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FM: Palestine is Kuwait's cause

Sheikh Salem slams double standards • New US envoy's credentials will be approved



KUWAIT: Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah speaks during a press conference on Oct 29, 2023.

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah underscored Kuwait's enduring solidarity with the Palestinian people and condemned the airstrikes by the Zionist entity in Gaza, affirming the alignment between the Kuwaiti leadership, government and citizens on this issue, demonstrating a strong and consistent stance.

The minister's emphatic statement during a press conference on Sunday highlights Kuwait's unwavering commitment to the Palestinian cause for over six decades. This enduring support has been a defining aspect of Kuwait's foreign policy, emphasizing the country's dedication to promoting justice and stability. There is no room for doubt that Kuwait's position on the Palestinian cause remains

steadfast, robust and clear.

Sheikh Salem affirmed Kuwait opposes normalization with the Zionist entity and demands the independent establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state based on the borders of June 1967 and international resolutions. "Today, we are witnessing the 23rd day of the war in Gaza. What the Zionist entity is doing is a war of revenge, not a defensive war. We are witnessing collective punishment and war crimes in Gaza. In 23 days, 7,000 people have been martyred, including 3,000 children. How is it possible to kill 3,000 children without considering it a war crime?" he questioned.

Hamas' armed wing said Sunday its fighters were engaged in "heavy fighting" with Zionist forces in Gaza after Zionist military deployed more ground forces across the Palestinian territory. "Our fighters are currently engaged in

heavy fighting with machine-guns and anti-tank weapons with the invading occupation (Zionist) forces in northwest Gaza," the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades said in a statement. In an earlier statement the group said two Zionist tanks had caught fire after they were targeted by its fighters.

Zionist forces continued to pound north Gaza with air and artillery shelling on Sunday evening. The health ministry in Gaza says the unrelenting retaliatory Zionist bombardment has killed more than 8,000 people, mainly civilians and half of them children. Zionist forces also killed five Palestinians Sunday across the occupied West Bank, health officials said, raising to more than 110 the death toll in surging violence there since the start of the Gaza war. The Palestinian health ministry said five

Continued on Page 6

NEWS IN BRIEF

Second pro-Zionist nurse deported

KUWAIT: The interior ministry deported an Indian nurse who worked at Sabah Hospital due to her public support for the Zionist entity in its war against Palestine. This is the second instance of an Indian health ministry nurse being deported for expressing support for the Zionist entity. The nurse demonstrated her solidarity and support for the Zionist entity on WhatsApp, where she referred to Palestinians as terrorists and displayed the flag of the Zionist entity. Informed sources revealed the nurse confessed to supporting the Zionist entity during her interrogation over a complaint filed by lawyer Bandar Al-Mutairi.

'Friends' actor Perry dies at 54

LOS ANGELES: Matthew Perry, troubled star of the smash hit TV sitcom "Friends", was found dead at his home in Los Angeles on Saturday, US media reported. He was 54. First responders found Perry unconscious in a hot tub at his house and were unable to revive him, law enforcement sources told the Los Angeles Times. A fire department spokesman confirmed it had responded to a "water emergency", but could not confirm reports that Perry had drowned. — AFP (See Page 11)



Matthew Perry

Mouse embryos grown in space

TOKYO: Mouse embryos have been grown on the International Space Station and developed normally in the first study indicating it could be possible for humans to reproduce in space, a group of Japanese scientists said. Astronauts thawed the early-stage embryos using a special device designed for this purpose and grew them on the station for four days. — AFP (See Page 12)

Public works minister resigns to avoid grilling

BY B Izzak

KUWAIT: Minister of Public Works Amani Bugammaz resigned on Sunday, apparently to avoid two grillings filed by two MPs over alleged mismanagement and delays in major projects, especially road repairs. The two grillings, filed separately by MPs Mubarak Al-Tasha and Dawood Maarafi, were listed for debate during the National Assembly's opening session on Tuesday. The resignation means the two grillings will not

be debated.

But Tasha said in a statement that he will ask the National Assembly to form a committee to investigate the works of the minister since she was appointed to the post and called on MPs to approve the request. Tasha said the minister's resignation is not acceptable, because she escapes from answering the grilling.

The Assembly is scheduled to start its new term on Tuesday with a key speech by HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, followed by Speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah. MP Mohammad Al-Raqeeb called for sending the two grillings to the special ministers' tribunal for a judicial probe.

Meanwhile, MP Abdulkarim

Al-Kandari reiterated on Sunday that he will grill Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah if he accepts the credentials of new US Ambassador to Kuwait Karen Sasahara. Kandari last week threatened to grill the minister if he accepted ambassador-designate Sasahara because she worked as consul-general in the Zionist entity.

The foreign minister said on Sunday after meeting with the Assembly's foreign relations panel that Sasahara had been approved by HH the Amir and that if she arrives in the country, he will introduce her to the political leadership and then accept her credentials. The minister also said that there is an agreement in principle over a draft law calling to ban any dealing with the Zionist state. The bill was not given the final approval by the panel.



Amani Bugammaz

Turkey marks centenary as Gaza war rages

ISTANBUL: Turkey marked its centenary as a post-Ottoman republic on Sunday with somewhat muted celebrations held in the shadow of the Zionist entity's escalating war with Hamas militants in Gaza. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was front and center of day-long events that both honor the secular republic's founder and play up the achievement of the Islamic-rooted party that has run Turkey since 2002.

"Our country is in safe hands, you may rest in peace," Erdogan said after laying a wreath at the mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk — the Turkish

military commander whose legacy the current president has vied with during his two-decade rule. Ataturk is lionized across Turkish society for driving out invading forces and building a brand new nation out of the fallen Ottoman Empire's ruins in the wake of World War I.

Turkey was formed as a Westward-facing nation that stripped religion from its state institutions and tried to forge a modern new identity out of its myriad ethnic groups. It eventually became a proud member of the US-led NATO defense alliance and a beacon of democratic hopes in the Middle East. But Ataturk's social and geopolitical transformation of the overwhelmingly Muslim nation created divisions that weigh on Turkish politics to this day.

Erdogan tapped into these as he led his conservative Justice and Development Party (AKP) to power over

Continued on Page 6



ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and state officials visit Anitkabir, the mausoleum of Turkish Republic's Founder Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, to mark the 100th anniversary of the Turkish Republic on Oct 29, 2023. — AFP

Trump to reimpose Muslim 'travel ban'; Pence quits race

LAS VEGAS: Donald Trump used a speech to a Republican Jewish convention Saturday to promise reimposition of a controversial travel ban that targeted a slew of mostly Muslim countries if he gets re-elected. "You remember the travel ban? On day one I will restore our travel ban," Trump told the audience attending the annual summit of the Republican Jewish Coalition.

At the start of his presidency in 2017, Trump imposed sweeping restrictions on the entry of travelers

from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria, Yemen and, initially, Iraq and Sudan. The order was quickly challenged in court as discriminatory against a religious group, but the bans, along with Trump's hardline anti-immigration agenda, were popular with his base. President Joe Biden reversed the ban in his first week in office in 2021. Biden "was proud to overturn the vile, un-American Muslim ban enacted by his predecessor," a White House spokesman said.

The former US leader was among several Republican hopefuls lining up at the gathering of influential Jewish donors to pledge unwavering support for the Zionist entity in its war against Hamas. Trump told the event, held in Las Vegas, in the southwestern state of Nevada, that he would "defend our friend and ally in the (the Zionist entity) like nobody has ever".

Continued on Page 6



LAS VEGAS: Former US president and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump addresses the Republican Jewish Coalition Annual Leadership Summit on Oct 28, 2023 at the Venetian Conference Center. — AFP



Local

UN official applauds Kuwait's great humanitarian efforts

Sixth Gaza aid plane departs Kuwait • KRCS hails ICRC efforts



KUWAIT: Humanitarian aid bound for the Gaza Strip through Egypt's northern Rafah border crossing, being loaded into a military aircraft at the International Airport in Kuwait City.



Kuwait Red Crescent Society Chief Dr Hilal Al-Sayer and KRCS officials with officials from the International Committee of the Red Cross. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: UN Secretary General's representative in Kuwait Ghada Al-Tajer applauded Kuwait's humanitarian efforts and its prominent role in resolving conflicts, a policy globally appreciated. In an interview with KUNA on Sunday, Al-Tajer said that 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 are following in the footsteps of Kuwait's late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in the humanitarian field.

Kuwait had always been a pioneer in easing the suffering of people in need around the world, as well as supporting infrastructure development, especially in hospitals and schools, she noted. The establishing of Kuwait Arab Economic Development (KFAED) on Dec 31, 1961, prior to joining the UN on May 15, 1963, shows the importance of development of countries in need, she said.

Kuwait is fully committed to achieving the goals of its 2035 vision, and is an active member in the UN community, she added. Kuwait plays an important role in resolving conflicts and brokering talks to de-escalate tensions in the Middle East and around the world, said Al-Tajer. In this context, she spoke of the three donors conferences Kuwait hosted for

Syria, the Yemeni talks in 2016 and the country's efforts in ending the Gulf crisis. The UN official congratulated Kuwait on receiving the UN Human Rights Council membership for 2024-2026.

The current situation in the region poses a new challenge for the council's member-countries to resolve the issue and protect human rights, she said. As for Kuwait's humanitarian work, Al-Tajer underlined the country's historic efforts in the field, noting the Kuwaiti humanitarian aid to Gaza Strip is still continuous, while Kuwait had also previously sent aid to Libya, in the aftermath of Hurricane Danielle, she added.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Chief Dr Hilal Al-Sayer hailed on Sunday the International Committee of the Red Cross' (ICRC) efforts in delivering humanitarian aid to those who are in need. In a statement to KUNA, after meeting ICRC Head of Regional Delegation for the GCC countries, Mamadou Sow, Al-Sayer asserted KRCS' interest in areas of cooperation and coordination with international humanitarian organizations, especially the International Committee of the Red Cross, for the benefit of humanity. The statement added that the two officials discussed the close cooperation between the two sides and their future prospects, in addition

to discussing frameworks for strengthening international humanitarian work and supporting joint activities in response to humanitarian crises and disasters in the region. Al-Sayer provided a detailed explanation of Kuwait's efforts to support the people in the Gaza Strip against the Zionist aggression, which require international intervention and humanitarian organizations to stop them and open the crossings to deliver humanitarian aid.

On his part, Sow presented a review of the efforts taken by the ICRC within the framework of the planned immediate humanitarian response and the urgent needs of the people of the Gaza Strip. He praised the cooperation and response that distinguished KRCS' efforts within the framework of interaction within the humanitarian work system to improve the conditions of those affected by disasters and crises, especially at the level of Middle Eastern countries.

Meanwhile, the sixth aid plane, filled with 40 tons of necessities and supplies, departed Kuwait on Sunday, heading to Egypt to provide assistance to the people of the Gaza Strip. This initiative came in line with the Kuwaiti leadership's directives and reflected the people's solemn support to the Palestinian people. — KUNA



FM meets UN Secretary-General's Iraq representative

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah on Sunday received Jeanine Henis-Plasschaert, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for

Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, as they discussed the latest developments regarding the search for remains of Kuwaiti prisoners in Iraq and the missing Kuwaiti properties including the national archive. They also discussed completing the maritime border demarcation beyond mark 162, according to a foreign ministry statement. — KUNA

Turkey is ready for next Century of the Republic



By Tuba Nur Sonmez
Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey

October 29 of each year is a day of joy and pride for Turkish citizens as we celebrate in Turkey and around the world the anniversary of our Republic, which was proclaimed in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The declaration of the Republic of Turkey marks, among other things, a triumphant foundation of a new nation-state with ambitious goals.

This year, however, we are more enthusiastic than ever before. On October 29, 2023, Turkey enters a historic milestone: the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Turkey. This centenary is a testament to our nation's resilience, growth, and unwavering commitment to progress with an eye to the future.

I would like to thank our friends in Kuwait who did not leave us alone with their messages of celebration and shared our enthusiasm. However, it is very unfortunate that this momentous occasion coincided with a grievous one as we are heartbreakingly witnessing the immense suffering of our brothers and sisters in Gaza, where they have been subjected to destruction and persecution of all forms at the hands of the occupying Zionist army. I would like to once again reiterate Turkey's support for the Palestinian cause, including ending the brutal occupation, and the establishment of a fully independent State of Palestine.

A tough yet successful journey

Since its formation in 1923, Turkey has undergone a process of massive transformation, starting under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of our Republic. Turkey has transitioned from a newly-born Republic into a strong multi-party democratic state with competing economy, admirable military strength and well-developed infrastructure. However, Turkey's 100-year journey of progress was hard-

ly a linear one. Along the way, there were challenges to overcome, struggles we have been through and the battles that had to be fought.

First of all, Turkey has been fighting multiple terror groups, at times simultaneously, to secure its citizens and to protect its territorial integrity and democracy. We have been effectively combating terrorists of all stripes, ranging from clandestine FETO to the ethnic separatist PKK terrorism, and the leftist DHKP-C to religiously motivated terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda and DAESH. Through this epic struggle, we dealt a heavy blow to terrorist organizations and ruined their evil plans.

Not just that, our counter-terrorism efforts have proved to be vital for the security and stability of the whole region. As such, Turkey has been on the forefront of efforts to increase awareness of the international community on the threat of terrorism.

Secondly, our nascent democracy has been almost periodically the target of military coups. The most recent attempt occurred on the night of July 15, 2016, when a clandestine faction within the Turkish army under the direct order of Fetullah Gulen (terrorist mastermind), attempted to overthrow the democratically elected government of Turkey. Thanks to the steadfast leadership of our President, and unwavering determination of our nations, the coup plotters could not reach their objective.

Alhamdulillah, none of these challenges were able to stop us from pursuing the path of development, welfare, democracy and peace. However, it is the last two decades of our Republic that witnessed all-out transformation and breakthrough in almost all realms of life.

The great leap towards the century of Turkey

Over the last 20 years, Turkey went through an era of "silent revolution", whereby comprehensive democratic reforms addressed our people's long-standing grievances, dramatically changing the political landscape for the good. Ambitious plans and innovations have been introduced in the areas such as education, health, infrastructure defense industry, and economy.

Since 2002, Turkish GDP has tripled with an annual growth rate of 5.4 percent. Major public infrastructure investments bridges, ports, railways along with increased production capacity and the leap in export fueled the Turkey's decades-long surge in growth. Despite grim global financial conditions and global trade volume that dropped by 1.8 percent from the last year, our economy maintained its strong growth performance in the second quarter of

2023, as we tried to compensate for the economic effects of the twin powerful earthquakes that hit 11 provinces in southern Turkey on Feb 6, causing extensive damage and killing and injuring tens of thousands of people.

We have implemented a healthcare transformation program with a series of reforms and infrastructure investments - most notably city hospitals - that significantly improved our healthcare system and the quality of care our people receive. This transformation contributed to a drastic drop in infant and maternal mortality, along with supporting efforts to expand tertiary care and research and development efforts. In addition to that Turkey has boosted its hospital capacity significantly, making it even better than in many advanced economies as manifested during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Turkey's advancement in high-tech innovation has also been noteworthy. In 2022, Turkey rolled out the country's first domestically-produced electric car, fulfilling a 60-year-old dream. In addition to that, Turkey has built a vigor defense sector over the last 20 years. In 2022 Turkey's arms export hit a record of \$4.4 billion which was almost \$100 million in the 2000s. This revolution in defense industry enabled our country to move from being the world's third-biggest receiver of weapons to the twelfth-biggest defense product exporter.

Certainly, the star of our defense industry has been unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAV) or drones. We introduced first indigenous jet-powered unmanned combat aerial vehicle, Bayraktar Kizilelma, whose serial set to begin in 2024. This year we concluded a landmark deal with Kuwait regarding purchase of Turkish Bayraktar TB2 drones which will be greatly contributing to military capabilities of the armed forces of Kuwait. All these past advancements provide us necessary inspiration to look confidently to the future and to achieve even more.

As Turkey embarks on this ambitious journey, it extends an open invitation to the global community to join hands in building a better future. The Century of Turkey is not just a vision for Turkey, but a promise to humanity — a promise of progress, prosperity, and peace. In celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Turkey, we celebrate a century of triumphs, and look forward with hope and determination to the next 100 years: The Century of Turkey.

I take this opportunity to wish health, happiness and long life to 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, as well as the friendly people and Government of Kuwait.



A group photo of the exhibition's participants.

Burgan Bank sponsors annual fair hosted by Expo 965 Team

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank recently concluded its sponsorship of the 5th annual exhibition organized by Expo 965 Team for Heritage Crafts and Talented Kuwaitis. This sponsorship comes as part of the Bank's comprehensive social responsibility and sustainability program, in addition to its continuous support of all efforts that aim to preserve the Kuwaiti identity and national cultural heritage, whether in traditional handicrafts, performing arts, or even the local dialect. With this sponsorship, the Bank also upholds its committed adherence to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices across all efforts.

On this occasion, Hessa Hussain Al-Najadah, Senior Manager – Corporate and CSR Communications at Burgan Bank, said: "We are very proud of our partnership with the Expo 965 Team for Heritage Crafts Exhibitions and Talented Kuwaitis, which underscores our commitment to supporting all efforts that aim to preserve our Kuwaiti cultural and popular heritage by passing it on to the younger generations through education and engaging activities."

Al-Najadah added that the exhibition, which ran for five days, saw the participation of 175 Kuwaiti members of the Expo 965 Team who all joined to showcase their antiques and handmade crafts and products, all of which masterfully captured the essence of the Kuwaiti identity and heritage; in addition to a select group of private museum owners, historians, and Kuwaiti heritage researchers.

Besides the displayed artwork and handicrafts, the event offered several workshops, including "Jewelry Mold-Making", "Application of Thermal Enamel Colors on Red Copper Sheets", "The Role of the Youth Public Authority in Caring for Youth" and "Craft Industries at the Heart of Industrial Creativity", which were presented by Prof. Ali Al-Najadah, as well as "Capsules from the History of Kuwait", which was delivered by the researcher Fahad Al-Shamali. Other workshops and activities included "Tradition Kuwaiti Toy Production", "Fundamentals and Skills of Rosary Making", "Utilizing Kuwaiti Heritage and Handicrafts in Development Projects", and many more.

Furthermore, the exhibition offered its visitors various other lectures and discussions, including "The Role of Volunteer Groups in the Preservation and Diffusion of the Kuwaiti Heritage" and "The Kuwaiti Dialect: Between Authenticity and Modernity", delivered by the researcher Hussein Al-Qattan in the traditional Kuwaiti dialect. It also hosted a number of discussion forums, such as the 3rd Youth Forum on Heritage and Handicrafts titled "The Sustainability of Heritage and Handicrafts in Kuwait: Between Authenticity and Innovation", in addition to a dedicated forum for differently-abled craftspeople, another about educational districts and supervisors, and the exhibition's closing event, the 4th Gulf Forum for Heritage and Handicrafts.

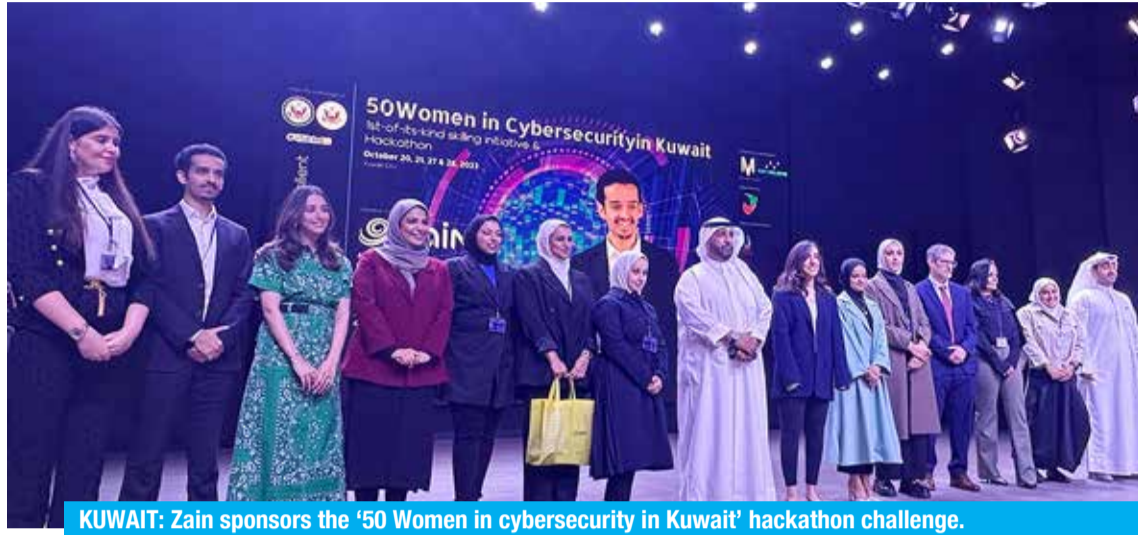
It serves to note that Burgan Bank continues to offer unwavering support to the Expo 965 Team on their yearlong efforts in organizing notable events and exhibitions, ensuring wider exposure to Kuwait's rich cultural heritage and more success in preserving it.



Kuwaiti heritage researchers

Zain supports upskilling women in cybersecurity

Company sponsored '50 Women in cybersecurity in Kuwait' hackathon



KUWAIT: Zain sponsors the '50 Women in cybersecurity in Kuwait' hackathon challenge.



'50 Women in Cybersecurity in Kuwait' hackathon, first-of-its-kind skilling initiative.

KUWAIT: Continuing its ongoing support for cybersecurity programs and contributing to empowering local female talents in this vital topic, Zain has sponsored the '50 Women in cybersecurity in Kuwait' hackathon challenge. The initiative aimed at upskilling women and girls in programming, coding, and cybersecurity, and was organized by ESK Holding under support from the National Cybersecurity Center (NCSC). The event was joined by 50 women and girls who participated in several hackathon competitions, including the Zain Hackathon chal-

lenge that covered specific cybersecurity-related skills. Zain's team was part of the judges panel that evaluated the teams and picked the winners who met the outlined standards. Present during the awarding segment was the Director of the National Cybersecurity Center Major General Mohammed Bouraki.

Zain's support to this unique initiative came under its Group-wide Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I) strategy, as well as its efforts to raise cybersecurity awareness in the community and encourage aspiring female Kuwaiti coders. Many of Zain's ini-

tiatives center around youth and education development. As digital skills are gaining accelerating importance in the future of education and the economy, the company has put the development of programming and digital competencies of young men and women at the forefront of its priorities.

Zain Group is proud to be among the first telecom providers in the region to have established a Diversity and Inclusion office, as an indicator of how seriously the company takes the subject of uplifting its entire workforce and benefiting society. The remit of this function

is to nurture a diverse and inclusive culture through a series of carefully crafted programs and initiatives.

In a previous step to support cybersecurity programs, Zain recently sponsored the Kuwait Hackathon, the nation's biggest cybersecurity competition of its kind. The successful initiative was launched by CODED Academy under support from the National Cybersecurity Center and came in response to a parliamentary initiative that was adopted by Kuwait's government and supported by the private sector.



MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare's pavilion at the first Gulf Housing Week in the Sultanate of Oman.

Kuwait participates in first Gulf housing week in Oman

MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare announced its participation on Sunday in the first Gulf Housing Week in the Sultanate of Oman, where it reviews the Kuwaiti experience in providing residential care, electronic services and digital transformation through the government application Sahel.

The authority announced that the Minister of Justice and Housing Affairs Faleh Al-Raqqa issued a decision to form a Kuwaiti delegation headed by Acting Director General of the Foundation Rashid Al-Enezi to participate in the activities of the 21st meeting of the Committee of Ministers concerned with housing affairs in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and the accompanying events in the Sultanate of Oman between 29 and 31 October.

"The Kuwaiti delegation will review the role of the Foundation in introducing a culture of sustainable urban planning and benefiting from modern design and alternative energy in public buildings belonging to city housing projects, as well as investment projects that are being offered and implemented, in addition to reviewing recent research and studies on residential care," they added.

The authority explained that the Director General of the Public Authority for Welfare will participate in the dialogue session of the ministers of housing in the Gulf countries, reviewing Kuwait's experience in full-service housing cities, as well as learning about the experiences of other Gulf countries.

A close-up on cybercrimes in Kuwait

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: In the current landscape, the incessant proliferation of cybercrimes presents a challenge in their identification and detection. Acknowledging this pressing concern, Kuwait Times interviewed Sultan Al-Shimali and Jabr Al-Fadhlah, two legal professionals, to shed light on targeted categories, underlying motivations propelling cybercrimes, most common cybercrimes and safeguards within Kuwait's law to protect victims and ensure the just punishment of offenders.

Targeted categories

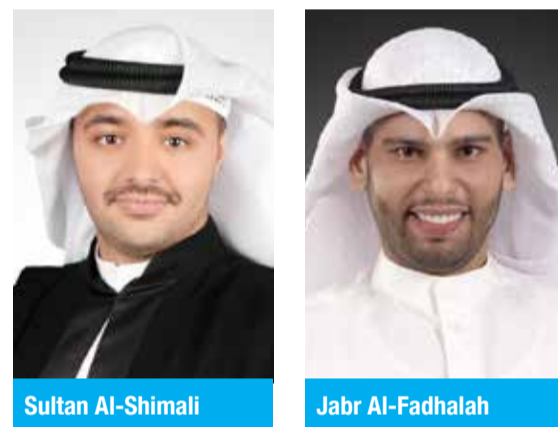
Shimali suggests that individuals who are nearing or have reached retirement age are particularly vulnerable to cybercrimes, because they often possess retirement funds, pensions and indemnities that make them attractive targets. Fadhlah supported this viewpoint, as he pointed out elderly individuals are primary targets for traditional financial crimes. On the other hand, cybercrimes such as slander, defamation and blackmail primarily target younger individuals. As for financial crimes like theft, fraud, and embezzlement, they can affect anyone regardless of age.

Fourth phase of new Farwaniya Hospital plan inaugurated

KUWAIT: Within the framework of a commitment to implement the operation plan of the new Farwaniya Hospital, the Director of the Hospital, Dr Ali Al-Mutairi, announced the launch of the fourth and penultimate phase of the new hospital plan.

Dr Al-Mutairi explained that the fourth phase of the operating plan is the penultimate stage. "It includes the transfer of the hospital administration headquarters on Sunday and the transfer and operation of the emergency department on Monday, starting at 8 in the morning."

"Within the framework regarding the readiness of the transition plan and the operation of the emergency department in the new hos-



Sultan Al-Shimali

Jabr Al-Fadhlah

Kuwait's law

According to Fadhlah, committing a cybercrime involves the use of electronic means and can have harmful consequences for individuals. Most cybercrimes are intentional and cause damage. However, Kuwait has enacted laws to protect against various types of cybercrimes, specifically law no. 37 of 2014 regarding the establishment of the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority and law no. 63 of 2015 on combating information technology crimes. These laws criminalize all types of cybercrime, whether directed at individuals or property, and protect public and private interests.

Penalties for cybercrimes include imprisonment and monetary fines. The legislator has also extended punishment to economic crimes that directly impact business entities. Consequently, various sectors of the business field have seen the criminalization of certain behaviors. On his part, Shimali advises anyone who has been scammed to report the incident to the cy-

bercrime unit within the ministry of interior. However, it is crucial to double-check the legitimacy of the platform or person involved before taking any action.

The motive

According to Fadhlah, cybercrimes are primarily driven by greed, defamation and exploitation of individuals. Unlike traditional crimes, cybercrimes have no boundaries in terms of place or time.

Most common types

Fadhlah explained that fraud and deception are prevalent forms of cybercrime, encompassing various techniques such as phishing and pretexting. Individuals are often tricked through fabricated projects, electronic stock trading schemes or fake requests for banking information, with criminals even impersonate reputable entities for their own gain. These types of fraud and deception rank among the most prominent scams. Additionally, cybercrimes involving public slander, defamation and harmful statements made in the presence or hearing of others are also prevalent.

pital, a trial was run last Monday under the supervision of the Director of Farwaniya Health District, Dr Muhammad Al-Rashidi, and the Chairman of the Medical Authority, Dr Ahmed Al-Dosari," he said.

Dr Al-Mutairi said: "the stages of operation of the hospital are proceeding according to the specified plan, praising in this regard the support of the Minister of Health, Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi, and the Undersecretary of the Ministry, Dr Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi."

Dr Ali Al-Mutairi praised the efforts of all employees in the hospital, including doctors, pharmacists, nursing staff, technicians and administrators. He commended the spirit of cooperation and coordination between the various departments.



Dr Ali Al-Mutairi



The fourth phase of the Farwaniya Hospital plan becomes operational.

Large spotted eagles return to Kuwait

KUWAIT: The head of the Kuwaiti Environmental Lens Team Rashid Al-Hajji announced on Sunday that the large spotted eagle has returned to the country for the fifth time from Russia. Hajji stated in an interview with KUNA that the spotted eagle usually arrives in Kuwait in October and departs for Russia in March. They spend five months in Kuwait and another five months in Russia, with two months allocated for each leg of the journey.

He explained that this marks the fifth time the spotted eagle has arrived in Kuwait since 2019, and it's the fourth time returning from the same location, according to data from tracking devices. These reports are shared with international organizations interested in environmental studies and providing protection for the remaining spotted eagles.

Hajji pointed out that the project of tracking these eagles began in 2019, initiated by the Ku-



KUWAIT: With the onset of winter, spotted eagles have come back to Kuwait. — KUNA photos

waiti Environmental Lens Team, with financial support from the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences and in collaboration with the Environment Public Authority. The project aims to uncover the secrets of the eagles seen in Kuwait from the beginning of winter until spring each year. He noted that tracking the large spotted eagle is particularly important because it falls within the category of endangered birds. It is the most prominently visible bird during the winter, especially around Jahra Reserve.

Hajji mentioned that 11 tracking devices have been placed to monitor eagles, with 10 devices positioned on hawks. In addition, six new devices have been deployed to study the long-legged buzzard, which spends the winter in Kuwait. Kuwait is considered one of the leading countries in this field, achieved through voluntary Kuwaiti expertise, support from KFAS and the expertise of EPA. This has led to the protection of the habitats of these eagles and the enactment of laws that prevent disturbance. He explained that every year, various types of eagles and other bird species are selected for tracking, including hatchlings on Kubbar Island, which arrive from Pakistan to Kuwait every year. — KUNA



Fixing a tracking device on a bird.

Jahra health region serves one million people: Official

KUWAIT: Director of the Jahra Health District, Dr Jamal Al-Duaij, said that the region serves about a million people, stressing that it will soon witness a qualitative shift in the services it provides. Al-Duaij added during a celebration held by the region on Sunday on the occasion of World Psoriasis Day that work is underway to develop internal medicine departments, specifically those related to diabetic foot, pointing out that 30 percent of Kuwaitis and residents suffer from diabetes. He pointed out the developments that the region will witness in the coming period will be the first of its kind at the level.

He explained that work is underway to develop the nuclear medicine center and radiology department, as well as the plans to provide more advanced services in the internal medicine and ophthalmology departments. He said that the hospital's administrators and technicians are quite promising and they will provide better service with great support from the Minister of Health and the Undersecretary of the Ministry. He stated that the region was keen to celebrate this day with the aim of spreading awareness about this chronic disease that causes psychological and social crises worldwide.

It is considered a painful, acute and chronic disease that affects millions of people globally and is often associated with other diseases. Head of the dermatology department Dr Muhammad Al-Otaibi said that psoriasis is a common but chronic disease that affects humans in the form of red bugs of different sizes covered by silvery scales affecting any part of the body.

Dr Al-Otaibi stressed that psoriasis is not contagious and this does not prevent a person from enjoying daily life. He pointed out that the global prevalence rate ranges from 2 to 4 percent, and there are studies that show that it reaches 5 percent in the Arab world. In Kuwait, there are about 100,000 cases of psoriasis.

Photo of the day



KUWAIT: The full "Hunter's moon" is pictured during a partial lunar eclipse above Kuwait City on October 28, 2023. A special prayer was held in Kuwait during the eclipse. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwait committed to integrate disabled into local job market

Sheikh Feras Al-Sabah calls for state-wide cooperation

KUWAIT: Kuwait's social affairs minister on Sunday said that his ministry is committed to plans that cater to the needs of the country's disabled people, which includes integrating them into the local job market.

Such plans require state-wide cooperation as part of efforts to provide better services to this cohort, Sheikh Feras Al-Sabah told KUNA to open a state-organized program aiming to provide job opportunities to Kuwait's disabled people. People of disabilities have inalienable rights to proper training and qualifications which would subsequently propel them into the job market, Kuwait's Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA) acting chief Humaidi

Al-Mutairi said. The continued support for them was the by-product of "fruitful" cooperation among state bodies, he added. UN's resident coordinator in Kuwait Ghada Al-Taher was also present on the occasion.

On national support for the disabled, the UN's resident coordinator said that local banks have recently opened their doors to provide them with jobs, an initiative she hailed as a testament to their capabilities and qualifications in spite of their disabilities. The aforementioned program is a collaborative effort that brings together a number of state bodies, including Kuwait University and PADA, in addition to the country's oil and banking sectors. — KUNA



Sheikh Feras Al-Sabah



Humaidi Al-Mutairi

Kuwait delegates attend opening of Arab Women Doctors' Association

AMMAN: Jordan's Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr Azmi Mahfaza, inaugurated the Association of Arab Women Doctors on Thursday in Amman. The inauguration was held under the patronage of Prince Al-Hassan bin Talal and coincided with the third Jordan Women Physicians Conference, which took place on Oct 26-27 in Amman and featured the participation of several Arab delegations, including Kuwait.

The event was attended by representatives from the British Royal College of Physicians and the Mediterranean Taskforce for Cancer Control. It was organized in collaboration with the Jordan Medical Council, Jordan Royal Medical Services, and the Colleges of Medicine at Jordan's universities. During the event, it was announced that Kuwait would host the second Arab Women Doctors Conference in Nov 2024.

Dr Asmaa Al-Rashed, Consultant in General Surgery, Bariatric Surgery and Endoscopy at Amiri Hospital, said Kuwait's hosting of the upcoming conference is an honor and an initiative aimed at increasing opportunities for cooperation and the exchange of expertise among Arab doctors. Host-

ing the conference will also provide scientific and professional development opportunities and empower women doctors in the Arab world.

Dr Rashed praised the idea of organizing the conference and the establishment of the Association of Arab Women Doctors, led by Dr Maisam Akroush and a group of distinguished Jordanian, Gulf and Arab doctors. The association's board includes members from four Arab countries, including Kuwait.

She emphasized that the association's goal is to empower women doctors and enhance their professional, academic and social roles. This initiative aligns with the United Nations recommendations of its Vision 2030 to empower women, which Kuwait, along with several Gulf and Arab countries, has ratified. The Kuwaiti delegation included specialists in medical and surgical fields, such as Dr Masouma Al-Ali, Consultant in Internal Medicine and Gastroenterology at Amiri Hospital, Dr Huda Al-Duwaisan, Family Medicine Consultant and Head of Yarmouk Medical Center, Dr Saja Surour, Head of Organ Surgery at Hamid Al-Essa Center, and Dr Jailan Mustafa, Organ Transplant Specialist. They all contributed to the conference with lectures and scientific sessions covering topics such as obesity, organ donation, primary care and psychological health.

Dr Rashed mentioned some Palestinian women doctors from Gaza participated through pre-recorded videos that were shown during the opening ceremony.



Kuwaiti delegation during the inauguration of the Arab Women Doctors' Association in Amman.



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Explosion at Kerala
Jehova's Witnesses
prayer kills two

'I consider myself Pakistani': Settled Afghans forced to flee



TAYBEH: Abu Bashar, the representative of the Wadi al-Seeq community, leans against an olive tree in the city where his community has found refuge. — AFP photos



A solar panel is damaged after Zionist settlers attacked the occupied West Bank village of Wadi al-Seeq.

Zionists expel Palestinians from West Bank homes

Settlers, forces 'cleaning' majority of West Bank from non-Jewish people: Activist

TAYBEH: Within an hour, the Bedouin village of Wadi al-Seeq in the occupied West Bank had been completely emptied, its 200 residents fleeing on foot with their sheep and goats. On October 12, five days after Benjamin Netanyahu declared war on Gaza, residents say dozens of Zionists turned up at the village and gave them an hour to leave their land, among them settlers, soldiers and police.

Residents said some were local settlers dressed in army uniforms who have regularly harassed the village, while others wore civilian clothing, with army and police vehicles also at the scene. The Zionist army had no immediate comment on the incident, despite several AFP requests.

The Zionist entity has escalated its attacks on besieged Gaza and the West Bank since Oct 7, when scores of Hamas fighters infiltrated occupied areas near the heavily fortified Zionist-Gaza border. The unprecedented assault killed 1,400 people, according to Zionist officials. The Zionist occupation has since ramped up its attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank, killing more than 110 people and capturing thousands. The occupation has also been relent-

lessly bombing Gaza, where Zionist airstrikes have killed 8,000 people, half of which are children.

"We are paying for what happened," said Abu Bashar, a leader from Wadi al-Seeq, a village of Palestinian herders that lies some 10 kilometers east of the city of Ramallah, who has taken refuge with a dozen other families on private land in Taybeh slightly further north. About three million Palestinians live across the West Bank, which is dotted with Zionist settlements that are considered illegal under international law but are home to 490,000 Zionists. Since the Zionist bombardment of Gaza, settler attacks against Palestinians have more than doubled, from an average of three to eight incidents a day, according to the UN humanitarian agency OCHA, citing incidents of intimidation, theft and assault.

"We don't sleep anymore, it's a nightmare", said Alia Mlihat, who lives in Muarrajat, another Bedouin village between Ramallah and Jericho. She's afraid her village will be next in line. "With the war, we're seeing the settlers have more weapons, it's very difficult," she told AFP.

"We're living through a new Nakba because of

settlers and the army," she said, using the Arabic word for "catastrophe" when some 760,000 Palestinians were expelled or forced to flee from their homes in 1948, which led to the creation of the Zionist Entity. That year, the Mlihat family, like most Palestinian Bedouins, left the Negev Desert for the West Bank. Since Oct 7, OCHA says some 607 people, more than half of them children, have been displaced within the West Bank. In the previous 18 months, 1,100 people were forced off their land.

'Everything was destroyed'

"I have nowhere else to go", said Abu Bashar who only wants to go back home. "All of our things are there, the goods we buy in bulk, our tractors, our solar panels." A week after the expulsion, the army allowed the villagers back to collect their things but when they got back, everything was ruined. "Everything was destroyed. The bags of food for the animals were dumped out on the ground," he said.

At the site, AFP observed ransacked homes with wardrobes emptied, children's beds broken, curtains torn and papers, sandals and toys scattered across

the floor. In and around the village, civilian vehicles circulated, some displaying Zionist flags, AFP journalists said. All he wants is to be left alone to live in peace but he can't see that happening. "There is a long-term plan to drive us out and take our land, and they took this opportunity to do it while everyone is watching Gaza."

Violence with impunity

Human rights activist Guy Hirschfeld told AFP the settlers had been stepping up efforts to throw Palestinians off their land since the start of the conflict. "The settlers taking advantage of the war to finish cleaning area C from non-Jewish people," he told AFP, referring to an administrative area covering 60 percent of the West Bank that is controlled by the Zionist army.

Despite the widespread presence of Zionist troops in the West Bank, the army "does not interfere with the settler violence," says Allegra Pacheco, head of the West Bank Protection Consortium, a group of NGOs coordinating humanitarian aid. "Their presence generally ends up in more violence." — AFP

Medics discover with horror relatives among Gaza dead

KHAN YUNIS: Mahmud al-Astal is one of many medics providing lifesaving care as casualties flood hospitals in Gaza, only to one day discover his sister and her entire family among the dead. "I went to the morgue and found her charred and in pieces," the 34-year-old doctor told AFP from the main hospital in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip.

"On the third day of the war, while I was working at the emergency unit in Nasser Hospital, I discovered my sister had been killed with her husband and children," he said. Those strikes razed entire buildings, including one where Astal's 40-year-old sister Sadafah died alongside her husband Hussein, also 40, and their children Fadwa, Azar, Ahmad and Su-leiman, aged between six and 13.

The Zionist entity began striking the Gaza Strip following the Oct 7 Hamas attack that saw gunmen storm across the Gaza-Zionist border, killing 1,400 people, mostly civilians and taking 229 hostages, according to Zionist authorities. The fierce aerial campaign has so far claimed the lives of more than 8,000 people, including about 4,000 children, in the impoverished enclave, according to the Gaza health ministry.

"Ever since my sister was killed ... the nightmares don't leave me. I imagine that my children will arrive at the hospital in pieces," Astal said. "My children

dream of travelling one day. Now I don't know if they will come out of this war alive." Despite the tragedy, he is determined to continue his vital work. "We have no other choice but to work and serve the injured to save them."

'Stench of death'

Wearing a red medics vest, he examines a young girl bleeding from a head injury who is crying in the emergency room. "Don't be scared," he consoles her.

Wala Abu Mustafa, 33, also works as a doctor in the hospital's emergency unit. She too was stunned to find her aunt Samira and her husband Tawfik and their 15-year-old son Sharif among "dozens" of victims of a Zionist strike who arrived at the hospital Friday. Samira and Sharif were already dead on arrival while Tawfik succumbed to his wounds shortly afterwards, she said.

"The torn body of my cousin arrived wrapped up in a sheet," she said. "My aunt was like a mother to me," she continued, struggling to catch her breath. "I can't speak, I'm in shock over what happened." But she too has vowed to "continue my work, because it's my duty and there aren't enough doctors."

Her coworker, respiratory physician Raed al-Astal, was at the hospital on Monday when he received a panicked call from his wife saying a strike had hit the building opposite theirs. He hurried to the emergency unit where the victims had been taken, and found his relatives were among the dead. "My aunt, her husband and their children as well as my cousin's wife were killed," he said. "The stench of death is everywhere, in every neighborhood, every street and every house." — AFP



KHAN YUNIS: Palestinian nurse Mahmud al-Astal attends to a little girl with a head wound at the Nasser hospital following Zionist bombardment. — AFP

Turkey-Zionist ties in tatters over Erdogan address

ISTANBUL: The Zionist entity said Saturday it was recalling its diplomatic staff from Turkey after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan delivered a fierce attack on its military attack on Gaza. The announcement dealt a body blow to the sides' nascent efforts to restore political and economic relations after a decade of all but frozen ties.

The occupation and Turkey — an overwhelmingly Muslim nation that forms the bulwark of NATO defenses on the edge of the Middle East — had only just agreed to reappoint ambassadors last year. They

were also resuming discussions on a US-backed natural gas pipeline project that could have formed the basis for much closer and more lasting cooperation in the coming years.

But their relations unraveled as Erdogan began to pick up the pace and venom of his condemnation of the escalated Zionist attack on Gaza. Erdogan's Islamic-rooted party staged a massive rally in Istanbul on Saturday that the president said drew a crowd of 1.5 million people.

"You are an occupier," he told the Turkish and Palestinian-flag waving sea of supporters, in reference to the Zionist entity. He called out the Zionist government for behaving like a "war criminal" and trying to "eradicate" Palestinians. "Of course, every country has the right to defend itself. But where is the justice in this case? There is no justice — just a vicious massacre happening in Gaza."

Zionist Foreign Minister Eli Cohen recalled all

diplomatic staff from Turkey moments after Erdogan finished his remarks. "Given the grave statements coming from Turkey, I have ordered the return of diplomatic representatives there in order to conduct a reevaluation of the relations between (the Zionist entity) and Turkey," he said in a statement.

The Zionist occupation had already ordered diplomatic staff out of Turkey and several other regional countries as a security precaution earlier this month. A Turkish diplomatic source said all Zionist diplomats had left the country by October 19. "It is difficult to understand whom Cohen had instructed to return," the Turkish diplomatic source said.

But Cohen's statement adds a new diplomatic dimension to the withdrawal. It follows Erdogan's own announcement earlier this week that he was cancelling plans to visit the Zionist entity because of its "inhuman" war. The sides' diplomatic relations are now in danger of falling to the lows they experienced

when a Zionist raid on a Turkish ship carrying aid into Gaza killed 10 civilians in 2010. Erdogan has been a leading international supporter of Palestinian rights during his two-decade rule. He told Saturday's rally that the Zionist entity was "a pawn in the region" that was being used by Western powers to stamp their authority on the Middle East. "The main culprit behind the massacre unfolding in Gaza is the West," Erdogan declared.

He accused the entity's allies of creating a "crusade war atmosphere" pitting Christians against Muslims. "Listen to our call for dialogue," Erdogan said. "No one loses from a just peace." Erdogan's address came in response to days of pro-Palestinian protests in Istanbul and other major cities.

A poll released this week showed the majority of respondents preferring to see Turkey remain either neutral or try to play a mediating role in the war. Just 3 percent said they "support (the Zionist entity)". — AFP

International

'I consider myself Pakistani': Settled Afghans forced to flee

Afghans can only take \$178, leaving hard-earned savings and businesses behind



KARACHI: An Afghan refugee sits beside his belongings before loading them onto a bus for his departure to Afghanistan on Oct 27, 2023. — AFP photos



People protest against the deportation of Afghans from Pakistan, at a rally organized by women's movement Aurat March on Oct 29, 2023.

TORKHAM: Maroza Bibi and her children are among hundreds of Afghans waiting at the Pakistani border, hurriedly leaving a country she has called home for decades in fear of arrest. Islamabad has issued an order to 1.7 million Afghans it says are living in the country illegally to leave by Nov 1, or be deported. A series of holding centers are being established across the country in preparation for the Wednesday deadline in what rights groups and lawyers say is an unprecedented crackdown. "I am taking a lot of good memories. I was expecting Pakistan to give us nationality, but that did not happen, compelling us to go back almost empty-handed," Bibi, 52, told AFP at the Torkham crossing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Friday.

She was around 10 years old when her family fled the Soviet war in Afghanistan, settling in Kashmir where she raised a family and where her husband is buried. Millions of Afghans have crossed the border during decades of conflict, making Pakistan the host of one of the world's largest refugee populations. But relations have steadily soured between the two coun-

tries since the Taliban government seized power in August 2021 and imposed their austere version of Islamic law. Hundreds of thousands of Afghans are estimated to have crossed the border since then. Pakistan has said the deportations are to protect the "welfare and security" of the country, where anti-Afghan sentiment has been growing amid prolonged economic hardship and a rise in cross-border militancy.

'Avoid humiliation'

Although the deadline to leave is still days away, police have already begun raiding communities and detaining Afghans, with lawyers reporting indiscriminate arrests and extortion. Zulfiqar Khan was born to refugee parents in a sprawling Peshawar aid camp, where generations of Afghans have settled in semi-permanent homes.

Like many others AFP spoke with, he knew little about the documentation process and believed he would eventually be granted Pakistani nationality. "To avoid any humiliation by the Pakistani authorities I have decided to leave," he told AFP at the bor-

der. "I am leaving Pakistan with a heavy heart and a state of acute mental stress. I have no idea about life in Afghanistan. I know nothing about any possibility of re-starting my business there."

On Friday, hundreds of families carrying bundles of belongings crowded the border post waiting to cross, some hoping to convince officials to let them take live chickens with them. "Women at the border are facing a lot of problems, especially the pregnant women and people with disabilities, you can see they are waiting for their turn for hours," Hakeem Ullah, a border official, told AFP.

More than 2,000 people are being processed each day, authorities have said, although most are laborers and traders who cross frequently back and forth. About 60,000 Afghans have "voluntarily" left the country through the border in recent weeks, Feroz Jamal, a spokesman for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial government, told AFP.

Counting down the days

Around 1.3 million Afghans are registered ref-

ugees and 880,000 more have legal status to remain in Pakistan, according to the United Nations. Islamabad says a further 1.7 million Afghans are in Pakistan illegally. "Everyone is frightened of arrest and deportation," Fazal Ahmed, a 40-year-old fruit vendor who came to Pakistan when he was four years old, told AFP at a Karachi aid camp on Thursday. "I consider myself Pakistani as I have never been back to Afghanistan, but now we are counting down the days in fear."

Afghans will only be allowed to cross the border with limited belongings and 50,000 Pakistani rupees (\$178), and they must leave their livestock behind. "Our money is stuck here. All our lifetime earnings and savings are stranded here. We have established businesses here, but they don't care," said Karachi camp resident Khan Mohammad, pleading for authorities to give Afghans more time to leave. Afghanistan is struggling through its own economic hardship, cut off from the international banking system and heavily reliant on humanitarian aid, particularly as the bitter cold winter months set in. — AFP

Vast destruction, 39 dead in Mexico after hurricane

ACAPULCO: Acapulco was struggling Saturday to recover from the extraordinarily powerful Hurricane Otis, which claimed 39 lives and provoked widespread power, water and telephone outages. The picturesque Mexican tourist haunt, which once lured Hollywood stars like Elizabeth Taylor and Elvis Presley, had never experienced a Category 5 hurricane like Otis, which roared ashore Wednesday and made local landmarks built over decades look like they had been bombed.

A lack of phone signal has left survivors desperate to communicate with loved ones. Some 200,000 homes were damaged, with a number of restaurants and businesses in ruins. "We must restart the reconstruction of Acapulco as soon as possible," President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said. As aid finally began to arrive after the storm's devastating landfall—initial estimates report \$15 billion in damage—the government on Saturday upped the death toll from the previous report of 27. Secretary of Security Rosa Icela Rodriguez said in a video on social media that at least 10 people remain missing, up from four previously reported. A security force of some 17,000 has been deployed

across the area after reports that supermarkets had been looted, authorities said. Additionally, the Mexican army and navy have established an air bridge "to accelerate the distribution of humanitarian aid," a government statement said. Thousands of liters of water and food supplies have been distributed in the resort city, home to 790,000 people. The government said victims in need of specialized care were being flown to hospitals elsewhere in Mexico.

Despite the government efforts, many survivors around the area were still struggling to contact family and friends elsewhere in Mexico. Andrea Fernandez, who is eight months pregnant, said she was distraught—unable to let her husband in another state know that she is fine. "There is no (cellular) service. I haven't been able to communicate for three days," she said, jostling on a bridge with about 20 others keen to reach loved ones. "I'm desperate," she said through tears.

Cell phones intermittently pick up signals in some parts of the port, but the situation is hit or miss. One local woman could be overheard saying: "There is no way to get out of here! I'll talk to you again when I can. Everything here is gone. It's horrible." Some survivors have told local media they were angry to hear tourists were taken to safe places to ride out the storm—in sharp contrast to the local population. Francisco Perez, 50, was desperate to get word to his mother. He accused the authorities of a grossly inadequate response. "(They put) some portable (phone) antennas at a couple of places, but ... what are we supposed to do?" he asked angrily, as people's



ACAPULCO: An aerial view of damages caused by the passage of Hurricane Otis in Acapulco, Mexico, on Oct 28, 2023. — AFP

focus has begun turning to the lack of reliable water and food. Some tourists approached journalists on the port's main avenue, Costera Miguel Aleman, asking them to pass on details of a sick person who needed to be evacuated from a damaged building.

Otis strengthened with dramatic speed, growing in just hours from a tropical storm to the most powerful category of the five-step Saffir-Simpson scale before hitting land early Wednesday. The World Meteorolog-

ical Organization described the hurricane as "one of the most rapidly intensifying tropical cyclones on record," exceeded in modern times only by another Pacific hurricane, Patricia, in 2015. The speed with which Otis intensified took the government and weather forecasters by surprise, leaving little time to issue warnings and prepare residents for its arrival. In 1997, Hurricane Paulina hit the Acapulco region as a Category 4 storm, killing more than 200 people. — AFP

FM: Palestine is Kuwait's cause...

Continued from Page 1

people aged 29 to 35 were shot dead by Zionist forces at dawn, two of them in Nablus's Askar refugee camp.

The other incidents took place in Beit Rima, northwest of Ramallah, Bethlehem's Dheishheh refugee camp and in Tamun north of Nablus.

Sheikh Salem criticized the double standards of some countries in dealing with the situation in Gaza and expressed his regret that the United Nations Security Council, responsible for global security, is unable to halt the war in Gaza. Sheikh Salem stated that Kuwait has three demands: An immediate cessation of the war, the facilitation of humanitarian aid to Gaza, and the resolution of the Palestinian issue. He stressed that the only way to end the violence is to address the root cause.

He highlighted Kuwait's proactive and persistent approach to addressing the situation in Gaza and its commitment to maintaining communication with international organizations and countries, underlining its dedication to diplomacy as a means to resolve the crisis. Sheikh Salem praised Egypt for responding to Kuwait's request for aid to be delivered to Gaza. He noted that the aid is stored in the Egyptian city of Al-Arish and that a sixth relief aid plane has departed for Al-Arish for delivery to Gaza, with more to follow.

Regarding demands not to receive the new American envoy, the minister said Kuwait has accepted the appointment of the new American ambassador, and her accreditation has been approved by HHH the Amir. He said the delay in the US diplomat's presence in

Kuwait is attributed to matters in Washington. "Once the ambassador arrives in Kuwait, her credentials as ambassador will be approved," he affirmed. In response to criticism from the ministers of nine Arab countries in their joint statement, he explained that joint statements are consensus-based and represent a common formula agreed upon by all. Kuwait is committed to unanimous Gulf and Arab consensus and will not join any statement without collective agreement. "The statement is important and reflects the demands Kuwait agrees on," he said.

When asked if Kuwait is facing pressure due to its position on Gaza, Sheikh Salem affirmed that Kuwait's position is unwavering and does not yield to external pressures. Kuwait categorically rejects the displacement that has occurred in Gaza. In response to a question about economic pressure on the US if the Gaza conflict continues, he suggested that such matters should be discussed with the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab League. Economic pressures should be jointly considered, especially if the conflict in Gaza persists.

Furthermore, Sheikh Salem mentioned that soon Palestinian teachers will be allowed to bring their close family members to the country.

Trump to reimpose Muslim 'travel...

Continued from Page 1

The conflict between the Zionist entity and Hamas is "a fight between civilization and savagery, between decency and depravity, and between good and evil", said Trump, who received the warmest response from attendees, as he took aim at the Biden administration

Turkey marks centenary as...

Continued from Page 1

the leftist Republican People's Party (CHP) formed by Ataturk. He has spent much of the past decade testing the limits of Turkey's secular traditions as well as its ties with the West. These competing forces were on full display as Erdogan moved from honoring Turkey's past to celebrating his own government's achievement while he was prime minister and president.

Sunday's celebrations have been partially eclipsed by Erdogan's increasingly fierce attacks against the Zionist entity over its response to the Oct 7 Hamas attacks. Turkish state television has also scrapped the broadcast of concerts and other festivities because of the "alarming human tragedy in Gaza". Erdogan's lifelong defense of Palestinian rights has turned him into a hero across swathes of the Muslim world.

He announced that 1.5 million people had come out for a pro-Palestinian rally in Istanbul on Saturday that

and avoided criticizing his rivals. The former reality show host, the overwhelming favorite to win the party nomination to run against Biden next year despite facing multiple criminal prosecutions, spoke after sparking fury in recent weeks by describing Lebanon-based Islamist group Hezbollah as "very smart" and criticizing Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Former vice president Mike Pence surprised the gathering Saturday when he announced he was dropping out of the 2024 presidential race, becoming the first major candidate to suspend his campaign. "It's be-

ended up drowning out national television coverage of the centenary. Erdogan accused the Zionist government of behaving like a "war criminal" and trying to "eradicate" Palestinians. "(The Zionist entity), you are an occupier," Erdogan declared. His remarks prompted the Zionist entity to announce the withdrawal of all diplomatic staff for a "re-evaluation" of relations.

The emerging diplomatic crisis further pulled attention away from Turkey's birthday party and onto Erdogan's handling of global affairs. Turkey has suffered a turbulent spell of relations with Western allies since Erdogan survived a failed coup attempt in 2016 that he blamed on a US-based Muslim preacher.

Istanbul's Kadir Has University lecturer Soli Ozel saw Saturday's pro-Palestinian rally as part of Erdogan's tacit effort to undermine Ataturk's secular vision. "Couldn't (this rally) have waited until next week? The centenary only comes around once in a century," Ozel said in an interview. But one survey suggested that Erdogan's comments play to his Islamic conservative core of supporters and not the public at large. The Metropoll survey showed just 11.3 percent of the respondents saying they "back Hamas". — AFP

come clear to me: This is not my time," he said. "After much prayer and consideration, I have decided to suspend my campaign for president."

Also on hand in Las Vegas was Trump's nearest rival, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, who called the Oct 7 Hamas surprise attack on the Zionist entity "the most deadly attack against Jews since the Holocaust itself". Hamas militants killed at least 1,400 people. More than 8,000 Palestinians have been killed by the Zionist entity's relentless retaliatory bombardments, mainly civilians and many of them children. — AFP

International

Explosion at Kerala Jehova's Witnesses prayer kills two

Indian police warns against spreading misinformation, hate-mongering

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: A suspected bomb blast during a Christian prayer meeting in India's southern state of Kerala killed two people and wounded more than 35 others, police said Sunday. More than 2,000 people were attending a three-day Jehovah's Witnesses prayer meeting at a convention center in Kalamassery near the port city of Kochi when the blast ripped through the crowd.

"At about 9:40 am (0410 GMT) approximately there was an explosion in Zamra International Convention Centre in which one person died and 36 are undergoing treatment," Director General of Police of Kerala Darvesh Saheb told reporters. "We will find out who is behind this and take stringent action ... preliminary investigation shows it was an IED (improvised explosive device) blast." Local assistant police commissioner PV Baby, speaking to AFP, said one woman died in the initial explosion, and a second woman later died of her wounds.

The Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency reported at least three "blasts" had occurred inside the convention center. Videos filmed shortly after the explosion and posted online showed flames inside the building and rescuers helping people clear out. "We are examining all angles and will find out who is behind this," Saheb added.

Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) law and order, MR Ajith Kumar, said during a news conference that a person named Dominic Martin, who claimed responsibility for the explosion, had surren-

dered at a police station in Thrissur district about 65km north from the site of the incident. The suspect is "claiming that he has done it," saying that "he belonged to the same group of sabha", Kumar told reporters, adding that police is "verifying" the claims. The man had released a video message on social media and aired on television channels, in which he claimed to be a former member of the church who now disagreed with its beliefs.

Around two percent of India's 1.4 billion people are Christian, according to the last census. There are nearly 60,000 Jehovah's Witnesses in India, according to the church's website. Jehovah's Witnesses are members of a US-based Christian evangelical movement, who are best known for knocking on doors around the world, bible in hand, trying to convert people to their beliefs. It is a millennial faith, meaning its members believe that the end of the world is near and that God's kingdom will soon rule over the Earth. The movement, which preaches non-violence and is politically neutral, has a long history of persecution.

The blast comes against a backdrop of tensions within the prosperous southern state of more than 31 million people, 26 percent of whom are Muslims, according to the last census in 2011. "I would request everyone to maintain peace, remain calm, and I also request that no provocative posts are made on social media," Saheb added.

Several journalists based in India have pointed to a number of social media accounts on plat-



KALAMASSERY: Victims receive medical treatment at the Government Medical College hospital after an explosion hit a Christian prayers meeting on Oct 29, 2023. — AFP

form X spreading misinformation about the attack. Mohammed Zubair, fact-checking expert and co-founder of altnews, said in a post on X that the accounts suggested the bombing was carried out by Muslims with the aim of targeting a few Jews

who were allegedly present at the event. "Strict action will be taken against those who spread fake news, promote religious rivalry and communal hatred through social media," said Kerala police in a statement. — Agencies

Divisive legacy of a British army base in Kenya

NANYUKI: When he was barely a teenager, Kenyan goatherder Lisoka Lesasuyan lost both arms to an unexploded bomb while crossing a field used in joint military exercises with the British army. For decades Britain has sent its forces to train in central Kenya but their presence has long attracted controversy, with soldiers accused of rape and murder, and civilians maimed by munitions.

King Charles III is steering clear of the British base at Nanyuki during a royal visit to Kenya this week that has stirred mixed emotions in the former Crown colony. The British Army Training Unit in Kenya (BATUK), a permanent base around 200 kilometers (125 miles) north of Nairobi, is an economic lifeline for many in Nanyuki, but has proved a lightning rod for criticism. Victims of alleged BATUK misconduct, including those afflicted by unexploded ordnance, had planned to march in the capital ahead of the king's visit, but police denied them permission to hold the rally.

Bearing the scars

Lesasuyan was 13 in 2015 when an unexploded bomb detonated on a field used for mortar practice by British and Kenyan soldiers at Archer's Post, a three-hour drive north of Nanyuki. "I was grazing goats when I picked up the explosive, not knowing what it was. And I started playing with it, before it went off," he told AFP, covering his amputated limbs with a checkered blanket. Taken to hospital by British soldiers, Lesasuyan lost both arms below the elbow, part of his right eye, and suffered burns and hearing loss in the blast.

In 2018, the British Ministry of Defence paid him 10 million shillings (roughly \$100,000 at the time) but did not admit responsibility, saying an inquiry failed to determine if the ammunition was British or Kenyan. "But this is far from enough. He will need life-long medical care, as well as prostheses," said Kelvin Kubai, a lawyer and activist who campaigned for Lesasuyan. His case is not isolated.

In 2002, the British Ministry of Defence paid out 4.5 million pounds (\$5.45 million) to 233 people claiming to have been injured by unexploded ordnance. Nairobi and London dispute the origin



ISILOLO: Lisoka Lesasuyan, 21, shows the extensive damage sustained after he came into contact with a piece of unexploded military ordnance in 2013. — AFP photos

of the munitions, as both nations' armies train in these locations.

'Only God can help us'

In 2003, Amnesty International claimed to have documented 650 allegations of rape against British soldiers stationed in central Kenya between 1965 and 2001 and denounced what it called "decades of impunity".

More recently, the tragic case of Agnes Wanjiru has brought fresh scrutiny to the British military base. In 2012, the lifeless body of 21-year-old Wanjiru, mother of a two-year-old daughter, was discovered in a septic tank in Nanyuki. She was last seen alive with a British soldier. In October 2021, British newspaper The Sunday Times reported that a soldier had confessed to his comrades to killing Wanjiru, and showed them her body.

The report alleged that the murder was taken to military superiors, but no further action followed. "Only God can help us, because it (the investigation) has stagnated. We are not sure whether we'll ever get justice," said Wanjiru's sister Rose Wanjiku, her eyes teary as she clutched photographs of her late sibling. "We've never heard from any government official about the case," she told AFP in Majengo, a lower-income neighborhood in Nanyuki.

An investigation was opened in 2019 but no results have ever been made public. Kenyan police announced it would reopen the inquiry after the Sunday Times revelations. "This case is a priority for the UK government, and we fully appreciate the seriousness and importance of justice for Agnes Wanjiru," a



NANYUKI: Rose Wanjiku (left) reacts as she sits outside her home with a relative looking at photos of her beloved sister, Agnes.

British government spokeswoman told AFP.

"The jurisdiction for this investigation lies with the Kenyan Police Service, and the UK government is working closely with the government of Kenya to accelerate progress," she said. Neither the local governor, nor the Kenyan defense ministry, responded to requests for comment from AFP.

Economic lifeblood

But despite being convinced her sister was murdered by a BATUK member, Wanjiku does not advocate shutting down the base. "I would not wish for the base to be closed down because we have locals who work there. It was only one person who committed the offence and not all of them," she said.

According to the British government, BATUK has injected 32 million pounds (\$39 million) into the local economy since 2016. On the road approaching the camp, businesses ply their wares for the British troops stationed in town, selling Union Jack mementos, military items, and objects imprinted with Premier League football clubs. Robinson Mutunga, who employs 10 people in one of these stores, said that 90 percent of his income comes from British army customers. "If they go, I have to start another life," he said.

Mary Nkirote, who runs a bar a hundred meters from the camp, went further: "The only thing important economically in Nanyuki is the British army," she said. "When the boys come here, I can earn up to 50,000 shillings per night, but when they don't, only 20,000. Nanyuki as we knew it would not exist without them." — AFP

Kazakhstan mourns as mine disaster death toll continues to rise

KARAGANDA: Kazakhstan held nationwide mourning on Sunday after 45 people died in a blaze at an ArcelorMittal mine, the worst accident in the Central Asian country's post-Soviet history. The tragedy, which struck at the Kostenko coal mine in the Karaganda region Saturday, came after a series of deadly incidents at ArcelorMittal mines and has prompted the nationalization of the company's local affiliate.

"As of 3 pm (0900 GMT) the bodies of 42 people were found," Kazakhstan's emergency services said on social media. "The search for four miners continues." Later, authorities said the bodies of three others had been found and rescuers were searching for the last miner missing, with little hope of finding him alive.

Rescuers earlier warned that chances of finding the remaining miners alive were "very low", due to the lack of ventilation and the force of Saturday's explosion, which spread over two kilometers (1.2 miles). The previous deadliest mine accident in post-Soviet Kazakhstan occurred in 2006, killing 41 miners at



KARAGANDA: The Kazakh national flag is fluttering at half-mast as a rescue operation continues at the Kostenko ArcelorMittal coal mine. — AFP

another ArcelorMittal site. It came just two months after another incident killed five miners. Anger and disbelief reigned after the disaster in Karaganda, central Kazakhstan. "Every miner is a hero, because when he goes down, he does not know if he will come back or not," said former miner Sergei Glazkov.

Many welcomed the government's move towards nationalization, angered by the company's safety record. Daniar Mustafin, a 42-year-old salesman, said he favored "full nationalization without material compensation for the current owners". President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has ordered cooperation with the Luxembourg-based company to be "brought to an end."

On Sunday, flags were at half-mast to mark the day of national mourning declared by Tokayev, an AFP correspondent saw. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, about 200 miners have died in Kazakhstan, the vast majority at ArcelorMittal sites.

There were 252 people inside the mine when the fire started, ArcelorMittal said. Outside a hospital in Karaganda, relatives of those who had survived the blast were thanking the heavens. "His guardian angel saved him. He is alive," said Nikolai Bralin, the brother of an injured miner. "Two of his ribs were slightly torn apart from the blow and he had surgery to put them back in place," he added.

Local politicians also called for the immediate nationalization of the company. "They must answer before court because they did not ensure people's safety," said local MP Kudaibergen Beksultanov. "The state needs to take it upon itself now." "In order for people not to die, the government needs to oversee the process and that there be criminal responsibility," Alexei Svistunov, a 48-year-old security guard, told AFP in Karaganda.

The group's arrival in Kazakhstan in 1995 was initially seen as a beacon of hope during the economic slump that followed the fall of communism. But a lack of investment and inadequate safety standards were repeatedly criticized by the authorities, while trade unions called for tighter government control. — AFP

A mother's grief 'only deepens' a year after Itaewon crowd crush

GOYANG: A year after losing her son in a deadly crush that killed nearly 160 people in Seoul, Cho Mi-eun feels her sadness and anger at the tragedy have only deepened, exacerbated by a lack of answers as to what went wrong that night. Last year, Cho's 24-year-old son Lee Ji-han was among the tens of thousands of people — most of them in their 20s and 30s — who were out to enjoy post-pandemic Halloween celebrations in the South Korean capital's Itaewon district on October 29.

The revelry quickly turned to panic, however, as a huge mass of people poured into a narrow, sloping alleyway between bars and clubs, the weight of their bodies and a lack of effective crowd control leaving more than 150 crushed to death. "As time goes by, my sadness only deepens, my longing grows, and my anger also seems to deepen," Cho told AFP after visiting her son at the charnel house where his remains are kept.

In the days immediately after Ji-han's death, Cho and her husband dedicated themselves to leading protests demanding answers for how and why the tragedy occurred. It was only four months later, Cho says, that she real-

ized she was suffering from depression because she had not taken the time to mourn her son, or even to visit his remains at the charnel house.

Now, three times a week, Cho cooks Ji-han's favorite dishes, hops on a bus and rides the 53 stops to the charnel house, where she sits until it closes at 6:00 pm. "I felt I should be here with my child so that he wouldn't feel completely alone," she said, sobbing.

A police probe into the disaster found massive failures in planning, and a botched and delayed response to the unfolding catastrophe. But it stopped short of assigning blame to any top officials, and no senior figures were fired or resigned over the disaster. "Our kids were just walking down the street. They called the police for help and even screamed that they were going to die, but why did no one go?" Cho said.

'Held him in my arms'

This year, Halloween festivities in South Korea have been subdued, with the public largely discouraged from celebrating the event. Cho said last year's deadly disaster should not stop young people from going out and enjoying themselves. "Even if 159 beau-



GOYANG: An ossuary for the cremated remains of 24-year-old Lee Ji-han, who died in the Itaewon crowd crush, is seen at a charnel house on the first anniversary of his death. — AFP

tiful lives were lost on that street, it wasn't their fault that they went there, so I think young people today also have the right to enjoy the festivities", she told AFP.

It is the government that should pay more attention to protect people, Cho added. In recent months, Cho has been focusing on spending the time to mourn her son — but the

process is not easy. "What's most sad and strange to me right now is that I remember Ji-han's face and body, I can feel his body temperature when I held him in my arms in the emergency room, but I don't remember his eyes," she said. "The look in my son's eyes. I think that's the hardest thing to bear because I can't remember those beautiful, clear eyes." — AFP

Business

MONDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2023

US Fed likely to pause again with rates at 22-year high

Bid to tackle inflation without damaging resilient US economy

WASHINGTON: The Federal Reserve will likely announce it is holding interest rates at a 22-year high on Wednesday, as it looks to tackle inflation without damaging the resilient US economy. Analysts and traders parsing recent Fed speeches overwhelmingly expect the US central bank to hold rates steady for the second meeting in a row as it looks to return inflation to its long-term target of two percent.

"Fed commentary has all but confirmed that the Fed will stay on hold in November," Bank of America economists wrote in a recent note to clients. Interest rate hikes slow down inflation by raising the cost of borrowing from the bank, which dampens economic activity and weakens the labor market.

Since peaking at more than seven percent in June last year, inflation as measured by the Fed's favored yardstick has fallen by more than half — though it remains stuck firmly above three percent.

Futures traders assign a probability of 99.9 percent that the Fed will vote to hold rates steady in November, according to CME Group data.

In a surprising development for many analysts, the Fed's aggressive interest rate policy has not pushed the world's largest economy into a recession, and it looks unlikely to do so in the coming months. In fact, resilient consumer spending fueled higher-than-expected annualized growth of 4.9 percent in the third quarter, building on positive growth in the first half of the year. At the same time, hiring has picked up and unemployment remains close to historic lows.

"I always say it is a mistake to bet against the American people," President Joe Biden said in a statement Thursday, shortly after the latest GDP figures were released. "I never believed we would need a recession to bring inflation down — and to-

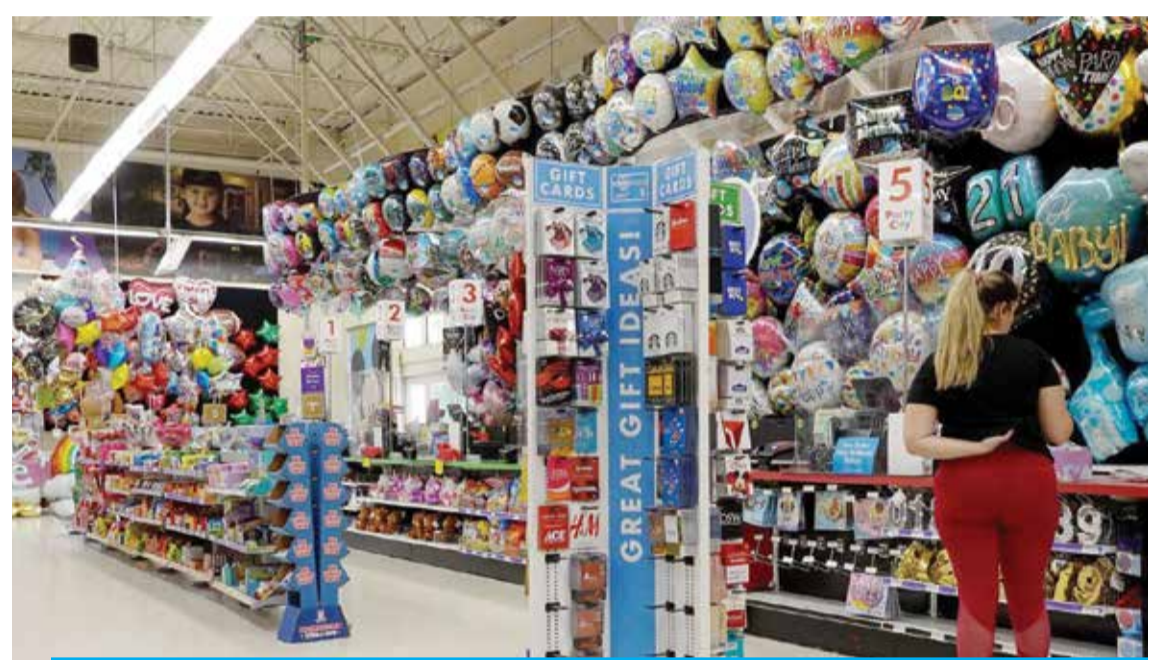
day we saw again that the American economy continues to grow even as inflation has come down," he added. Another factor weighing on the Fed as it mulls whether to hold its key short-term lending rate steady has been the recent surge in yields on longer-term government bonds.

Whereas the Fed's key short-term rate mainly affects the borrowing rates offered by banks, Treasury yields determine "everything from mortgage rates to corporate and municipal bond yields," KPMG Chief Economist Diane Swonk wrote in a recent note to clients. "It has already added an Arctic blast to the mortgage winter, which has frozen current owners in place and locked first-time buyers out of the housing market," she said. "Many within the Fed believe that the rise in yields we have seen are equivalent to an additional rate hike," she added.

Since the Fed's last rate-setting meeting, when most policymakers indicated they expected at least one more increase this year, officials have moderated their tone about further hikes.

Earlier this month, Fed Chair Jerome Powell said the current policy stance is "restrictive," suggesting monetary policy was working to put "downward pressure on economic activity and inflation." The economy "is handling much higher rates — at least for now — without difficulty," he continued. And Philadelphia Fed President Patrick Harker said he believed the Fed was "at the point where we can hold rates where they are."

"I think doing nothing at this moment equates to doing quite a lot," he added. Against this backdrop, many analysts have indicated they expect a "hawkish" pause — whereby the Fed holds rates steady while indicating it could still hike rates again this year if needed.



A Party City store in Miami, Florida. Consumer inflation rocketed to decades-high levels last year. — AFP

Deutsche Bank economists wrote in an investor note that a November hike is "off the table," while indicating further hikes would "depend on if tight financial conditions are sustained and the evolution of the economy." And Bank of America's economists said they expect a final rate hike in December due to the "strong" economic data seen in September, adding that it was "a close call."

While the US economy remains resilient, Fed

officials have warned that the current conflict between Zionist entity and Hamas in Gaza could affect America's economy. "Geopolitical tensions are highly elevated and pose important risks to global economic activity," Powell warned in a recent speech. The Fed later warned in a financial stability report that escalation of this conflict, or the war in Ukraine, "could reduce economic activity and boost inflation worldwide." — AFP

Non-oil sector leads Saudi growth: Report

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's non-oil private sector is leading in growth for 2023, having accelerated to 5.8 percent year-on-year (y/y) in Q2 2023 and standing 13.9 percent higher than in 2019. In contrast, growth in the non-oil government sector slowed to 3.8 percent (y/y), while the oil sector contracted by -4.3 percent (y/y) due to production cuts, according to PwC's inaugural Saudi Economy Watch report. It said Saudi GDP exceeded \$1 trillion, with strong progress towards meeting its Vision 2030 targets in multiple areas.

The report reviews the kingdom's ongoing performance across several economic targets at the midpoint towards achieving Vision 2030's transformative impact on society and the economy. This positive outcome is attributed to strong investment from the private and public sectors, non-oil revenue growth, ongoing diversification, and economic resilience efforts. The report indicates notably strong performance on multiple targets.

Female workforce participation has surged to 36 percent in Q1 2023, already ahead of the 2030 target of 30 percent, supported by social liberalization and Saudization policies. The resulting boost to household incomes has been a critical factor in rising consumption, supporting broader economic growth. Homeownership among Saudi nationals expanded from a baseline of 47 percent to 67 percent — scoring higher than the US and France. These strong re-



A file photo shows vehicles moving on a street in Riyadh.

sults can be attributed to a range of initiatives to boost the supply of affordable homes, including a tax on undeveloped urban land and improved access to finance, with the 2030 target of 70 percent now close to being achieved.

Economic diversification initiatives are bearing fruit, owing to the commitment of the public sector to major non-oil investments, it said.

The transformation of the Public Investment Fund (PIF), from a small holding company to international dealmaker and manager of giga projects, has been one of the biggest successes of the diversification strategy. PIF is on track to achieve its ambitious tar-

get to increase assets under management by more than 10-fold, having already increased by nearly five-fold to \$773 billion by the end of 2022.

The Kingdom's ambitious initiatives are shaping the foundation of the new Saudi economy which will have a transformative effect on the business environment in the region.

The report highlights that the kingdom has quickly secured the recovery of the non-oil sector post-COVID, even in the hardest-hit sectors of hospitality, transportation and retail and wholesale trade. As a result, Saudi GDP exceeded \$1 trillion for the first time in 2022. — Agencies

1.5C goal on the line as countries gear up for key climate talks

PARIS: Facing record-shattering temperatures and a geopolitical tinderbox, countries are scrambling to lay the groundwork for crucial UN climate talks next month tasked with salvaging global warming goals laid out in the landmark Paris deal.

Ministers meet next week in the United Arab Emirates to grapple with flashpoint issues, including the future of fossil fuels and financial solidarity between rich polluters and nations most vulnerable to the devastating impacts of climate change. World leaders meeting in Dubai for the COP28 summit between November 30 and December 12 will also have to respond to a damning progress report on the world's commitments under the Paris Agreement.

The 2015 deal aims to limit global warming to well below two degrees Celsius since the pre-industrial era and preferably a safer 1.5C. The results are already in on that "global stocktake": the world is far off track. "The challenge we face is immense," incoming COP28 president Sultan Al-Jaber acknowledged in October. Keeping the Paris goals in reach needs an enormous collective effort to slash greenhouse gas emissions this decade.

But that may be even more challenging in a world

roiled by geopolitical storms, with conflict between the Zionist entity and Hamas adding to tensions over Russia's invasion of Ukraine, United States-China rivalry and a mounting debt crisis. This year has seen a catalogue of climate extremes and the highest global temperatures in human history, stoked by the El Nino weather phenomenon that is warming temperatures. That may serve to focus minds, making clear that the dangerous changes to Earth's fragile life support systems are already in motion. The question is whether countries perceive climate change as a "collective threat", Alden Meyer of think tank E3G told AFP.

The climate talks, which will kick off with a two-day world leaders summit, are expected to be the biggest ever, with predictions of 80,000 attendees. Observers have raised concerns that eye-catching initiatives on the sidelines of the meeting could obscure the main negotiations, which this year should reflect the poor performance on the Paris goals. "The risk is that we will be sold a whole raft of declarations and side coalitions," said Lola Vallejo, of the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations.

The focus should instead be on "an ambitious agreement on the stocktake of the Paris Agreement, including fossil fuels and loss and damage", she said. The UAE has proposed targets to triple global renewable energy capacity, double the annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030 and called for massive scaling up of climate finance. Rich polluters are under pressure to finally meet their promise to provide \$100 billion in funding by 2020 for poorer



Youth climate activist Sim Bilal, 21, rides his One-wheel, in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

nations to prepare for climate extremes and fund the energy transition. An agreement to help vulnerable countries cope with climate "loss and damage" is also a key point of contention.

The flagship achievement of last year's COP27 in Egypt, it was mired in disagreement during recent talks to flesh out the details — like who pays, how much and the fund structure.

But the biggest tussle is likely to be over weaning the world off coal, oil and gas — the main drivers of global warming. Jaber, who heads the UAE state-owned oil firm ADNOC, has said he believes the phasing down of fossil fuels is "inevitable", without specifying when. — AFP

G7 ministers lash out at China, Russia

TOKYO: Group of Seven trade ministers took veiled swipes at China and Russia on Sunday while expressing concerns about the economic effect of the conflict in the Middle East. A joint statement after talks in Japan slammed Russia's "destruction of Ukrainian grain export infrastructure" since it exited in July a deal that had allowed safe grain shipments via the Black Sea.

Without naming any country, the G7 statement also hit out at "actions to weaponize economic dependencies" and "noted with concern the recent export control measures on critical minerals".

China has been accused of using trade restrictions to pressure other countries politically and recently imposed export restrictions on certain types of graphite, key to making electric vehicle batteries.

This came days after the United States slapped fresh restrictions on outflows of high-tech microchips in an attempt to slow down China's work in artificial intelligence (AI). In another apparent reference to China and Russia's bans on Japanese seafood imports since Tokyo began releasing treated waste water from the Fukushima nuclear plant, the G7 countries also said any restrictions should be "science-based and only applied in accordance with WTO (World Trade Organization) and other international rules."

The communique made no direct mention of the Middle East. But Japan's Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa, who co-chaired the meeting in Osaka, told a news conference that there were also concerns that uncertainties could further increase due to the latest situation after the Zionist entity's relentless bombardments of Gaza.

The G7 comprises current chair Japan, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Britain, and the United States, as well as the European Union. Until 2014 it included Russia and was called the G8. The talks in Osaka also included representatives from other countries including India, Australia, Chile, Kenya and Indonesia, international organizations and the private sector.

Australia's Trade Minister Don Farrell was expected to hold talks on the sidelines — reportedly on Monday — with EU Trade Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis about a long-delayed free trade deal.

Farrell told Sky News Australia on Sunday that "at the moment the offer that's on the table isn't good enough. And I'm aiming to get a better one." — AFP

Business

NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

Economic data varies drastically on both sides of the Atlantic

US economy delivers exceptional performance

KUWAIT: PMI figures in the United States came in better than expected, indicating an expansion of business activity in the private sector. Composite PMI improved to 51, while manufacturing PMI came in at 50 from 49.8 previously. Furthermore, services PMI rose to 50.9 from 50.1 previously. Hopes for a soft landing will be encouraged following better than expected business activity as well as positive retail sales and employment figures. Additionally, major publicly traded corporations reported positive earnings which indicates that consumers and the US economy remain resilient in the face of high interest rates, elevated energy prices, and rising geopolitical tensions. The US dollar index held its strength following the release of the report, last trading at 106.18.

Unemployment claims

Although the labor market is gradually cooling, conditions remain tight, with claims at the low end of their typical range. Unemployment claims came in at 210,000 up 10,000 from the previous week's figure and higher than expected by 2,000. Continuing claims, a reading on the number of people receiving ongoing unemployment assistance, climbed by 63,000 to 1.790 million in the week ended Oct 14. Nancy Vanden Houten, lead US economist at Oxford Economics, noted continuing claims increased for the third consecutive week, climbing to their highest level since May.

As the word "recession" continues to ring in the ears of markets worldwide, the US economy continues to defy the odds. The US economy grew at its fastest pace in two years, aided by the seemingly robust labor market that seems to drive the power of consumer spending. Third-quarter GDP came in at 4.9 percent, better than the 4.5 percent expected by economists. As the narrative continues to differ between whether a recession is inevitable or if a "soft-landing" is achievable, the latest news continues to push economists towards the "soft-landing" side of the argument.

September's figures showed a lack of movement in inflation, neither a sharp decline nor a rise with the recent data release. PCE inflation, the Fed's "preferred" inflation metric, came in-

line with expectations. The headline YoY rate held steady at 3.4 percent for the 3rd consecutive month, while the core YoY rate fell to 3.7 percent, the lowest level since June 2021. This should come as welcome news to the Fed while yields moved lower following the data release with the policy-sensitive 2-year yield trading near 5 percent. Fed Funds futures markets continue to price no change at next week's FOMC.

The greenback traded sideways over the week and appreciated slightly, closing at 106.559.

Eurozone PMI

PMI numbers coming out of the eurozone are sending recessionary signals, with October PMI readings near a 3-year low. The Composite PMI fell to 46.5 from 47.2 previously, the lowest since November 2020. Manufacturing PMI declined to 43.0 from 43.4 in September, while services PMI fell to 47.8 from 48.7 previously. The decline in business activity is led by the bloc's two largest economies - Germany and France - with the former showing contraction for the fourth straight month. An increase in geopolitical tensions and a further rise in energy prices are risk factors that could add to the woes of the bloc, as consumers are already struggling.

The European Central Bank left interest rates unchanged at 4 percent, as the market expected on Thursday, ending an unprecedented streak of 10 consecutive increases in borrowing costs while maintaining its guidance which signals steady policy ahead. Markets are now wondering how long the European Central Bank is going to keep rates elevated to bring inflation down to their 2 percent initial target. ECB president Christine Lagarde said that "she would not rule out another rate increase, adding that it was "totally premature" to discuss a potential cut.

In the United Kingdom, composite PMI came in better than expected at 48.6 from 48.5 previously. Manufacturing PMI edged higher to 45.2 from 44.3. However, business activity in the services sector declined to a 9-month low coming in at 49.2 versus expectations of 49.4. The numbers indicate a contraction in all fronts of business activity, and the worry is that further contractions amid weaker employment and retail sales numbers

will push the economy into a recession while having the highest inflation rate out of the G7 economies. In addition, the BoE's objective of getting inflation to its 2 percent level from 6.7 percent recorded in September has been complicated. Uncertainty is growing regarding the impact of its 14 rates hikes to date yet to be felt. Headline inflation failed to come down in September, and price growth in the services sector - which largely reflects stubbornly high pressures - has accelerated. The last monetary policy committee meeting that was held in September resulted in five members voting to pause, outnumbering the four who sought another increase. With that said, markets are expecting that Governor Andrew Bailey and his colleagues will keep bank rates at a 15-year high of 5.25 percent on Nov 2.

Japan's inflation

Tokyo's core consumer price index (CPI) which excludes volatile fresh food prices came in at 2.7 percent y/y versus the expectations of 2.5 percent y/y. Meanwhile the headline inflation rate came in at 3.3 percent y/y for October, accelerating from 2.8 percent the prior month. Higher food prices were a key contributor to the higher inflation figure, as well as higher fuel prices. Given higher than expected Japanese inflation, markets will watch next week's BoJ meeting closely.

In a data release by the Reserve Bank of Australia on Wednesday, the consumer price index showed a 1.2 percent increase in Q3 from 0.80 percent seen in Q2. On an annual basis, CPI declined to 5.40 percent from 6.00 percent previously. The Australian dollar depreciated in value against the US dollar following this news release as investors expected a higher inflation print. Despite inflation declining, the new Governor Michele Bullock said, in her strongest reference yet to the threat of renewed price pressures. "Our focus remains on bringing inflation back to target within a reasonable timeframe, while keeping employment growing," he said.

The AUD/USD currency pair is up on the week, last trading at 0.6334.

Kuwaiti dinar

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30895.

Stellantis, striking US union reach tentative deal

WASHINGTON: Stellantis and the striking United Auto Workers union have reached a preliminary agreement on a new labor contract, the two sides said Saturday, allowing members to go back to work at grounded factories.

The tentative deal, reached after 44 days of strike action that simultaneously targeted Detroit's "Big Three" automakers, is similar to one struck earlier this week with Ford, the union said.

"Once again, we have achieved what just weeks ago we were told was impossible," UAW President Shawn Fain said, adding that "we have begun to turn the tide in the war on the American working class." The tentative contract includes a 25 percent raise in base wages by 2028. Cost of living adjustments will cumulatively raise the top wage by 33 percent, to over \$42 an hour, the union said.

Like the Ford deal, any preliminary agreement with European auto giant Stellantis would need to be ratified via a vote by UAW members. But in the meantime, striking Stellantis workers, like those at Ford, "will return to work while the agreement goes through the ratification process," the UAW said.

Stellantis North America chief operating officer Mark Stewart thanked negotiating teams "who have worked tirelessly for many weeks to get to this point."

"We look forward to welcoming our 43,000 employees back to work and resuming operations to serve our customers," he said in a statement. President Joe Biden, who became the first sitting US president to stand on a picket line when he joined UAW members in Michigan last month, hailed the agreement.

"I applaud the UAW and Stellantis for coming together after hard fought, good faith negotiations to reach a historic agreement that will guarantee workers the pay, benefits, dignity and respect they deserve," he said in a statement. The wage increase is lower than the 40 percent sought by Fain when the union launched the strike on September 15, in the first ever simultaneous stoppage at Ford, General Motors and Stellantis. However, it is far above the nine percent increase that Ford, for example, initially proposed in August. — AFP



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 26 OCTOBER 2023

(965) 22 675 140
Al-Safat Tower, Hawalli, Beirut St.
alsafatinvest.com
research@alsafatinvest.com
alsafatinvestment
al-safat-investment-company

Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	30,483	7,080.83	-4.0%	-5.9%	-12.8%	405,339,606	175,931,672	37,714	16.6	1.1	76.7%
Main Market	9,236	5,462.30	-1.5%	-4.5%	-2.4%	229,199,274	30,809,625	15,773	12.3	0.7	23.3%
All Share	39,719	6,504.31	-3.5%	-5.6%	-10.8%	634,538,880	206,741,297	53,487	13.2	0.8	100%

Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Banking	23,570	1,572.98	-4.1%	-6.4%	-12.3%	224,387,571	121,835,982	22,638	16.0	1.0	59.34%
Basic Materials	428	759.17	-3.8%	-8.9%	-12.2%	3,974,699	2,486,719	1,059	9.2	2.2	1.08%
Consumer Discretionary	1,001	1,489.13	-0.1%	-4.4%	0.2%	40,863,854	11,488,571	5,019	12.6	0.9	2.52%
Consumer Staples	178	585.71	0.5%	-1.7%	22.0%	3,363,228	1,674,723	267	74.3	1.1	0.45%
Energy	189	903.82	-2.6%	-6.0%	-20.6%	671,681	29,904	104	8.7	0.6	0.48%
Financial Services	4,378	1,169.95	-3.0%	-5.5%	-6.9%	174,248,348	25,288,608	9,918	22.8	0.7	11.02%
Health Care	233	469.66	0.0%	-1.1%	1.7%	0	0.00	0	12.0	0.9	0.59%
Industrials	3,015	870.43	-1.9%	-5.4%	-19.3%	42,890,888	23,321,750	5,935	13.0	0.9	7.59%
Insurance	917	2,242.28	0.8%	1.0%	44.6%	144,289	18,241	45	10.5	0.9	2.31%
Real Estate	2,461	1,147.94	-2.4%	-2.4%	-5.0%	129,542,355	13,607,067	4,810	14.0	0.6	6.20%
Technology	8	609.64	-2.0%	9.7%	-12.4%	113,346	9,584.52	48	NM	0.8	0.02%
Telecommunications	3,146	1,029.35	-4.2%	-4.0%	-12.9%	12,542,612	6,665,632	3,363	9.5	1.3	7.92%
Utilities	194	463.16	-1.1%	-5.4%	-6.4%	1,796,009	314,517	281	14.2	1.6	0.49%

Top Gainers

Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
ARABREC	54	10.88%	30,595,875	1,563,898	599
KCIN	1,185	7.73%	6,300	7,184	6
FTI	56.4	4.44%	500	28	1
CABLE	1,162	4.31%	4,299,752	4,943,872	531
UNICAP	47.4	3.04%	74,070	3,305	12

Top Losers

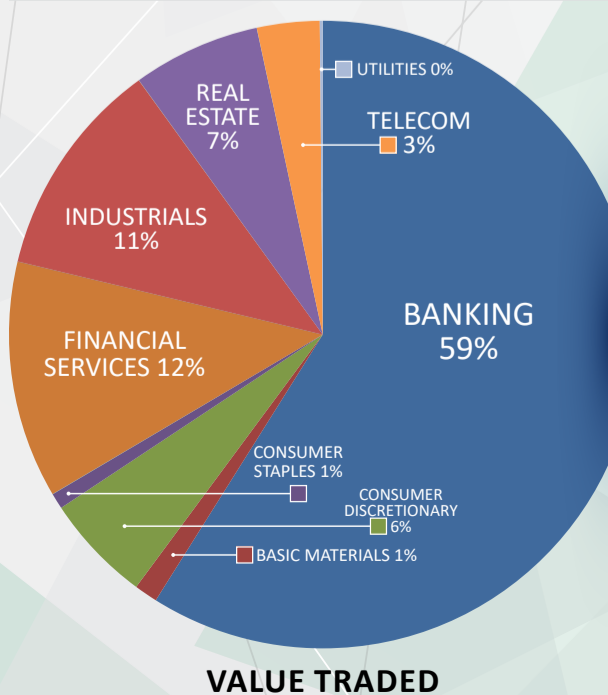
Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
NINV	191	-11.98%	9,601,874	1,968,539	612
GFC	50	-11.35%	20,786	1,075	8
UPAC	168	-11.11%	10,525	1,789	18
BAYANINV	37	-10.84%	1,173,627	45,136	70
KINV	117	-10.69%	6,392,000	801,730	391

Top Volume

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KFH	678	-5.83%	119,300,696	82,853,816	13,482
ARABREC	54	10.88%	30,595,875	1,563,898	599
NIND	184	-8.00%	27,760,223	5,333,962	863
GBK	244	-3.33%	21,252,154	5,272,224	782
WARBABANK	172	-6.52%	20,431,159	3,628,081	1,740

Top Value

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KFH	678	-5.83%	119,300,696	82,853,816	13,482
NBK	866	-2.91%	20,008,268	17,698,571	3,199
BOUBYAN	588	-1.67%	11,624,592	6,886,144	1,602
AGLTY	513	-2.10%	11,660,608	6,081,639	2,299
IFAHR	292	-8.46%	19,378,436	6,038,113	2,622



Market Summary:

- Premier and Main markets volume and value dropped 21% and 11%, 37% and 24%, respectively.
- The Premier index has officially entered into correction falling 13% from July peak. Main market is fluctuating and is yet to show stability.
- Technically, the All Share index closed at 6504, with support levels at 6487 and 6348, while resistance at 6621. The Premier index closed at 7080, with support levels at 6966 and 6883, and resistance at 7195. The Main index closed at 5462, with support levels at 5447, 5424, and 5393, while resistance at 5513.

Business

Gulf Bank continues its trend of robust financial performance with solid Q3

Bank holds its third quarter 2023 earnings webcast

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its investors webcast on Oct 25, 2023, to present and discuss the Bank's financial performance for the third quarter of 2023. The webcast was organized by EFG Hermes and presented by Waleed Mandani, Deputy Chief Executive Officer & Acting Chief Executive Officer of Gulf Bank, and David Challinor, Chief Financial Officer of Gulf Bank. The discussion was moderated by Dalal Al-Dousari, Head of Investor Relations at Gulf Bank.



Waleed Khalid Mandani

- I'm pleased to report that we've had another strong quarter, continuing our trend of robust financial performance.
- We closely monitor the global, regional, and local economic and geopolitical environment.



David Challinor

- Customer loan growth in the system this year has been much lower than we all anticipated at the beginning of the year.
- In the absence of any further rate rises, the margins will most likely be relatively stable in the short term.

Operating environment

Waleed Mandani commenced the webcast with key updates regarding Gulf Bank's operating environment during the third quarter of 2023. Mandani stated: "We continue to closely monitor the global, regional, and local economic and geopolitical environment. Although global economic growth has proved more resilient than expected so far in 2023, the outlook for next year could be weaker as the impact of tighter global monetary policy feeds through. Locally, core inflation stabilized at 3.4 percent year-on-year, still trending above the 2014-2019 annual averages, supported by solid consumer spending and expansionary fiscal policy. This has positively impacted the household lending, that continues to increase modestly during 2023. We acknowledge these industry-wide challenges and have proactively taken steps to navigate this environment effectively."

On Major milestones achieved by Gulf Bank during the third quarter of the year, Mandani commented: "In addition to our strong financial performance, I would like to announce the successful launch of our brand-new mobile banking application. The application offers a seamless and user-friendly experience, enabling our customers to manage their accounts, conduct transactions, and access a wide range of financial services conveniently from their smartphones".

Solid financial performance

Mandani summarized Gulf Bank's third

quarter 2023 financial performance with six key messages:

1. Net profit grew by 18 percent for the first nine months of 2023, to reach KD 53.8 million in comparison to KD 45.7 million reported for the same period in 2022.

2. Return on average equity increased to 10.0 percent for the first nine months of 2023 up from 9.0 percent at the same period last year.

3. Gross loans and advances reached KD 5.5 billion, slightly contracted when compared to the same period of last year.

4. The quality of our loan book remains resilient, as our non-performing loan ratio (NPL) as of 30 September 2023 is at 1.2 percent, coupled with a strong NPL coverage ratio of 470 percent including total provisions and collaterals.

5. As of 30 September, 2023, our Tier 1 Ratio was 13.6 percent achieving a buffer of 160 basis points above regulatory minimums of 12 percent, and our Capital Adequacy Ratio was 15.8 percent achieving a buffer of 180 basis points above regulatory minimums of 14 percent.

6. Gulf Bank remains an 'A' rated bank by major credit rating agencies.



Dalal Al-Dousari

Loan growth mix

David Challinor responded to questions raised by participants on the call related to loan growth mix between retail and corporate banking segments, Challinor commented: "I think it's fair to say that customer loan growth in the system this year has been much lower than we all anticipated at the beginning of the year. When we look at the CBK data to the end of September the total loans have only grown 1.4 percent. Last year this number was 7.7 percent. So, we're operating in a market that's very slow. Interest rates have curtailed some of the growth, but I also think the excess growth we saw in 2022, when the system grew 9 percent, has maybe caused an overhang for growth this year. In terms of the business mix, we continued to see good growth in retail as we've grown three times faster than the market this year in retail albeit in a market that's very slow. We're aiming to continue this outperformance in retail for the remainder of the year. In terms of corporate, we booked some high-quality transactions in the quarter, but we continued to see customers repaying debt which offset the new deals and caused a small net contraction in growth of around 10 million. Looking ahead for next year, we expect the growth to improve from 2023 but likely to be much less than what we witnessed in 2022."

Profit margins

Challinor commented on the outlook

of profit margins of the Bank by saying: "We saw another quarter of margin expansion as it now stands at 221 basis points. If we look at the cost of funds first, it's significantly slowing. On the asset side, we saw yields continue to expand. Particularly in the corporate business which effectively reprices straight away, and we had a rate rise in July, but also in retail where new loans are priced at the new higher rates and loans crossing 5 years also reprice higher. Going forward, and in the absence of any further rate rises, the margin will most likely be relatively stable in the short term but given all the moving parts it's very difficult to predict longer term at this stage."

Resilient asset quality

Regarding the credit cost and asset quality of the Bank, Challinor stated: "Credit costs continued to be relatively low at 7.2 million for Q3. This is a cost of risk of 52 basis points. For the full year 2022 it was 49 points, and a year earlier it was 95 points. So, I'm happy with the way the portfolio is performing so far this year and in fact the underlying NPL generation, which I think is a key metric to look at, for the first 9 months this year, is actually lower than what we saw for the first 9 months of last year. So even though interest rates are much higher from one period to the next, the underlying NPL generation is less. When we look at Stage 2, the percentage is only

4.4 percent, which is the lowest it's ever been since the introduction of IFRS 9 in Kuwait back in 2019, and much lower than where the system is at. The NPL ratio is still very low at 1.2 percent, which was where it was a year ago. Total provisioning continues to be very high. Our total coverage including collaterals is running at around 470 percent so we're happy the way the metrics are trending around asset quality."

Operating expenses

On the topic of operating expense and expected efficiencies, Challinor commented: "Total operating expenses was up 3 percent year to date versus last year. At the first half we were up 4 percent and last year for the full year it was 10 percent. So clearly the cost growth has slowed down significantly. We've also seen income grow at 6 percent, which is double the cost growth, so that's led to a further drop in the cost to income ratio. For Q3 its 45.8 percent which is the lowest it's been in the last 7 quarters. And this is despite ongoing costs relating to our transformation program. On the other side, we've obviously had lower volume related costs than last year given the market we're currently in, but nonetheless the slowdown in costs is positive. I've said before we'll be looking to extract further cost efficiencies when the transformation is complete some point next year, so we'd be looking to drive the cost to income lower."

Joe & The Juice now open in GUST

KUWAIT: Ali Abdulwahab Al-Mutawa Light Food, a subsidiary of Ali Abdulwahab Al-Mutawa Commercial Co (AAW), Sunday announced the opening of the renowned cafe Joe & The Juice at Kuwait's Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST). This marks the first global campus location for Joe & The Juice.

Joe & The Juice's rapid expansion in the country is fueled by the growing demand for healthy snacks and drinks among students who are embracing a healthier lifestyle, despite their busy schedules. The new store at GUST campus is set to become the favorite spot for students and staff to refuel and recharge between classes or meetings, offering a range of high-quality, fresh juices, shakes, coffee, and made-to-order sandwiches, in a trendy environment.

Since the launch of its first store in March of this year, Joe & The Juice has successfully competed with the most renowned restaurants and cafes in Kuwait's food and beverage sector, quickly becoming the preferred choice for customers. GUST is one of the first private universities established in Kuwait and is known for its exceptional campus and education. Offering internationally accredited degrees, the university is also a hub for various student-led activities and events.



Joe & The Juice stores in Kuwait are located in Ar-Rania Complex in Shuwaikh, Argan Square in Salmiya, The Walk in Ardiya, Al-Andalus in Hawally, The Warehouse in South Subahiya, Sahara Golf Resort, and the new GUST Store in West Mishref, which is open from Saturday to Thursday from 7 am to 7.30 pm.

What is a COP?

PARIS: The crunch climate talks being held in Dubai from November 30 to December 12 will be the 28th such gathering of world leaders under UN auspices known as COPs. AFP unpacks the workings of the high-level summit, where countries will aim to thrash out a new agreement as accelerating climate change threatens the world with costly and destructive consequences.

COP stands for Conference of the Parties, referring to the 198 parties including the European Union that have signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, originally adopted in Brazil in 1992. COPs have been held every year in different cities since 1995, with the exception of COP26 in Glasgow, which was delayed by a year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

They are numbered in chronological order, with the United Arab Emirates welcoming the world's movers and shakers at COP28 after taking over the presidency from COP27 hosts Egypt. COPs also exist for other UN conventions and treaties on issues including desertification and biodiversity.

What are the outcomes?

The long, complex and occasionally acrimonious negotiations between world leaders are supposed to end with a final text, which is often hammered out well past the official deadline. Numerous lobbyists, NGOs, international organizations and other observers gather on the sidelines of the talks.

The agreement must be reached by consensus, meaning different positions and interests have to be reconciled, all while aiming for progress in the fight against climate change. Outcomes of little substance have emerged from some COPs, in stark contrast with the acceleration of climate change and its increasingly destructive consequences.

Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg has dismissed COPs as "greenwashing machines", summing up the result of a recent summit as "bla, bla, bla". In 2009, COP15 in Copenhagen was widely viewed as a failure as no global deal was reached, despite a last-minute text involving the world's two largest economies, the United States and China.

But other editions have a more favorable place in history, notably COP21 in 2015, which gave birth to the historic Paris Agreement that 195 parties have ratified. The accord was the first to unite the international community behind the goal of keeping global temperature rises "well below" two degrees Celsius compared with industrial levels, and to 1.5C if possible. In a first, COP26 in 2021 designated fossil fuels as the primary cause of global warming, but under pressure from China and India the final text only called for a "phasedown" of coal rather than a "phaseout".

COP28 is due to host a record 80,000 people, according to the Emirati presidency. The choice of Sultan Al-Jaber — head of the UAE's national oil company ADNOC — as COP president has sparked fury among environmental campaigners. But Jaber and others see it as an opportunity for a business leader from the fossil fuel industry to discuss the energy transition, which will once again be a key topic of discussion. The COP presidency has set concrete goals for 2030: tripling global renewable energy capacity as well as doubling energy efficiency and hydrogen production. COP28 will also see a first "global stocktake" of the world's progress in achieving the Paris goals. — AFP

Climate conscious Americans reduce their carbon footprints

WASHINGTON: Bala Sivaraman drives an electric car around the US capital Washington, buys used clothes and furniture and cooks his vegan meals on an induction stove he bought after parting ways with his gas oven. Sim Bilal relies exclusively on public transit — no easy feat in car-centric Los Angeles — uses refurbished tech and lives in an apartment with solar panels.

As world leaders prepare to meet for crunch COP28 climate talks in the United Arab Emirates next month, some environmentally-conscious Americans are demonstrating it's possible to rein in their carbon emissions, aligning their actions with their values in a country where such lifestyle choices are rare. "When we are inundated with a lot of climate doomsday news, it can be really difficult to feel we have something to ground us," Sivaraman told AFP.

"What is so powerful about living a sustainable life or committing ourselves to zero waste living practices is that it gives us that sense of hope, because it reclaims our power."

Living on opposite ends of the country, both young men work as environmental activists and have carbon footprints of three to four tons per year, according to self-reported estimates generated by carbonfootprint.

com. That's well below the average Americans' annual footprint of around 15 tons, which is roughly three times the global average. On a brisk autumn day, Sivaraman brings his compost to a local community garden, unlocks a sorting bin, and begins placing leftover vegan hotdogs, paper plates and other biodegradables inside.

"This was from a party at my friend's animal refuge the other day," the 28-year-old, who works in communications for the nonprofit Earthjustice, says, covering the pile with the dry brown waste to aid in the decomposition process. After six months, the nutrient-rich soil is used in the neighboring plots to help tomatoes, cilantro and other vegetables grow.

"Composting diverts organic waste out of landfills," he explains, and because it decomposes in the presence of oxygen, it produces far less climate-impacting methane. It also helps foster a sense of common purpose and community, he adds.

Bilal, 21, got his first taste of direct action last year after disrupting the LA mayoral debates, making local news as he led demands for candidates to release their climate action plans. "This is the number one problem for my generation," he told AFP. He now organiz-



Bala Sivaraman speaks in a local community garden in Washington, DC, on October 16, 2023. — AFP

es for the California Green New Deal coalition and Youth Climate strike in Los Angeles. Though getting a driver's license is a rite of passage for US teens, Bilal decided when he turned 16 the climate cost was too great to bear.

When he's not riding the LA Metro or taking intercity trains, he can be found on his One Wheel: a self-balancing electric skateboard he finds essential for the last mile in a city where public transport can be lacking. The clothes he's wearing during a video interview are four years old and his iPad is a five-year-old model that he

recently had repaired after cracking its screen, instead of buying a new one — measures that embody his philosophy of buying less, and buying to last.

"It is hard because some things look really cool — maybe you want to jump on a trend, but for me it's not worth the cost," he adds. Sivaraman — who also participates in direct action with the Sunrise Movement and was arrested for the first time in September at the Federal Reserve building in New York — said his health and wellbeing had only improved since he made more climate-aware choices. — AFP

Lifestyle



The cast of the hit US TV show "Friends" from (left to right) Lisa Kudrow, Jennifer Aniston, Matthew Perry and Courtney Cox pose for photographers as they arrive for the 53rd Annual Golden Globe Awards January 21, 1996 in Beverly Hills.--AFP photos



The cast of the television comedy "Friends" (From left to right) Matthew Perry, Lisa Kudrow, Jennifer Aniston, and David Schwimmer pose with their award at the 26th People's Choice Awards in Pasadena, CA on January 09, 2000.



Five of the six cast members of the show "Friends" arrive at the NBC 75th Anniversary Special at Rockefeller Center in New York, 05 May 2002.

'Friends' actor Matthew Perry dies aged 54

Matthew Perry, troubled star of the smash hit TV sitcom "Friends," was found dead at his home in Los Angeles on Saturday, US media reported. He was 54. First responders found Perry unconscious in a hot tub at his house and were unable to revive him, law enforcement sources told the Los Angeles Times. "We responded at 4:10 pm... It is a death investigation for a male in his 50s," a Los Angeles Police Department spokesman told AFP, without confirming the deceased's name. A fire department spokesman confirmed it had responded to a "water emergency," which could refer to a "pool, spa, bathtub or fountain," but could not confirm reports that Perry had drowned.

American broadcaster NBC, which aired "Friends" for nearly a decade, confirmed the death. "We are incredibly saddened by the too soon passing of Matthew Perry," NBC said in a post on social media platform X, formerly Twitter. "He brought so much joy to hundreds of millions of people around the world with his pitch perfect comedic timing and wry wit. His legacy will live on through countless generations," it said. Perry was best known for his portrayal of the wise-cracking Chandler Bing on the wildly popular "Friends," which ran for 10 seasons from 1994 to 2004. "Friends" followed the lives of six New Yorkers navigating adult life, dating and careers. It was a mainstay of NBC's much-vaunted 1990s and early 2000s television lineup, and drew a massive global following.

Battle with addiction

During the height of his success, Perry battled for years with addiction to painkillers and alcohol, and attended rehabilitation clinics on multiple occasions. Perry experienced health problems including a burst colon in 2018 due to his drug usage, which required multiple surgeries and the use of a colostomy bag for months after. In his memoir "Friends, Lovers and the Big Terrible Thing," published last year, Perry described going through detox dozens of times, and spending millions of dollars in repeated attempts to get sober.

Perry dedicated the book to "all of the sufferers out there," and wrote in the prologue: "I should be dead." He wrote: "People would be



Actor Matthew Perry attends the 2003 TV Land awards at the Palladium theatre in Hollywood on March 2, 2003.

surprised to know that I have mostly been sober since 2001. Save for about sixty or seventy little mishaps over the years." TMZ, which first reported the news Saturday, said that no drugs were found at the scene. The celebrity news outlet said Perry was found by his assistant, who called 911. The LA Times and TMZ both said there were no signs of foul play, citing anonymous sources.

Reactions poured in from the Hollywood community on social media as news of Perry's death spread. "Oh no!!! Matthew Perry!!! You sweet, troubled soul!!!" wrote Mira Sorvino, who starred with Perry in the 1994 television movie "Parallel Lives." "May you find peace and happiness in Heaven, making everyone laugh with



Actors Matthew Perry (left), Jennifer Aniston (center) and Lisa Kudrow attend the 29th Annual People's Choice Awards in Pasadena on January 12, 2003.

your singular wit!!!" Josh Charles, who appeared with Perry on "The Good Wife," wrote: "Awful news. RIP brother." Warner Bros TV, which produced "Friends," wrote: "We are devastated to learn of Matthew Perry's passing. He was a true gift to us all. Our heart goes out to his family, loved ones and all of his fans."

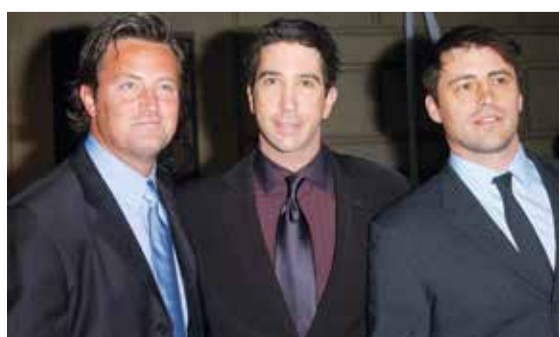
'Friends'

Perry was born in Massachusetts in 1969, and was raised between Montreal and Los Angeles after his parents separated. His mother was a Canadian journalist who served as press secretary to then prime minister Pierre Trudeau. His father was a US actor. On Saturday, current Canadian PM Justin Trudeau, Pierre's son, said Perry's death was "shocking and saddening." "I'll never forget the schoolyard games we used to play, and I know people around the world are never going to forget the joy he brought them," Trudeau posted on social media platform X.

As a teenager, Perry was a nationally ranked tennis star in Canada before moving to California and pursuing acting. In the 1980s, Perry had guest roles in popular shows such as "Charles in Charge" and "Growing Pains." He was the final, and youngest, lead actor to be cast for "Friends." Perry's character—the group's most sarcastic and quick-witted, but occasionally awkward and insecure, member—quickly became a fan favorite. Perry and his co-stars—Jennifer Aniston, Courteney Cox, Lisa Kudrow, Matt LeBlanc and David Schwimmer—negotiated \$1 million each, per episode, by the end of their colossally popular and zeitgeist-setting 236-episode run.

In a sign of the show's enduring appeal, the gang reportedly pocketed \$2.5 million each for a reunion episode in 2021. During that episode, Perry's slurred speech prompted concern among fans. Perry also surprised his co-stars by admitting to having suffered severe anxiety "every night" during the filming of the sitcom. As well as "Friends," Perry appeared in movies such as "Fools Rush In" and "The Whole Nine Yards."

He was nominated for five Emmys, including two for guest appearances on "The West Wing," but never won the prestigious television award. Perry never married. His representatives did not immediately respond to AFP requests for comment.—AFP



Actors Matthew Perry (left), David Schwimmer (center) and Matt LeBlanc attend the 28th Annual People's Choice Awards in Pasadena on January 12, 2002.



US actors Bruce Willis and Matthew Perry arrive at the premiere of their new film "The Whole Nine Yards" in Los Angeles on February 17, 2000.

49 interesting facts about Matthew Perry

- 1- **Matthew Perry was born on August 19, 1969, in Williamstown, Massachusetts.** This small town in New England holds the honor of being the birthplace of this talented actor.
- 2- **He is of Canadian-American descent.** Perry's father, John Bennett Perry, is a Canadian actor, while his mother, Suzanne Marie Morrison, is an American journalist.
- 3- **The family moved to Ottawa, Canada, when Perry was very young.** During his childhood, Perry spent a significant part of his life in the capital city of Canada.
- 4- **As a child, Perry was a tennis prodigy.** He even pursued a professional tennis career and was ranked as high as number 17 in the national Juniors singles category in Canada.
- 5- **Matthew Perry lost part of his middle finger during preschool** after his grandfather accidentally shut his car door on Perry's hand.
- 6- **Perry's passion for acting began in high school.** He participated in several school theater productions, which ignited his love for the performing arts.
- 7- **After high school, Perry moved to Los Angeles to pursue acting full-time.** He attended the renowned acting school, The Buckley School, where he honed his craft.
- 8- **Perry's breakthrough role came with his portrayal of Chandler Bing on "Friends."** His witty one-liners and impeccable comedic timing made Chandler one of the most memorable characters on the show.
- 9- **When auditioning for the part of Chandler Muriel Bing, Matthew Perry didn't need a script** because he knew the pilot by heart as he had been helping his friend with the same part before auditioning himself.
- 10- **He was originally considered for the role of Ross Geller.** However, he ultimately auditioned and secured the role of Chandler, which suited his comedic talents perfectly.
- 11- **Matthew Perry's wit is so legendary that even the directors often used his gags** as well as suggestions on the show and he was only cast members of Friends who was allowed to sit with the writers.
- 12- **Perry struggled with addiction during his time on "Friends."** He battled with substance abuse, particularly with alcohol and prescription drugs, throughout the show's ten-season run.
- 13- **From 1995-1996, Matthew Perry dated actress Julia Roberts, Lauren Graham in 2003, and then Lizzy Caplan from 2006 to 2012.**
- 14- **He sought treatment for substance abuse in 1997.** Perry entered rehab to address his addiction issues, and he later became an advocate for addiction recovery.
- 15- **Perry has been open about his struggles with mental health.** He has spoken candidly about his experiences with depression and anxiety, aiming to raise awareness and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues.
- 16- **In addition to acting, Perry is also a talented writer and producer.** He wrote and produced several episodes of "Friends" and went on to create and star in his own sitcom, "Mr Sunshine."
- 17- **Perry has an impressive filmography outside of "Friends."** Some notable movies he has appeared in include "The Whole Nine Yards," "Three to Tango," and "17 Again."
- 18- **One of Perry's hobbies is playing the piano.** He is a skilled pianist and has showcased his musical talent on various occasions.
- 19- **Perry has been nominated for numerous awards for his acting.** This includes several Primetime Emmy nominations for his outstanding performance on "Friends."
- 20- **He has won various accolades throughout his career.** Perry has received honors such as the Screen Actors Guild Award and the Teen Choice Award for his exceptional acting skills.
- 21- **Perry has made guest appearances on several popular TV shows.** These include "The West Wing," "The Good Wife," and "The Kennedys – After Camelot."
- 22- **He reprised his role as Chandler Bing in a reunion special.** In 2021, Perry reunited with his "Friends" castmates for a highly anticipated reunion special, which delighted fans worldwide.
- 23- **Perry has been actively involved in charity work.** He has supported organizations such as The Children's Health Fund and The Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation.
- 24- **Perry has had several successful theatrical runs.** He has starred in critically ac-

claimed stage productions, including "The End of Longing" and "The Odd Couple."

25- **Perry has achieved remarkable success throughout his acting career.** His talent and dedication have earned him recognition as one of the most beloved actors in the entertainment industry.

26- **Perry has a strong presence on social media.** He frequently engages with his fans on platforms like Twitter and Instagram, sharing glimpses of his life and career.

27- **He has amassed a substantial following on social media.** With millions of followers, Perry's online presence continues to grow.

28- **Perry has ventured into voice acting.** He provided the voice for key characters in animated movies such as "The Whole Nine Yards" and "The Kid Who Would Be King."

29- **One of Perry's notable non-acting roles is being a spokesperson for the Canadian Olympic team.** His Canadian roots and love for sports led to this prestigious partnership.

30- **Perry has been involved in producing and starring in theater productions.** In addition to acting, he has taken on the role of producer for stage shows like "The End of Longing" and "The Play What I Wrote."

31- **Perry is a celebrated poker player.** He has competed in numerous celebrity poker tournaments, showcasing his skills on the green felt.

32- **Perry's acting abilities extend beyond comedy.** He has also shown his dramatic talents in movies such as "The Whole Nine Yards" and "Birds of America."

33- **Perry has made appearances in music videos.** He can be spotted in videos for popular songs like "MMMBop" by Hanson and "Dance with the Devil" by Breaking Benjamin.

34- **Perry has been a guest host on "Saturday Night Live."** His comedic chops were in full display when he hosted the iconic sketch comedy show.

35- **Perry has voiced characters in popular animated series.** He lent his voice to characters in shows like "The Simpsons" and "Family Guy."

36- **Perry is an avid fan of the Los Angeles Lakers.** He can often be seen cheering for his favorite basketball team from the court.

37- **Perry has also tried his hand at writing.** He co-wrote and starred in the play "The End of Longing," which premiered in London's West End.

38- **Perry has a witty sense of humor.** His quick wit and dry delivery have endeared him to audiences worldwide.

39- **He has received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.** This prestigious honor was bestowed upon him in 2004, recognizing his contributions to the entertainment industry.

40- **Perry has been involved in producing documentary films.** He has produced insightful documentaries like "The Battle of Chosin" and "The Kennedys – After Camelot."

41- **He has made guest appearances on popular talk shows.** Perry has shared laughter and anecdotes on shows like "The Ellen DeGeneres Show" and "Late Night with Jimmy Fallon."

42- **Perry is known for his philanthropic efforts.** He has supported various charitable causes and participated in fundraising events.

43- **Perry has a fondness for dogs.** He is a proud dog owner and frequently advocates for animal welfare.

44- **He has been involved in the theater community.** Perry has attended and supported numerous theater productions, showcasing his dedication to the performing arts.

45- **Perry has a passion for photography.** He has showcased his talent behind the lens by sharing his own photographs on social media.

46- **He has a keen interest in architecture.** Perry enjoys exploring different architectural styles and has been involved in property investments.

47- **Perry is known for his generosity.** He has supported charitable initiatives and made significant donations to various organizations.

48- **The first time Perry ever got onto the cover of People magazine,** he sent a copy to one of his old teachers, named Dr. Web, who once said he would never achieve anything if he kept joking around all the time.

49- **Matthew Perry continues to be an influential and beloved figure in the entertainment industry.** His talent, charisma, and philanthropic efforts have made him a true icon.

Mouse embryos grown in space for first time: Japan researchers

Mouse embryos have been grown on the International Space Station and developed normally in the first study indicating it could be possible for humans to reproduce in space, a group of Japanese scientists said. The researchers, including Teruhiko Wakayama, professor of University of Yamanashi's Advanced Biotechnology Centre, and a team from the Japan Aerospace Space Agency (JAXA), sent frozen mouse embryos on board a rocket to the ISS in August 2021.

Astronauts thawed the early-stage embryos using a special device designed for this purpose and grew them on the station for four days. "The embryos cultured under microgravity conditions developed" normally into blastocysts, cells that develop into the fetus and placenta, the scientists said. The experiment "clearly demonstrated that gravity had no significant effect," the researchers said in a study that was published online in the scientific journal *iScience* on Saturday. They also said there were no significant changes

in condition of the DNA and genes, after they analyzed the blastocysts that were sent back to their laboratories on Earth. This is "the first-ever study that shows mammals may be able to thrive in space," University of Yamanashi and national research institute Riken said in a joint statement on Saturday.

It is "the world's first experiment that cultured early-stage mammalian embryos under complete microgravity of ISS," the statement said. "In the future, it will be necessary to transplant the blastocysts that were cultured in ISS's microgravity into mice to see if mice can give birth" to confirm that the blastocysts are normal, it added.

Such research could be important for future space exploration and colonization missions. Under its Artemis program, NASA plans to send humans back to the Moon in order to learn how to live there long-term to help prepare a trip to Mars, sometime towards the end of the 2030s. —AFP



Eternal rest—at the foot of a tree

No grave, nor a wreath. Instead, eternal rest in an urn buried at the foot of a tree. This alternative to cemeteries, known as sanctuary forests, are spreading in eastern France, an ecological project inspired by neighboring Germany. Gabrielle and Jean-Pierre Grasser, 81 and 85, take a walk in the woods at Muttersholtz, some 40 kilometers (25 miles) south of Strasbourg, not far from the border with Germany.

Near an oak tree, a commemorative slab emerges from underneath fallen leaves. It bears a name, a surname and dates of birth and death, marking the spot where an urn has been buried. Three small, inconspicuous plaques indicate the presence of other urns. The couple from Barr, some 20 kilometers away, have come to discover the forest cemetery which opened in March. As they favor being cremated when the time comes they are mulling what will happen to their ashes.

"The idea of eternal rest in a setting such as this appeals to me more than a niche in cemetery funeral urn," said Gabrielle. "I find it very relaxing and it's also in tune with the times in terms of ecology." "It brings us a little closer to nature, which we love," added her husband. "Several people have come to have a look and have reserved a space," said Muttersholtz deputy mayor Luc Dettwyler. The spaces allocated around a majestic oak tree were "almost all taken".



A photograph shows an identification sign is displayed on the trunk of a tree in the forest sanctuary, where people can choose the place where they will rest after their death. — AFP photos

The commune, home to 2,200 people, launched its project in 2017 after a visit to a similar initiative some 30 kilometers away on the German side of the border. An area has been turned into a communal forest sanctuary. Some oak, hazelnut and acacia trees have been selected and almost 500 urns will be

able to be buried there. The 30-year leases cost between 600 and 1,000 euros (\$633 to \$1,060) depending on the size of the tree and are available to people who live outside Muttersholtz for an additional 200 euros. A meditation area has also been created with carved stones to allow young and old to sit. "It's a place which we try to leave as close as possible to nature," said Dettwyler.

Return to nature

Well established in Germany, the concept of a forest sanctuary or cinerary for urns is only a recent development in France. Arbas, a village in the southwestern Haute-Garonne region, was the first to try out the idea in 2019, but the prefecture suspended its project. But other more urban communes picked up on the idea, including Strasbourg suburb Schiltigheim, population 32,000.

Unlike Muttersholtz, whose project developed within an existing forest, Schiltigheim's trees were planted in a part of the town cemetery specifically earmarked for a forest sanctuary, with a capacity for 1,760 urns. For civil registry assistant Bernard Jenaste, the space bears a "very strong symbolism" and "there is a link



Paving stones and commemorative plaques on it in a forest sanctuary where people can choose the place where they will rest after their death.



between the living tree and the deceased person". Schiltigheim received backing from the association Au dela des racines (beyond the roots), co-founded in 2017 by Denise Heilbronn, a nature enthusiast who wanted to see this option flourish. "Ageing myself, I don't want to end up in a marble compound with plastic flowers," she explained. "It doesn't suit me, and I don't want to force my daughters to care for a grave every six months."

She has received interest "from communes right across France," she said. "There's a huge lack of cemetery space," she said, referring to the ageing of the baby-boom generation and the ravages of COVID. The French are also increasingly likely to prefer cremation to burial.

Today, major cities such as Nancy are also taking an interest, which plans to open a forest space in December planted on a 6,000-square-metre (65,000-square-foot) area of one of its cemeteries. The ashes of the city's inhabitants will be buried there free of charge, without flowers, wreaths or distinguishing marks. "We are the first major city to offer this service," said deputy mayor Chantal Finck. — AFP



People look at a commemorative plaque as they visit the forest sanctuary in Muttersholtz, eastern France, where they can choose the place where they will rest after their death.



A meditation area in the forest sanctuary where people can choose the place where they will rest after their death.

Disaster survivors' tales grip Hollywood film fest

Gustavo Zerbino and Mamadou Kouassi have two major things in common. They both survived horrifying ordeals—one endured 72 days in the frozen Andes by eating human flesh after an infamous plane crash; the other suffered brutal imprisonment, extortion and slavery on the African migrant trail to Europe. And they are both the inspiration for major new films playing at Hollywood's AFI Fest this week, ahead of their submission for next year's Oscars.

Zerbino drew an extended standing ovation in Los Angeles following a screening of "Society of the Snow," Spain's official entry for the Academy Awards, which will stream on Netflix in January. "This movie lets you contact with the deep part of your soul, and feel exactly the spirit we had in the mountains," said an emotional Zerbino.

The film portrays the "Miracle of the Andes," when a plane carrying an amateur Uruguayan rugby team and their

family members crashed on the way to Chile in October 1972. Thirty-three of the 45 on board survived the initial impact, but only 16 were left after a ten-week ordeal on an Andean glacier without food, shelter, or even warm clothes in -22 degrees Fahrenheit (-30 Celsius) weather, at an altitude of some 12,000 feet (3,600 meters).

The survivors had to resort to eating the flesh of their dead comrades to stay alive. It has previously been dramatized, most famously in the 1993 US film "Alive," starring Ethan Hawke. But the new version, from director J.A. Bayona, recounts the story in Spanish using local actors, and places the emphasis equally on those who died and those who survived. "In the Andes, we needed to build a caring society. When all the things belonged to everyone, and the only goal was to survive," said Zerbino. "We did not fight each other, because we were fighting death," he told AFP after the screening.



(From left to right) Mamadou Kouassi, actor Moustapha Fall, Italian filmmaker Matteo Garrone and actor Seydou Sarr arrive to the US premiere of "Io Capitano" during the American Film Institute (AFI) Festival at the TCL Chinese Theatre. — AFP

Slavery in Libya

"Io Capitano," Italy's official entry for best international film at the Oscars in March and due in US theaters early next year, had its North American premiere Saturday. Director Matteo Garrone, best known for mafia drama "Gomorra," tells the harrowing story of African migrants before they have even reached

the perilous Mediterranean crossings that occupy most Western headlines. His script combines the real-life ordeals of three migrants including Kouassi, who trekked across the Sahara from Ivory Coast around 18 years ago.

"We spent about one month [going] through the desert. You can see people dying in front of you, children dying be-

cause of a lack of water. And you cannot help," he told AFP before the screening. Even when they reached Libya—a major transit country and crossing point for migrants—their ordeal was far from over. "We Black people, they used to catch us and put us in prison," he said.

Once behind bars, "they asked you to call one of your family or relatives to bring money to pay for your freedom. At that time I didn't have anybody." The film portrays graphic scenes of torture, and Kouassi recalls fellow inmates "killed in the prison, in the cells." He escaped only after being sold "like a slave" to a local who needed workers to complete masonry work on his property, and eventually freed him.

'Love, friendship, solidarity'

Despite the trauma of reliving their ordeals, both men are helping to promote their films, and expressed hope that audiences will take away important messages. For Zerbino, his story is "not a tragedy, [though] it has a lot of tragedy; it is not a miracle, [though] it has a lot of miracles." Instead, "this is a story of love, friendship, solidarity... a very important message in this difficult moment that the whole world is facing." —AFP

WITCHES, DEVILS SCARE YOU STRAIGHT IN INDIGENOUS NICARAGUA FESTIVAL



A man with painted face participates in the annual Los Aguzotes festival, in the indigenous neighborhood of Monimbo in Masaya, Nicaragua.— AFP photos

Thousands of people dressed as terrifying characters from fables and legends have taken to the streets in a Nicaraguan festival heavy on fright. The Aguzotes festival, held in an indigenous neighborhood in the city of Masaya, is known for local artisans' spectacularly spooky masks. Music for the event, in the town south of Managua, is cool in its own right—a hypnotizing soundtrack of drums, cymbals, trumpets, trombones and tubas. "Our grandfathers and grandmothers did this to instill fear in future generations—so that they would do the right things," William Guerrero, decked out in a red devil's mask, told AFP.

The festival is held the last Friday of each October. Characters include a black devil with enormous horns and a Witch of the Volcano. Another traditional character, the "nagua" or haunted cart, travels through town at night making a clamorous noise. Driving it—dressed in a white tunic and carrying his signature scythe—is the figure of "Death." Several family workshops produce masks for the festival. Artisan Fermina Lopez, 39, told AFP that she inherited her mask workshop. Lester Espinoza, 42, told AFP that his family workshop made more than 1,000 masks for the carnival. "It starts out as a kind of dough, and then we put it in the mold and we begin to style the mask."—AFP



Artisan Fermina Lopez shows a devil mask to be used in the annual Los Aguzotes festival in her workshop.



People with masks pose for a picture during the annual Los Aguzotes festival.



People with masks pose for a picture during the annual Los Aguzotes festival.



Artisan Lester Espinoza puts the finishing touches on a devil mask to be used in the annual Los Aguzotes festival in his workshop.



A man with a devil mask plays with fire during the annual Los Aguzotes festival, in the indigenous neighbourhood of Monimbo in Masaya.



Artisan Lester Espinoza stands next to devil masks to be used in the annual Los Aguzotes festival at his workshop.



Artisan Lester Espinoza puts the finishing touches on a devil mask to be used in the annual Los Aguzotes festival in his workshop.



A girl participates in the annual Los Aguzotes festival.



A boy in a costume takes part in the annual Los Aguzotes festival.



Artisan Fermina Lopez poses for a photo wearing a devil mask to be used in the annual Los Aguzotes festival and poses for a photo at her workshop.



A photograph shows an interior view of the library named after English novelist George Orwell.

'George Orwell Library' shines a light in Russia

The librarian scans the shelves and quickly picks out a few works—Orwell, Sorokin, Dostoevsky—the authors she thinks can best help cast some light in a dark time for Russia. The scene is in Ivanovo, an industrial city five hours' drive from Moscow, where the "George Orwell Library" was set up last year in an effort to counter growing propaganda and censorship. The simple library housed in the ground floor of a run-down building has a computer, a few hundred books and a lingering smell of the perfume used by the librarian, Alexandra Karaseva.

"Books help to see what is human, even in an enemy, and reject any form of dehumanization," the 67-year-old said as she handles the tomes. The library was opened by Dmitry Silin, a local businessman and opponent of the conflict in Ukraine who has since fled Russia fearing he could be imprisoned for his outspoken views. Karaseva showed off the collection of books about dystopias, the Soviet prison system, the works of contemporary writers critical of the Kremlin as well as some lighter novels to "lift spirits".

"The more you read about dystopias, the more freedom you have. They show the dangers, as well as ways of avoiding them and of resisting," Karaseva said. The books are not banned and can therefore be loaned to readers just like a normal library. Among them are works by authors now classified as "foreign agents" under Russian law which in bookshops have to be sold with their covers hidden.

'Forget fear'

The librarian, with her turtle-neck and thick glasses, is a wellspring of knowledge. Only her pronunciation is uneven because of her damaged teeth. With a blond fringe falling over her eyes, she talks about Orwell's masterpiece "1984" which describes an ultimately futile attempt at resistance in a highly effective dictatorship. She talks about the revolutionary self-destruction in Dostoevsky's



A photograph taken in Ivanovo shows a view of the library named after English novelist George Orwell.— AFP photos

"Demons" and the explosive dystopias in Vladimir Sorokin's works, as well as the maverick works of Harper Lee and Erich Maria Remarque.

Karaseva is a retired historian of ancient Rome, specializing in "the transition from the Republic to the dictatorship". She does not only deal in high-brow and even shares her thinking on the blockbuster film "Barbie" which she said was "deeper than it seems". The film was recently shown in the library meeting room.

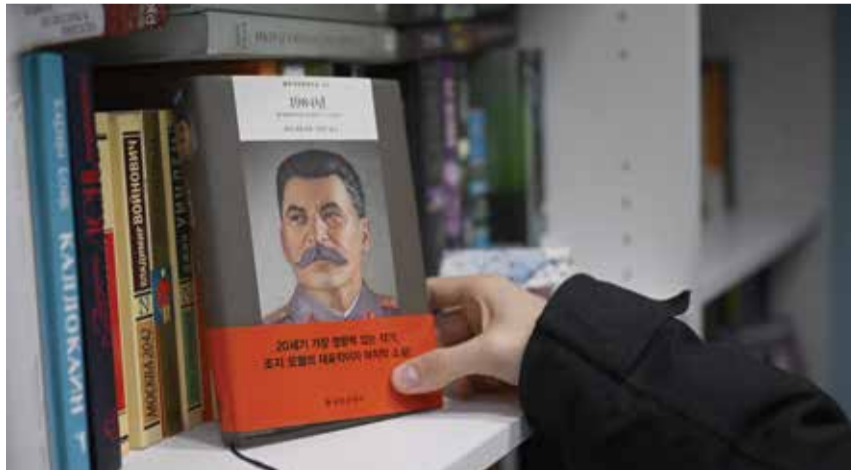
Dmitry Shestopalov, 18, an activist for the opposition party Yabloko, attended the screening and regularly visits the library to watch films and meet other young people. "You can develop yourself here despite everything that is happening in our country. You can forget fear, feel free, feel comfort, feel that you are not alone in the enormous system that is devouring us," he said. Lawyer Anastasya Rudenko, 41, a co-founder of the library, said she sees in modern Russia "signs" of the same totalitarianism described in "1984". Above all, she feels a sense of "fear that shackles".

She is also struck by the contemporary relevance of the slogan from the book "Ignorance Is Strength". In Russia "people who try not to understand what is going on live very well," she said.

'What would you have done?'

In Ivanovo's central square, near a plaque for those killed by Tsarist Russia during an anti-war demonstration in 1915, Rudenko reflects on her own "personal tragedy" as an icy wind lashes her face. Her brother and her husband are both Russian army officers serving in the "special military operation"—the euphemism used by the Kremlin to classify Russia's offensive against Ukraine. She cannot speak openly about the topic. The slightest sensitive comment could mean a sanction or even a prison sentence. Being a lawyer or the wife of an officer would not protect her.

In June 2023, Rudenko was sentenced to pay a fine for "discrediting" the Russian army for some Telegram posts where she said she had watched a documentary by opposition leader Alexei Navalny. Her husband came to the court hearing to support her. A normally smiling, energetic woman with a Ukrainian father, she breaks down when she talks about the "great pain" of being powerless confronted by the conflict. But she said she loves her husband "without a doubt even more" since he left to fight. To anyone who might question the contradiction and ask why they are still together, she replies: "And you? What would you have done?"—AFP



A photograph shows an Orwell's 1984 South Korean edition with a portrait of Joseph Stalin on its cover in the library named after English novelist George Orwell.



Librarian Alexandra Karaseva, 67, stands in the library named after English novelist George Orwell.

Sports

Martin wins Thai MotoGP thriller with Bagnaia promoted to second

This feeling is amazing because today I wasn't better than them: Martin

BURIRAM: Spain's Jorge Martin won a thrilling Thailand MotoGP race Sunday to close the gap on Francesco Bagnaia to 13 points in the world championship, with three legs of the season to go. Italy's Bagnaia crossed the line third, behind Brad Binder, but was awarded second place after the South African was penalized one position for exceeding track limits on the final lap.

The trio had been involved in a titanic tussle over the closing laps with the lead changing hands before pole-sitter Martin, on a Pramac-Ducati, pipped his rivals and celebrated wildly as he crossed the line. "I'm so happy. This feeling is amazing because today I wasn't better than them," said Martin.

The Spaniard managed the race masterfully from pole position, conserving his tyres to leave him with enough grip to withstand the late onslaught from the fast-finishing KTM rider Binder and factory-Ducati pilot Bagnaia. "I had the same tools, same tyres, but I had better pace than them and I had to go more than 100 percent on the last lap to stay in front," added Martin.

"I was pushing on the last lap like it was qualifying," Bagnaia, attempting to defend his world title, came into the weekend with a 27-point cushion in the championship but saw that slashed by Martin, who also won Saturday's sprint at the Buriram International Circuit.

'On the limit'

"I felt like I was in a (video) game room. It was incredible," said Bagnaia of the final daredevil minutes of

the 26-lap race around the 4.554-km-long circuit that saw the leading trio go wheel-to-wheel. "That last lap was on the limit but second place is positive for the championship this weekend considering where I was at the start," added Bagnaia, who began from sixth on the grid and was down to seventh by the fourth lap.

Bagnaia began to claw his way through the pack and was then gifted third when Alex Marquez crashed his Gresini-Ducati on lap 12, allowing the world champion to close on the leading duo of Martin and Binder. "I'm really happy with the way I rode today," said Binder. "I didn't leave anything on the table." Marco Bezzecchi was fourth on a VR-46 Ducati, Aleix Espargaro fifth and Fabio Quartararo sixth. Saturday specialist Martin had won the last five sprint races but crashed while leading the main race in Indonesia a fortnight ago as Bagnaia snatched the championship lead, back.

Then a disastrous gamble on a soft rear tyre last weekend in Australia saw Martin slump to fifth from the lead as his rubber deserted him on the final lap. But the Spaniard vowed no more mistakes as the MotoGP circus arrived in Thailand and picked up the full 37 points available for winning the 13-lap sprint and Sunday's 26-lap main event.

The riders now head to Malaysia's Sepang circuit in two weeks' time with the championship duel looking likely to go to the wire. The season rounds off in Qatar and Valencia next month. — AFP



BURIRAM: Winner Pramac's Spanish rider Jorge Martin celebrates on the podium after the MotoGP Thailand Grand Prix at the Buriram International Circuit in Buriram on October 29, 2023. — AFP

Ferrari's Leclerc grabs surprise pole for Mexico Grand Prix

MEXICO CITY: A surprised Charles Leclerc admitted he did not expect his success on Saturday after he secured pole position ahead of team-mate Carlos Sainz as Ferrari locked out the front row for Sunday's Mexico Grand Prix.

In a chaotic and confusing qualifying session that seemed set to see Max Verstappen on pole again, Ferrari emerged in Q3 with a surge of pace that surprised almost everyone. The Monegasque clocked a best lap in one minute and 17.166 seconds to beat the Spaniard by 0.067 seconds, leaving newly-crowned three-time world champion Verstappen third for Red Bull.

"It's two weekends in a row where we say that we don't know if we have the pace," said Leclerc. "People will start not believing us anymore! To be honest, I did not expect to be on pole today — I thought we were lucky after FP3."

"But once we put everything together it all went well. The new tyres gained a lot, but I am already focusing on tomorrow's race. We may have pole position, but now we need to convert it into a win and obviously it is going to be very difficult."

Sainz admitted: "It was a strange one. This whole weekend I've struggled to put a lap together then the first lap I put together in Q3 was P1 and suddenly Charles beat me by half a tenth, one tenth... "I'm just struggling to understand where we can find half a second — and then we go half a second slower in the next lap. It's very tricky with the tyres."

"The feeling with the car is very strange around this circuit, but we managed to put a good lap in when it counted," he added. Verstappen, who will be hunting a 51st career win in Sunday's race, said: "It's very difficult here... It's very low grip around here



MEXICO CITY: (L to R) Ferrari's Spanish driver Carlos Sainz Jr., Ferrari's Monegasque driver Charles Leclerc and Red Bull Racing's Dutch driver Max Verstappen pose after the qualifying session for the Formula One Mexico Grand Prix at the Hermanos Rodriguez racetrack in Mexico City. — AFP

because of the altitude so when you try and push a little bit more it goes a bit away from you.

"We're very close and it's a very long race with a lot of laps to be raced. Of course, I would have liked to start first, but we'll have a good slipstream into turn one so we'll see what happens."

After dominating all three practice sessions, it was a surprise to see the 26-year-old Dutchman unable to stay on top as Ferrari found a surge of additional pace in the final Q3 section of qualifying. Daniel Ricciardo was fourth for Alpha Tauri ahead of local hero Sergio Perez in the second Red Bull, seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes and Oscar

Piastri of McLaren. George Russell was eighth in the second Mercedes ahead of the Alfa Romeo pair of Valtteri Bottas and Zhou Guanyu.

Three of the top ten — Verstappen, Hamilton and Russell — faced stewards' investigations for infringement during qualifying, Hamilton for ignoring yellow flags and Russell and Verstappen for holding up the field in the pitlane.

It is Leclerc's fourth pole position success this year and the 22nd of his career, but he is without a win this season and has struggled to convert poles to wins. His last victory was at the 2022 Austrian Grand Prix, the fifth of his career. — AFP



PASSAU: Finland's driver Kalle Rovanpera (R) and co-driver Jonne Halttunen of Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT celebrate after the stage (SS 18 Wolf Powerstage Passauer Land 2) of the WRC Central European Rally 2023 near Passau, southern Germany on October 29, 2023. — AFP

Rovanpera wins second straight world rally title

PASSAU: Kalle Rovanpera sealed his second straight world rally title on Sunday with the young Finnish driver declaring: "I am going to enjoy this one more than the first". The 23-year-old Toyota star finished second to Thierry Neuville in the Central European Rally to take an unassailable lead in the standings with one round of the season remaining. "I am feeling really good," beamed Rovanpera, who last year became the youngest ever champion one day after his 22nd birthday. "I am going to enjoy this one more than the first one," added the winner of 11 rallies in three years.

"I think this year was, for me personally, more important than last year. The competition was tighter and we did a really good job." He said the "biggest thank you" was reserved for his co-driver Jonne Halttunen. "He is the world's best co-driver," he said. Rovanpera and Halttunen became only the sixth driver combination in history to win back-to-back world rally crowns. Rovanpera was helped along the way when his teammate and only remaining title challenger Elfyn Evans crashed on Saturday.

The Welsh driver returned to the race on Sunday in a desperate bid to prolong the title battle, but in vain despite collecting five points for winning the closing Power Stage. "Kalle was very strong on Friday and we didn't have the pace to follow him," said Evans.

"After that, of course we continued to try but it didn't work out this time and sometimes that's the way it goes," he added. Rovanpera had been virtually untouchable in the treacherous Czech rain and mud on Friday and had built up a 36-second lead over Neuville in this new addition to the calendar staged over three countries — Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic.

A spin on Saturday's second stage allowed Neuville to cut his advantage by more than half with the Belgian claiming the lead on the next stage. Then, Evans drove into a farm when placed third, his slim title hopes gone. That gave Rovanpera the luxury of coasting to the finish, knowing all he had to do was avoid a similar slip up suffered by his teammate to defend his crown.

'Incredible season'

Rovanpera clinched the 2022 title with two rounds to spare after winning the New Zealand Rally. The son of former world championship driver Harri Rovanpera, the champion maintained his hold on the sport in 2023, winning in Portugal, Estonia and Greece. "Nobody expected that someone so young could win two championships," commented former rally driver and now Toyota team boss Jari-Matti Latvala. "(Sebastian) Ogier and (Sebastian) Loeb were already in their thirties when they won their first titles," he recalled.

Eight-time world champion Ogier praised Rovanpera's "impressive season", adding "I'm sure it's not his last" title. As Rovanpera rejoices Evans will be wondering what he has to do to finally claim the crown following this third runners-up spot after 2020 and 2021. — AFP

Afghanistan played four spinners against Pakistan

PUNE: When cricket lovers refer to a 'fearsome foursome' they are usually talking about one of the West Indies' celebrated fast-bowling attacks of the late 1970s and 1980s. But the way Afghanistan deployed four spinners in their recent World Cup win over Pakistan could lead to a new meaning for the term.

Even though the Chennai pitch is known to provide plenty of turn, some pundits were still taken aback when Afghanistan brought teenage left-armers Noor Ahmad into their XI to give themselves a fourth spin option against Pakistan.

Yet the 18-year-old wrist-spinner, appearing in just his fourth one-day international, responded with a return of 3-49 in 10 overs. Not only that, his haul on World Cup debut included three frontline batsmen in Abdullah Shafique, Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan.

Afghanistan's spinners bowled 38 overs between them, with the experienced Mohammad Nabi (1-31) and Rashid Khan (0-41) proving particularly tough for Pakistan's batsmen to

get away even if off-spinner Mujeeb Ur Rahman, opening the bowling, conceded 55 runs from his eight overs.

As it was, Pakistan were held to 282-7 in a match Afghanistan won by eight wickets following their 69-run rout of reigning champions England. Noor's left-arm angle complements that of right-arm leg-spinner Rashid, with the 25-year-old the first global superstar of Afghanistan cricket following his exploits in various Twenty20 competitions.

Nabi's flighted off-spin has been a key component of Afghanistan's rise through the ranks of world cricket, with the 38-year-old now a veteran of 152 ODIs. With the roots of so much Afghanistan cricket in neighboring Pakistan, where players learned the games in refugee camps following the Soviet invasion or, in Nabi's case, in Peshawar after his parents moved across the border to avoid the conflict, it is perhaps unsurprising that spin bowling has long been a key component of their team.

They have slow-bowling depth as well, with the likes of 23-year-old



PUNE: Afghanistan's players attend a practice session on the eve of their 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup one-day international (ODI) match against Sri Lanka at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium in Pune on October 29, 2023. — AFP

leg-spinner Qais Ahmad - not in the World Cup squad - having had stints with English county side Kent. For much of cricket history, the concept of a 'balanced attack' has held sway.

But that idea was rejected by celebrated West Indies captain Clive Lloyd, who reasoned that if your four best bowlers were quicks, then why not field them all? India, by contrast, had a celebrated 1960s and 1970s quartet of spin-

ners in Erapalli Prasanna, Srinivasaraghavan Venkataraghavan, Bhagwat Chandrasekhar and the late Bishan Bedi but they rarely all appeared in the same XI. But having broken with convention against Pakistan, in a match where Noor starred on World Cup debut, Afghanistan coach Jonathan Trott would have no qualms about pitching the rising star into Monday's World Cup match against Sri Lanka in Pune. — AFP

L AFC, Philadelphia start MLS playoff push with wins

MIAMI: Last year's MLS Cup finalists, Los Angeles FC and the Philadelphia Union, launched their bids for a return to the title game with victories in the opening games of the playoffs on Saturday. Denis Bouanga and Ryan Hollingshead scored two goals each as defending

champions LAFC beat the Vancouver Whitecaps 5-2 in game one of their three game, first round series.

Philadelphia enjoyed a comfortable 3-1 win at home over the New England Revolution, scoring all their goals in the opening half. MLS has introduced a three-game series format in the opening round of the playoffs this season with penalty shootouts to determine a winner if the games end level.

While aggregate scores and goal difference therefore count for nothing, LAFC certainly sent a clear message with their demolition of Vancouver. Hollingshead put LAFC ahead in the 18th minute when his header from a corner was saved by Yohei Takaoka but the

American reacted swiftly to drill home the loose ball.

A cool finish from Brian White brought the Whitecaps level only for French-born Gabon international Bouanga, the top scorer in the regular season, to restore LAFC's lead, cutting in from the left and firing into the corner.

Vancouver responded again though with Sam Adekunle's glancing header from a Ryan Gauld free kick ensuring the teams went in 2-2 at the interval. But it was all LAFC after the break — Hollingshead slotted home from close range in the 52nd minute and then Bouanga made it 4-2 with a low drive through a crowded penalty area. — AFP

Sports

Tyson Fury wins split decision against MMA fighter Ngannou

World heavyweight champion Fury's toughest fight in 10 years

RIYADH: World heavyweight champion Tyson Fury beat mixed martial arts fighter Francis Ngannou in a split decision after their boxing bout went the distance in Saudi Arabia on Sunday. Ngannou knocked Fury down in round three but the 35-year-old British fighter, though shaken, was able to continue.

The undefeated Fury, who earlier this week laughed off his opponent as a "big fat sausage", afterwards acknowledged that the 37-year-old Cameroonian had effectively kept him off-balance. "He's a very awkward man, and he's a good puncher and I respect him a lot," Fury said of Ngannou, adding that it was "probably my toughest fight in 10 years". Fury was the overwhelming favourite against boxing novice Ngannou.

"This was my first boxing match, great experience—I'm not giving any excuse," Ngannou said in a ringside interview. "I know I come up short, I'm going to come back and work harder... now I know I can do this." Fury came out swinging in the first round with a hard right hand but sustained a cut to the forehead in the second round and looked especially sluggish after hitting the mat in the third. The final rounds dragged as both men tired, neither able to land a decisive blow.

"I don't know how close it was, but I got the win and that's how it was," Fury said. "Fair play to Francis, he cut my head here. It was a good fight." Fury's WBC heavyweight belt was not on the line in the "Battle of the Baddest" in the capital Riyadh, but Saudi officials nevertheless hoped it would further boost the Gulf kingdom's reputation as a top-flight boxing destination.

With all parties desperate to lend the contest

some sporting legitimacy, the WBC had fashioned a "Riyadh Champion" belt to allow the winner to strut around the ring at the end with something other than a fat pay cheque.

Fury has been linked with a £50 million (\$60.6 million) payout from Sunday's exhibition bout, while he has said in the British press that Ngannou will earn £10 million. Fury has a far more serious bout lined up in Riyadh in December against the Ukrainian Oleksandr Usyk, who currently holds the other three world titles. "I'm going to go home, I've been in training camp for 12 weeks," he said on Sunday. "I'll take a long hard rest and see what's next for us."

Saudi boxing boom?

Saudi Arabia has hosted a series of high-profile fights in recent years including the 2019 "Clash on the Dunes", in which Anthony Joshua reclaimed his world heavyweight crown from Andy Ruiz, and last year's "Rage on the Red Sea" in Jeddah, in which Joshua lost in a split decision to Usyk. Saudi officials say there has been a surge of domestic interest in boxing in recent years. Their goal is to have 500,000 boxers in the kingdom by 2030 as part of a broader sports push under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030 reform agenda.

Footballer Cristiano Ronaldo, now in the Saudi Pro League, and rappers Kanye West and Eminem were on hand for Sunday's event which marked the beginning of Riyadh Season, a four-month series of concerts and sporting events intended to make Saudi Arabia more attractive to tourists.

The festivities went ahead despite concerns the Israel-Hamas war could pitch the wider re-



RIYADH: Britain's Tyson Fury (L) falls on the ground as he fights against Cameroonian-French Francis Ngannou during their heavyweight boxing match in Riyadh early on October 29, 2023. — AFP

gion into turmoil. Turki Al Sheikh, head of the Saudi General Entertainment Authority, this week dismissed criticism on social media at a time when other events in the region have been cancelled, saying on Facebook that "every Saudi, including

myself, is busy with the development and renaissance of his country". The war came up just once on Sunday, when heavyweight Arslanbek Makhmudov said after his undercard win: "Victory to our brothers in Palestine!" — AFP

Al-Arabi move to the top of Zain Premier League

KUWAIT: Al-Arabi Sports Club football team moved to the top of the Zain Premier Football League by beating Jahra 3-2 Saturday in the sixth round competitions. Al-Arabi now has 14 points ahead of Kuwait by one point, while Jahra remains at the bottom with just one point.

Jahra scored first through players Anas Al-Shibly in the 8th minute, then Al-Arabi's Hamza Khaba equalized for his team in the 28th minute. Then Al-Shibly was awarded a penalty which Rodrigo converted in the 45th minute.

Al-Arabi equalized in the 45th minute through a penalty kick which Hamza Khaba succeeded in scoring it. Mamado Thiam headed Al-Arabi's winning goal, ending the match with the score of 3-2.

Meanwhile Fahaheel defeated Al-Nasr 4-2, Fahaheel scored first in the 13th minute through William Baros, then Fahaheel was awarded a penalty kick, which Baros scored in the 28th minute.

Fahaheel's Saleem Al-Houli scored the third goal for his team, while just before the end of the first half Al-Nasr's Ayman Laqjaa scored a goal from inside the 18 yard area.

Al-Nasr scored a second goal in the second half only to see Fahaheel score a fourth goal in the 70th minute. Fahaheel now has (5) points while Al-Nasr has (7).

Salmiya continued its winning ways as they defeated Al-Shabab 2-1. Salmiya now has 9 points in fourth place while Shabab remains with 5 points in eighth place.

Salmiya started attacking very strongly and their Brazilian player Seba scored in the 3rd minute, then Fawaz Ayedh scored Salmiya's second goal, and this is how the first half ended. In the second half Salmiya resorted to defence, while Al-Shabab's attempts continued and finally succeeded in the 82nd to cut the score in half by Carlos Rivas.



Fahaheel player in red fights for the ball against Al-Nasr player



The two teams participating in the match.

Cancer survivors shine in basketball game

KUWAIT: Cancer Aware Nation (CAN) Board of Director and Executive Committee Member, and in charge of Breast Cancer Awareness campaign Dr Hussa Al-Shaheen said the campaign is keen on including sports initiatives and activities in its October "Your Health is your Capital", campaign to promote the importance of practicing sports which reduces the risks of getting many chronic diseases including cancer diseases, and that is why a friendly basketball match was held to increase awareness of women in general about the importance of sports to maintain their health, as well as those women in remission in particular to encourage them to join the society and

strengthen their psychological aspect and urge them to take good care of their health.

Dr Hussa spoke during a basketball match which came under activities of the awareness month of breast cancer under the patronage of Social Affairs and Family Affairs Minister Sheikh Firas Saud Al-Sabah.

She also called upon ladies to join Haido team of CAN, which was formed this year to support women in physical activity. Meanwhile, member of the team that supports CAN campaign that the smile on the faces of members of CAN's team who are in remission reflects their enthusiasm and eagerness to participate in the game, which they won by the score of 18-16. All players were recognized, while Mai Al-Ali who recovered from cancer said the match brought back memories as she used to play the sport in the past.

Kuwait to partake in Gulf Triathlon Championship

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Basketball Association announced that the Kuwait national team will participate in the Gulf Triathlon Championship for the game scheduled to start in the Qatari capital Doha next Friday and continue its competition for two days. The director of the teams in the Federation, Dr Abdulaziz Dhari said that the Bahraini coach Salman Ramadan chose the list of participating players, namely Alexander Al-Ghais, Mohammed Adnan, Turki Hamoud, Abdul Mohsen Murtaza, Ahmed Al-Balushi, Abdulaziz Al-Humaidi, Ali Al-Hadhoud and Imran Johar. He stressed that the Kuwaiti team will enter the tournament with high focus with the aim of competing for the title and achieving first places "to raise the classification of our team in this game," expressing his confidence in the players' ability to provide their best level because of their skill and high technical level. — KUNA

Diamondbacks rout Rangers to pull level in World Series

LOS ANGELES: Arizona pitcher Merrill Kelly struck out nine and scattered three hits over seven innings to spark the Diamondbacks over Texas 9-1 on Saturday and level the World Series. Gabriel Moreno smashed a solo home run and Ketel Marte drove in two runs with a record-setting single as Arizona equalized Major League Baseball's best-of-seven final at 1-1 with game three in Phoenix on Monday.

Kelly, a 35-year-old right-hander, spent four seasons in the South Korean league, dreaming of such a dominating effort, before joining Arizona in 2019.

"I dreamed of it but at that point all it was was a dream," Kelly said. "It took a lot of hard work, a lot of being in the right place. I've got to give a lot of credit to the Arizona organization for giving me a chance. "I'm just glad we got it done."

Kelly surrendered a solo homer to Mitch Garver in the fifth inning but otherwise baffled Texas batters while Diamondbacks hitters struck. "If I execute, I've

Messi eyes an eighth Ballon d'Or with Bonmati tipped to win

PARIS: Lionel Messi is the favourite to win the eighth Ballon d'Or of his remarkable career when this year's ceremony to crown the planet's best footballer takes place in Paris on Monday, while Spain's World Cup-winning star Aitana Bonmati is tipped to take the women's prize.

The prestigious award has been dominated over the last 15 years by Messi and his old adversary Cristiano Ronaldo, who have won it 12 times between them. Only two other players have won the Ballon d'Or since Ronaldo claimed his first in 2008 -- Luka Modric won it in 2018 and Karim Benzema was crowned last year following a brilliant season with Real Madrid.

Messi is set to benefit from a recent change which means the award is now based on a player's record over the last season, rather than over the course of the calendar year. Last season saw Messi lead Argentina to glory at the World Cup in Qatar, where he scored seven times and was named the tournament's best player. It was the crowning moment of his astonishing career, and is likely to mean Messi sees off the considerable competition elsewhere among the 30 nominees. Most notably, there are seven members of the Manchester City team that won the English Premier League, FA Cup and UEFA Champions League under Pep Guardiola.

The obvious candidate among them is Erling Haaland, who scored 52 goals in 53 games and has already won the UEFA Player of the Year award for last season. "I always said that the Ballon d'Or should be in two sections, one for Messi, and after that look for the other one," Guardiola said recently. — AFP

got a pretty good chance," Kelly said. The Rangers, in their first World Series since 2011, seek the club's first MLB crown since it began play in 1961 while the Diamondbacks won their only title in 2001 in their only prior World Series appearance.

Marte broke the MLB all-time playoff hit streak record by stretching his run to 18 games with a two-run single in the eighth inning. The 30-year-old Dominican second baseman, whose post-season streak dates to 2017, had shared the old mark of 17 with Derek Jeter, Hank Bauer and Manny Ramirez.

Moreno crushed his fourth homer of the playoffs, a solo blast over the centerfield wall, to open the scoring in the fourth inning. With two outs, Tommy Pham doubled down the right-field line and scored on a single by Lourdes Gurriel to give the Diamondbacks a 2-0 lead. After Garver's homer, the D-backs answered in the seventh when Alek Thomas doubled and scored on an Evan Longoria single. Corbin Carroll followed with a single that drove in Longoria and Arizona led 4-1.

In the eighth, Pham singled and walks to Emmanuel Rivera and Geraldo Perdomo loaded the bases with two outs for Marte, who singled in two runs and set the hit streak record. Carroll followed with a single to bring in Perdomo and Arizona led 7-1. Rivera added a two-run single in the ninth to create the final margin. — 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

Change of Name

I, FATEMA, holder of Passport No. M0230843 do hereby change my name to Fatema (as given name) Bazarwala (as surname) for all purposes. I will hence forth be known in the name Fatema Bazarwala and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents.
#4553 - 30-10-2023

ALUMINIUM

Doors - window shutter - kitchen (fixing and new)

IHSAN (PAKISTANI)

97488682

S Africa beat New Zealand by a point to win record fourth Rugby World Cup

Eddie Jones resigns as Wallabies coach



SAINT-DENIS: President of South Africa Cyril Ramaphosa (C) lifts the Webb Ellis Cup while standing next to South Africa's flanker and captain Siya Kolisi on the podium after South Africa won the France 2023 Rugby World Cup Final match between New Zealand and South Africa at the Stade de France in Saint-Denis, on the outskirts of Paris. — AFP

PARIS: Handre Pollard kicked four penalties to help South Africa to a nail-biting 12-11 victory over 14-man New Zealand in the Rugby World Cup final on Saturday to claim a record fourth title. As is so often the case with finals, the match was a tight, edgy encounter at a rain-soaked Stade de France where defence ruled and the All Blacks lost captain Sam Cane to a first-half red card for a high tackle.

But the Springboks prevailed to win a third successive knockout match in this tournament by a point and add to their titles in 1995, 2007 and 2019. Player of the match Pieter-Steph du Toit said: "The last three games have been quite tough, each one we have played has been a final and each one we have won by one point."

"As a team we like drama. It has helped us through the last few years, it shows the resilience of this team. "We are honoured to play for the whole of South Africa and the Springboks. When we go back home it will be a warm welcome for us."

Meanwhile, under-pressure Wallabies coach Eddie Jones has resigned less than a year in the job after their dismal showing

at the World Cup, multiple Australian news outlets said Sunday. The Australian newspaper said Jones amicably agreed to terms for his departure with Rugby Australia powerbrokers Phil Waugh and Hamish McLennan over the weekend. National broadcaster ABC and the Sydney Morning Herald also said he had quit. Rugby Australia told AFP it had no comment.

South Africa captain Siya Kolisi added: "Honestly, people who are not from South Africa don't understand what this means for our country. "It's not just about the game on the field. Our country goes through such a lot. We are the hope they have."

The game, with tennis stars Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic among the 80,000 spectators, got off to a dramatic start. All Black flanker Shannon Frizell was yellow carded by referee Wayne Barnes after just two minutes for an illegal ruck clearout that saw Bok hooker Bongsi Mbonambi, the sole specialist number two in the squad, leave the pitch with an injured right knee.

Pollard kicked the penalty as Deon Fourie, a 37-year-old flanker, replaced Mbonambi, who was cleared earlier in the

week of using a racial slur against England flanker Tom Curry in the semi-final. Pollard, who kicked 22 points in South Africa's final victory over England four years ago in Japan, booted a second penalty after Codie Taylor failed to roll away in a ruck.

The opening quarter was not for the faint-hearted, each side delivering a succession of eye-watering hits as the Boks, whose aggressive defence was led by the outstanding Du Toit, pinned the All Blacks in their own territory.

A late Faf de Klerk hit on Mark Tele'a saw Jordie Barrett kick for the corner and from a series of drives, the Boks infringed and Richie Mo'unga got the All Blacks on the scoreboard with an easy penalty. Pollard hit straight back after Ardie Savea flopped over a ruck, connecting perfectly to convert a monster 49-metre effort.

All Blacks frustrated

New Zealand's woes were compounded when Cane was yellow-carded in the 29th minute for a high tackle on Jesse Kriel, later upgraded to red for a high degree of danger with no mitigation, according to the televi-

sion match official.

Cane became the first player to be shown a red card in a World Cup final and the All Blacks were reduced to 14 men for 46 minutes. A dejected Cane said afterwards he was "extremely gutted and disappointed". "The boys had to play with 14 men for the last 50-odd minutes. I thought the courage that they showed out there was incredible. The whole team are absolute warriors."

As the game approached half-time, yet another punishing hit by Du Toit, this time on Will Jordan, piled the pressure back on New Zealand and Pollard kicked his fourth penalty. Mo'unga kicked over a second penalty to make it 12-6 and the All Blacks trudged off without their skipper and in the knowledge that no team has ever come back from behind at half-time to win a final.

South Africa then spurned two clear try-scoring chances. Firstly, Siya Kolisi was guilty of butchering a clear five-pointer seconds into the second period, keeping hold of the ball as the whitewash beckoned despite Cheslin Kolbe racing up inside and Kriel on the flank.

Kurt-Lee Arendse then went close, just

failing to gather a Kolbe grubber. Kolisi was rightly yellow carded for a high tackle on Savea, who led the All Black charge back up the pitch. Mo'unga spilling the ball in a rare attack after Tele'a had taken a towering up-and-under.

Another All Black kick to the corner eventually paid off as the ball was recycled left to Tele'a, who beat three men before offloading. Beauden Barrett scooping up the ball to tuck down. Mo'unga missed the touchline conversion but the game was suddenly a one-point affair.

Kolbe's ambitious 50-metre drop-goal fell well short as both sides looked for an opening to close down the game. The winger was shown yellow for a deliberate knock-down of an Anton Lienert-Brown pass which meant the two teams finished with 14 players. Jordie Barrett, however, pushed the long-range penalty wide as the game entered a nerve-shredding final six minutes.

Another Du Toit hit on Barrett and a perfectly-timed De Klerk tap tackle on Dalton Papali'i in the dying moments were enough to see South Africa bag back-to-back titles and their fourth. — AFP

Man City crush Man Utd; Liverpool show support for Diaz

LONDON: Manchester City underlined the vast gulf in quality between themselves and Manchester United on Sunday as Liverpool showed their support for absent team-mate Luis Diaz, whose parents were kidnapped in Colombia. Old Trafford paid tribute to late United great Bobby Charlton ahead of kick-off, with supporters unfurling a banner that read: "The finest English footballer the world has ever seen".

But memories of past glories failed to translate onto the pitch, with the home team thoroughly outplayed by the champions, who did not have to get out of second gear in their 3-0 win. Champions City made most of the early running and were awarded a penalty after VAR spotted a foul on Rodri by Rasmus Hojlund as the ball was crossed into the area from a free-kick. It was the first spot-kick Manchester City have ever been awarded at Old Trafford in the Premier League in the 27th meeting between the teams.

Erling Haaland stepped up to tuck home the 12th goal of the season in City's 100th anniversary celebrations. City goalkeeper Scott McTominay saved a minuscule pile-driver before Andre Onana produced heroics at the other end when Haaland appeared certain to head home. But the Norwegian forward made no mistake just after the break, thumping home a header from Bernardo Silva's cross. Phil Foden made it 3-0 with 10 minutes remaining after he was set up by Haaland.

Liverpool tribute
Earlier, Liverpool swept Nottingham Forest aside by the same scoreline. Goals from Diogo Jota and Darwin Nunez before the break and Mohamed Salah's second-half effort ensured Jurgen Klopp's side maintain their 100 percent home record in the Premier League this season. Jota held aloft Diaz's number seven shirt after scoring — the Colombian did not feature in Liverpool's squad

following the kidnapping incident in his home country.

Colombia President Gustavo Petro said on Saturday that the winger's mother had been rescued but the search remained ongoing for his father. "Luis was with us in the hotel then he went home," Jota told the BBC. "It's a very hard situation and I don't know how anyone would react if it happened to you. He was going to play. I played instead of him, and I showed him his shirt to show we're with him and we hope everything works out."

Liverpool finished the day fourth in the table, behind leaders Tottenham, Arsenal and City. High-flying Aston Villa, in fifth spot, won their 12th consecutive home game in the Premier League, beating struggling Luton 3-1.

Unai Emery's side made light work of their opponents, with goals from John McGinn and Moussa Diaby giving them the upper hand before Luton captain Tom Lockyer put through his own net. "For me it is still a long process here and I will want to work to improve as always," Emery told Sky Sports. "Of course I am happy but still being serious, serious in the way I want to build here and improve more."

Brighton lost further ground after their sparkling start to the season. The south coast club took a 1-0 lead through Evan Ferguson, but Fulham levelled through midfielder Joao Palhinha. Dominic Calvert-Lewin scored the only goal of the game as Everton beat West Ham 1-0 to give themselves breathing space above the relegation zone. — AFP



MENORCA: Juan Lebron and Alejandro Galan pose with their trophies after winning the Estrella Damm Menorca Open 2023 on Oct 29, 2023.

Lebron and Galan win Menorca Open title

MENORCA, Spain: The final match at the Estrella Damm Menorca Open 2023 featured the best pair from recent years in the World Padel Tour, Juan Lebron and Alejandro Galan, facing off against the standout pair of the current season, Agustin Tapia and Arturo Coello. BNK Holding is the official sponsor of padel world champion Lebron of Spain.

It was a captivating spectacle on the blue court, and in the end, Lebron and Galan redeemed themselves to claim the ultimate victory. The final began with both duos commencing their serves, but it was Lebron and Galan who gradually asserted

their dominance. They secured a pivotal break, which proved to be decisive, resulting in a 6-3 victory in the first set for Ale and Juan.

The tempo and intensity of the game intensified, particularly on the side of Lebron and Galan, who quickly notched up two breaks in a matter of minutes in the second set. Although Tapia and Coello made efforts to mount a comeback, managing to recover one of the two breaks, they struggled to find their rhythm for an extended period. With a 6-2 win in the second set, Juan Lebron and Alejandro Galan were crowned champions of the Estrella Damm Menorca Open 2023.