconds later Gloukh drew Salzburg level with a brilliant first-time finish reminiscent of Sanchez's opener after good play from Roko Simic and Maurits Kjaergaard. However Inter responded and were soon back in the lead when Lucas Gour-



MILAN: Salzburg's Austrian defender #17 Andreas Ulmer (L) fights for the ball with Inter Milan's Dutch defender #02 Denzel Dumfries during the UEFA Champions League 1st round day 3 Group D football match between Inter Milan and Salzburg at the San Siro stadium in Milan. — AFP

na-Douath and Strahinja Pavlovic clumsily bundled over Frattesi and referee Francois Letexier quickly pointed to the penalty spot.

Calhanoglu made no mistake with his spot-kick, rifling home what turned out to be the winning goal to the right of Alexander Schlager. Lautaro Martinez

thought he had sealed the points for Inter in the 81st minute, but the strike was ruled out, Frattesi straying offside before flashing a low cross for the Argentina forward. Salzburg pushed for a leveller but Inter held out for a win which will boost their chances of another deep run in the competition. — AFP

Liverpool clash with Toulouse takes Comolli back to Anfield

PARIS: Liverpool's home meeting with Toulouse on Thursday might not be their biggest European game of recent seasons, but the match offers a chance for a figure who was once highly influential on Merseyside to return to Anfield. Taking his seat in the VIP section of the stadium will be Toulouse president Damien Comolli, the man who has overseen the club's resurgence since his arrival in 2020, helping them climb out of the French second division to win silverware and return to continental competition.

Now 51, there was a time a decade ago when Comolli was one of the most important figures in the whole Premier League. Long before that he worked as a scout for Arsene Wenger at Arsenal, going on to develop an interest in the influence data analysis could have on performance and recruitment in football. Later he worked as director of football at Tottenham Hotspur, where he was notably responsible for the signings of Dimitar Berbatov and Luka Modric. Between 2010 and 2012, Comolli held a similar position at Liverpool in the wake of John W. Henry's takeover of the club.

Among the players he brought to Anfield was Jordan Henderson, who overcame early scepticism to spend 12 years as a Liverpool player. “At Liverpool I was reproached for having signed Jordan Henderson. People said it was a big mistake,” Comolli remembered in an interview with So Foot magazine last year. “I can assure you that without him they wouldn't have won the Champions League or the Premier League.” A friend of Billy Beane,



LIVERPOOL: File photo shows Liverpool's Uruguayan striker #09 Darwin Nunez crosses the ball during the English Premier League football match between Liverpool and Everton at Anfield in Liverpool. — AFP

whose use of statistical analysis in baseball inspired the 2011 film Moneyball. Comolli has instilled a data-driven approach to recruitment at Toulouse that has been central to their recent success.

Toulouse, France's fourth-biggest city, is better known for rugby than football and TFC had just been relegated from Ligue 1 in 2020 at the end of a season curtailed by the COVID-19 pandemic. It was in the wake of that the club was bought by American investment firm RedBird Capital Partners, who later also took over Italian giants AC Milan. Comolli was appointed as president and oversaw the implementation of a scouting system that has leaned heavily on data analysis, with impressive results.

After a bedding-in period, a cosmopolitan squad ran away with the Ligue 2 title in 2022. Last sea-

son they consolidated in the top flight and won the French Cup, crushing Nantes 5-1 in the final with two goals from Thijs Dallinga, a little striker unearthed from the Dutch second division.

It was a rare trophy for Toulouse and it sealed their place in this season's Europa League, although only after they were cleared by UEFA amid concerns about their links to Milan, who are competing in the Champions League.

UEFA has multi-club ownership regulations in place to protect the integrity of its competitions and there is a possibility Toulouse could end up playing Milan, should the Italian side drop down from the Champions League. Not that Toulouse are looking that far ahead in their first European campaign since 2009. — AFP

free from Juventus in the summer, on the bench despite the Italian captain having played 29 matches against Napoli in a storied career.

Another summer arrival from the Italian league, Germany defender Robin Gosens, who arrived from Inter Milan, recovered in time to make the starting XI. Spurred on by a fiery home crowd of 70,000 in Berlin's sold out Olympic Stadium, Union started brightly, forcing the Italian champions to concede some early corners as the home side pushed high and had Napoli on the back foot. Union had the ball in the net after 24 minutes when Chelsea loanee David Fofana, carving down the right flank, found Gosens, who tapped in, but the Ivorian had been offside in the build up.

Napoli had few attacking opportunities in the opening half, seemingly missing Osimhen's penetration up front and manager Rudi Garcia reacted at halftime, switching out Jens Cajuste for Eljif Elmas in midfield to give his side some attacking spark. Quiet in the first, Kvaratskhelia danced his way into the penalty box early in the second, but failed to find a teammate in a penalty area crowded by red Union shirts. — AFP

Kvaratskhelia helps ‘ice cold’ Napoli secure victory at Union Berlin

BERLIN: Napoli winger Khvicha Kvaratskhelia helped an “ice-cold” Napoli secure a narrow Champions League victory at Union Berlin on Tuesday, laying on the game's only goal for Giacomo Raspadori in a 1-0 away victory.

The Georgian stepped up in the absence of star striker Victor Osimhen and was dangerous throughout, slicing through the Union defence to set up Raspadori midway through the second half. The victory—Napoli's second in three group stage matches—boosts the Italian side's chances of reaching the knockouts, while Union are stranded in last place with no points after three losses.

Visiting manager Rudi Garcia said “we had to be patient and in the second half we did better—and

Al Ahly, Sundowns held at home, but reach semi-finals

JOHANNESBURG: Al Ahly of Egypt and Mamelodi Sundowns of South Africa both failed to win at home on Tuesday, but still qualified for an African Football League (AFL) semi-finals showdown. Mahmoud Kahraba scored in Cairo as Ahly came from behind to draw 1-1 with Simba of Tanzania in a quarter-final second leg, and squeezed through on away goals after a 3-3 aggregate deadlock.

Sundowns had Mthobi Mvala sent off after only four minutes of a dour 0-0 draw with Petro Luanda of Angola in Pretoria and advanced 2-0 on aggregate. Ahly will host Sundowns on Sunday with the return match next Wednesday. They met in the CAF Champions League group stage last season with Sundowns winning 5-2 at home and drawing 2-2 away.

Having drawn 2-2 in Dar es Salaam last Friday, record 11-time African champions Ahly were expected to beat Simba in Egypt, but could not translate first-half dominance into goals. After South African Percy Tau wasted a great early second half chance for Ahly, Simba stunned the home team by taking a 68th-minute lead through Malian Sadio Kanoute.

When a teammate headed a cross toward the Ahly goal it struck Kanoute, and the ball changed direction to enter the net with Ahly goalkeeper Mohamed el Shenyawy out of position. Simba held the lead on the night and on aggregate for eight minutes before Kahraba, who scored the second Ahly goal in Tanzania, struck again.

Veteran Ahly and Tunisia full-back Ali Maaloul was a constant threat with his runs down the left flank and his cut back enabled Kahraba to beat Ally Salim with a low shot into the corner. Ahly coach Marcel Koller must be concerned that his team had 20 goal attempts, but only two on target.

In Pretoria, centre-back Mvala was shown a straight red card for fouling Petro captain Tiago Azulao as he dashed toward goal. But the Luanda outfit failed to take advantage of facing 10 men and 71 minutes elapsed before they had a goal attempt on target.

The other second legs will be staged on Wednesday with TP Mazembe from the Democratic Republic of Congo defending a 1-0 lead away to Esperance of Tunisia. Wydad Casablanca of Morocco, beaten by Ahly in the last Champions League final, host Enyimba of Nigeria and hold a 1-0 aggregate advantage.

The AFL is a new competition that bears little resemblance to the original concept with changes to the name, number of competitors and prize money. Originally called the CAF Africa Super League, the name was altered amid concerns that the competition might be linked with the failed 2021 attempt to form a super league in Europe. — AFP

Classifieds

Clinics & Hospitals

Clinics

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

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

Hospitals

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

Change of Name

I, SAHHUL HAMEED SALAIMAAN 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

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Man United claim vital Champions League win, Bellingham strikes again

United held a minute's silence in memory of Bobby Charlton



MANCHESTER: Manchester United's Scottish midfielder #39 Scott McTominay commits a foul on FC Copenhagen's Norwegian midfielder #10 Mohamed Elyounoussi as they fight for the ball during the UEFA Champions League Group A football match between Manchester United and FC Copenhagen at Old Trafford, in Manchester. — AFP

PARIS: Andre Onana's last-gasp penalty save secured a vital Champions League win for Manchester United against FC Copenhagen on Tuesday, while Jude Bellingham scored again for Real Madrid in their victory over Braga. Elsewhere, Arsenal beat Sevilla in the rain in Spain and Harry Kane was on target as Bayern Munich won a tough assignment against Galatasaray.

Before kick-off at Old Trafford, United held a minute's silence in memory of Bobby Charlton after the Red Devils legend died on Saturday at the age of 86. They marked the occasion by claiming their first points in Group A as Harry Maguire's 72nd-minute header secured a 1-0 win.

The result keeps alive their chances of advancing to the last 16 but they needed Onana to produce a brilliant save from Jordan Larsson's 97th-minute penalty to see the game out. The spot-kick was awarded when Scott McTominay caught Mohamed Elyounoussi as he tried to hook a ball clear in the box, but Larsson - whose father Henrik briefly played for United in 2007 - could not convert the chance. "It is incredible and a great night. Especially

in the dying second when you concede a penalty, but a brilliant save from Andre Onana," coach Erik ten Hag told broadcaster TNT Sports.

Kane nets in Bayern win

United are now back in contention to qualify but Bayern look set to run away with the group after making it three wins out of three with a 3-1 victory in Istanbul. Kingsley Coman's early opener for the German champions was cancelled out by a Mauro Icardi penalty on the half-hour mark.

But Bayern pulled away in the second half, with Kane finishing in the 73rd minute to restore the visitors' lead with his 11th goal in 12 games for his new club. He then set up Jamal Musiala to wrap up the win.

Bayern have now won 16 consecutive matches in the Champions League group phase and have not lost at this stage in over six years. "I don't know how many group stage matches I've done as a coach, but it's always super difficult — so it's great to find ourselves with nine points after three matches," said Bayern coach Thomas Tuchel.

200 up for Ancelotti

Madrid, the record 14-time European champions, also have three wins out of three in Group C after Rodrygo and Bellingham scored in a 2-1 victory over Braga in Portugal. Real coach Carlo Ancelotti was taking charge of his 200th game in the competition and he saw Rodrygo open the scoring on 16 minutes before Bellingham fired in just past the hour mark.

It was the England midfielder's third goal in as many Champions League games for his new club, and his 11th in 12 matches altogether since signing from Borussia Dortmund. Alvaro Djaló pulled one back for Braga, but Real can secure qualification for the last 16 when they host the Portuguese side next.

Napoli are second in the group after a 1-0 win at Union Berlin, who are still without a point. Giacomo Raspadori scored the only goal in the second half as the Italian champions won without star striker Victor Osimhen.

Arsenal win in Seville

In Group B, Arsenal bounced back from losing 2-1 to Lens in France in their last game as they beat Se-

villa by the same scoreline on a sodden surface at the Sanchez Pizjuan. Gabriel Martinelli ran clear to open the scoring in first-half stoppage time and a fantastic strike by Gabriel Jesus made it two.

Nemanja Gudelj pulled one back for Sevilla but last season's Europa League winners have won just twice in 13 games in this campaign. "There are not many teams to have won here in the last ten years in Europe and we've done it," Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta told TNT Sports.

Lens are second, a point behind Arsenal, after coming from behind to draw 1-1 at home to PSV Eindhoven with Elye Wahi cancelling out Johan Bakayoko's opener. Last season's beaten finalists Inter Milan are joint top of Group D with seven points after defeating Red Bull Salzburg 2-1 at San Siro.

Hakan Calhanoglu's second-half penalty won it for Inter after Alexis Sanchez's opener was cancelled out by Oscar Gloukh. Real Sociedad are level with Inter thanks to a 1-0 win over Benfica in Lisbon secured by a Brais Mendez goal. Benfica are still without a point and staring at an early exit. — AFP

Kuwaiti boxer calls for more recognition of combat sports

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: "It was a great achievement for my country ranking 6th in the world. Winning seven medals with seven players!" With these words, Kuwaiti boxing champion, Abdulaziz Al-Shammar, who stood third in boxing at 2023 World Combat Games in Riyadh, expressed his pride mixed with regret to Kuwait Times for what Kuwaiti champions in combat sports see as a lack of attention and recognition from their country, which kills their passion and frustrates and saddens them.

Shammar said despite Kuwait ranking sixth in the world in combat games, little to no attention was given to this remarkable success. Not only there was no consideration shown after this achievement, but also before joining the 2023 World Combat Games, he indicated the Kuwaiti team's preparations could have been better. He expressed pride in Kuwaiti men and women champions who won medals, be it in the first, second or third places, highlighting that seven medals were brought home by seven Kuwaiti champions, but no rewards or recognition were given to the winners from those responsible for sports, especially in the field of combat.

However, Shammar said that his family and friends were his reward for his victory in this championship. He called for security, peace and constant stability for his beloved country Kuwait and wished for the safety of innocents in Palestine.

According to Shammar, Kuwait possesses excep-



Kuwaiti Boxing Champion Abdulaziz Al-Shammar (right)

tional talents that have the potential to elevate the state's name in the world of sports, as Kuwaiti champions have already demonstrated at different levels in sports. It is crucial for Kuwait to recognize and showcase these national talents, rather than confining its focus to a selected category of sports. By embracing a more inclusive approach, Kuwait can provide opportunities for citizen champions and position itself as a formidable contender in the sports arena across all levels.

Ronaldo stunners edge AFC Champions League seven-goal thriller

RIYADH: Cristiano Ronaldo rolled back the years to score two stunning goals and propel his Al Nassr side to a thrilling 4-3 victory over Al Duhail of Qatar in the AFC Champions League. Former Liverpool striker Sadio Mane and Anderson Talisca also scored for the Saudi side late Tuesday as they made it three wins from three in the group stages of the premier Asian club competition.

Talisca opened the scoring in Riyadh from the edge of the box in the 25th minute after being teed up by the 38-year-old Ronaldo's clever back-heeled flick as the Portuguese talisman went through his full repertoire of tricks. Mane turned and drilled home to add a second 11 minutes after the break and Al Nassr appeared to be cruising when Ronaldo curled home a sumptuous third from outside the box to make it 3-0 five minutes later.

But the Qatari side, inspired by former Barcelona and Liverpool winger Philippe Coutinho, scored twice in the next six minutes through Ismail Mohamad and Almoez Ali to leave the game on a knife-edge. With nine minutes remaining, Ronaldo appeared to have had the final say as he sprinted on to a long ball from Sultan Al Ghannam and lashed home a superb left-foot volley without breaking stride.

There was still time for another twist as Michael Olunga pulled it back to 4-3 in the 85th minute to ensure a nervous final few minutes. "When you face Ronaldo, there isn't much you can do," said Al Duhail manager Christophe Galtier, who was in charge of French giants Paris Saint-Germain last season.

"He scored two beautiful goals. I'm at a loss for words to describe him. What he did today is ex-



RIYADH: Duhail's Portuguese defender #35 Ruben Semedo eyes Nassr's Portuguese forward #07 Cristiano Ronaldo as he plays the ball during the AFC Champions League Group E football match. — AFP

traordinary for a 38-year-old. He's still the best player in the world." Another Riyadh-based side, Al Hilal, made light of being without their injured superstar Neymar as they thrashed India's Mumbai City 6-0 with two goals from former Fulham front man Aleksandar Mitrovic.

In the East zone, defending champions Urawa Red Diamonds of Japan were upset at home 2-0 by South Korea's Pohang Steelers, who netted either side of half-time in Saitama through Jeong Jae-hee and Goh Young-jun.

Urawa now face a battle to qualify for the knockout stages, having taken only four points from their three Group J games so far, level with China's Wuhan Three Towns, who beat Hanoi FC 2-1 for their first win. "Today Pohang was the better team and deserved to win. Especially in the physical aspect, we couldn't do too much," said Urawa manager Maciej Skorza.

Japan's Kawasaki Frontale made it three wins from three with a 4-2 victory away to Thailand's BG Pathum United to open a three-point gap at the top of Group I over South Korea's Ulsan Hyundai. — AFP