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Kuwait, US defense ministers discuss developments • FM heads to Russia



NEW YORK/GAZA/KUWAIT: Kuwait's Permanent Representative at the UN Ambassador Tareq Al-Bannai said regarding the Zionist entity's brutal aggression on Gaza that Kuwait rejected the displacement of Palestinians out of their lands, calling for an immediate ceasefire and opening of crossings for humanitarian aid. This came during Bannai's speech on Wednesday before the UN General Assembly's emergency session regarding the developments in Gaza and the occupation forces' ongoing violations against Palestinian civilians.

Bannai said the world is witnessing violations of international humanitarian law principles, in addition to UN Security Council, General Assembly and international organizations' resolutions. He added the severest crime the world is witnessing is the bombing of innocent children, noting that the number of children killed in Gaza since Oct 7 is more than 3,257, according to the British Save the children charity organization, which exceeds the number of children killed annually throughout conflict zones since 2019.

Bannai reviewed some Security Council resolutions condemning acts of violence by the Zionist occupation, calling on all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law. "We are witnessing shameful media misinformation by the occupation forces, which we re-

spond to with facts that cannot be defeated, as the truth hurts them and the world standing by Palestine terrifies them," he said.

Bannai stressed the urgent need to implement the Security Council's resolutions related to protection of civilians, noting that these resolutions detail the violations committed by the occupation forces. He stressed there is no way forward except through comprehensive peace through the implementation of relevant international legitimacy resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002, which states the establishment of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Bannai concluded by addressing the Zionist occupation: "You only have one option that will rid us of the cycle of violations you imposed 56 years ago, which is ending the occupation and leaving Palestinian occupied territories."

Meanwhile, the first batch of aid presented by Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) arrived on Thursday at Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) warehouses in Gaza. Chief of Palestinian volunteer teams affiliated with the KRCS Ahmad Abu Daya said the KRCS aid, which includes medicine, arrived at PRCS north of Gaza, after crossing the Rafah border on Wednesday.

Bahraini, Zionist envoys leave; Saudi fundraises for Gaza

MANAMA: Bahrain's lower house of parliament announced Thursday the halting of economic ties with the Zionist entity and the return of ambassadors on both sides over the Zionist-Hamas war. Bahrain's National Communication Centre confirmed Bahrain's ambassador in Tel Aviv returned to the kingdom some time ago, while the Zionist entity's ambassador to the kingdom also left some time ago, noting direct flights between Bahrain and Tel Aviv have been suspended for several weeks.

"The Council of Representatives confirms that the Zionist ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain has left Bahrain, and the Kingdom of Bahrain decided to return the Bahraini ambassador from (the Zionist entity) to the country," a statement said. "Economic relations with (the Zionist entity) have also been halted," said the statement from the lower house, which does not have executive powers. The move is "in support of the Palestinian cause and the legitimate rights of the brotherly Palestinian people", it said.

Abdulnabi Salman, parliament's first deputy speaker, confirmed the decision to AFP, saying the "ongoing conflict in Gaza cannot tolerate silence". Bahrain and the Zionist entity established diplomatic relations in 2020 as part of the US-brokered Abraham Accords. Under the accords, the Zionist entity also established ties with the United Arab Emirates and Morocco.

Bahrain has seen a series of demonstrations in recent weeks denouncing the Zionist entity's attacks. As recently as September, Bahrain and the Zionist entity agreed to boost trade

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MP files to grill commerce minister

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Hamdan Al-Azmi on Thursday filed a grilling against Commerce and Industry Minister Mohammad Al-Aiban over alleged irregularities, violations, squandering of public funds and others. The grilling was submitted to the National Assembly and will be listed for possible debate on the agenda of the next regular session on Nov 14. Aiban, who is also minister of state for youth affairs, has the right

to demand delaying the debate for two weeks.

In his grilling, MP Azmi accused the minister of committing financial and administrative violations at a trading company that he chaired before his appointment as a minister. Azmi alleged that financial violations were committed by the minister and the company filed a lawsuit against him, but he utilized his post as a minister to refuse summons by the public prosecution. He also alleged that there are several cases of fraud at the public prosecution against the minister, who is utilizing his post by not going to the public prosecution.

Azmi also charged the minister of putting the country's security at risk by not acting to force the director of the customs department to release

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KUWAIT: MP Hamdan Al-Azmi (left) files a grilling against Commerce and Industry Minister Mohammad Al-Aiban on Nov 2, 2023. — KUNA

More foreigners flee as death toll mounts in Gaza

GAZA: Hundreds more foreigners and dual nationals fled war-torn Gaza for Egypt Thursday as Zionist forces bombarded and fought ground battles in the besieged Palestinian territory, where thousands have died. Egypt said it eventually plans to help evacuate 7,000 foreigners through the Rafah crossing and a spokesman for the Palestinian side of the border post said about 100

had been able to leave Thursday.

A total of 400 foreign passport holders as well as 60 severely wounded Palestinians in ambulances were due to cross by the end of the second day of departures, Wael Abu Mohsen said, and Egyptian officials later reported the first arrivals. A list of those approved to travel Thursday shows hundreds of US citizens and 50 Belgians along with smaller numbers from various European, Arab, Asian and African countries.

"There was no food, no water, no gas, nowhere to take shelter," said US passport holder Salma Shaath, 14, as she prepared to cross.

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GAZA: Palestinians run for cover after a strike near the Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City on Nov 1, 2023. — AFP

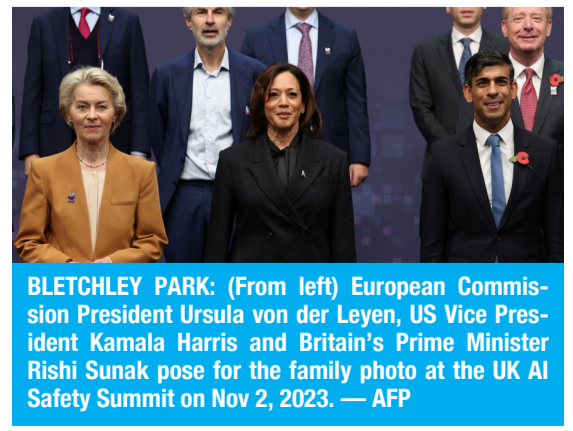
UN chief leads calls for 'united' response to AI

BLETCHLEY PARK, United Kingdom: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called Thursday for a "united, sustained, global response" to artificial intelligence threats, as world leaders met in Britain to discuss the risks posed by the technology's rapid development. The UN chief said the world was "playing catchup" and needed to "get ahead of the wave", as he spoke at the inaugural AI Safety Summit attended by political, tech and other leaders.

The two-day gathering at Bletchley Park, north of London, kicked off Wednesday with the publication of an agreement signed by 28 countries and the European Union acknowledging the "need for international action". But Thursday saw senior representatives from leading nations formally convene to address AI's most pressing imminent threats, with UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and US Vice President Kamala Harris in attendance.

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and EU chief Ursula von der Leyen also joined government officials from France, Germany, Australia and elsewhere, as well as leading tech figures including Elon Musk. In a statement, Guterres said AI

Continued on Page 6



BLETCHLEY PARK: (From left) European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, US Vice President Kamala Harris and Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak pose for the family photo at the UK AI Safety Summit on Nov 2, 2023. — AFP

Kuwait and Saudi Arabia sign cybersecurity MoU

Kuwait's cybersecurity chief urges effective system to face threats

RIYADH: Kuwait and Saudi Arabia signed on Thursday a memorandum of understanding in the field of cybersecurity. Kuwait was represented in the MoU's signing, on the second day of the Riyadh-held Global Cybersecurity Forum, by the Head of National Center for Cybersecurity Maj Gen Mohammad Bouarki, while Saudi Arabia was represented by Governor of the National Cybersecurity Authority (NCA) Majed Al-Mazyad.

In a statement to KUNA, Bouarki said that this MoU is aimed at opening broad horizons for transferring knowledge and sharing experiences in the cybersecurity field between the two sides, stressing the importance of cooperation in the field to better counter cyberattacks.

On Wednesday, Bouarki had stressed the need of building an effective system of cybersecurity to protect countries from threats. In statements on the sidelines of his participation in the Global Cybersecurity Forum, Bouarki said it is imperative to boost cybersecurity culture

to ensure safe and proper use of cyberspace. He said that human element is important in cybersecurity and without trained cadres, digital systems could be threatened by cyberattacks.

He affirmed that cybersecurity helps countries maintain their information secrecy from being hacked by hostile countries or exposed to cyberattacks that cause a paralysis or financial losses to their economies. Commenting on the forum, Bouarki said it has contributed to opening broad horizons for transferring knowledge, sharing experiences, exploring opportunities for cooperation on cybersecurity topics with a strategic dimension, backing international efforts and unifying joint endeavors in this regard, in addition to stimulating social and economic development in aspects of cybersecurity.

Finally, he thanked Saudi Arabia's national cybersecurity authority for hosting this global forum, which has become an international platform to benefit from participants' and specialists' expertise. — KUNA



RIYADH: Kuwait and Saudi Arabia sign a memorandum of understanding in the field of cybersecurity on Nov 2, 2023. — KUNA



KUWAIT: (From left) South Korean Ambassador's spouse, South Korean Ambassador Chung Byung-ha, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Asia Affairs Sameeh Johar Hayat and Ambassador of Tajikistan Zubaydullo Zubaydzoda, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, cut the ceremonial cake. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

South Korea, Kuwait hail deep-rooted ties

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The South Korean Embassy in Kuwait hosted a reception on Wednesday to commemorate National Foundation Day. The event was attended by numerous Arab and foreign diplomats, as well as members of the Korean community.

In his opening remarks, South Korea's Ambassador Chung Byung-ha emphasized the enduring and robust relationship between his country and Kuwait, highlighting decades of fruitful cooperation and mutual understanding. The ambassador also noted that next year would mark the 60th anniversary of bilateral energy cooperation, which began in 1964, when Kuwait became the first country from which Korea imported crude oil. The establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries dates back to 1979.

Chung shared an interesting chronology, mentioning that the economy preceded diplomacy, and the flow of oil preceded the arrival of construction workers. Nevertheless, over the years, both countries have developed comprehensive and multi-dimensional relations that have evolved into a strategic partnership.

He highlighted that Kuwait is the 6th largest exporter to Korea, with the trade volume reaching around \$13 billion last year. Additionally, 100 million barrels of oil are imported from Kuwait to Korea each year, making Kuwait the 3rd largest oil supplier to Korea.

The ambassador expressed Korea's aspiration to become a significant partner of Kuwait beyond 2035, emphasizing the need to deepen mutual understanding and share the values of freedom, peace, and prosperity based on unwavering trust and a strong partnership. He also mentioned Korea's involvement in translating Kuwait's 2035 vision into reality through the construction of symbolic and strategic infrastructure projects.

Ambassador Sameeh Johar Hayat, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Asia Affairs, stressed the significance of the deeply rooted and strategic ties between Kuwait and South Korea. He noted that Kuwait was the third country to supply oil to Korea, dating back to 1964. Hayat also indicated that economic relations between the two countries began before political relations, and high-level meetings and visits are expected to



Ambassador Chung Byung-ha with Ambassador Sameeh Johar Hayat.



South Korean Ambassador Chung Byung-ha speaks at the event.

strengthen their partnership.

Brig Gen Faisal Dashti, Director of Joint Education at the Ministry of Defense, highlighted the strong relationship between Kuwaiti forces and the Korean Army, including joint exercises. He underscored the importance of military cooperation in the field of education as a cornerstone of their collaboration.

Regarding potential cooperation in the field of armaments, Dashti explained that specialized committees assess the suitability of equipment for their respective forces, considering regional threats and the status of existing systems within the Kuwaiti army. In response to the current regional situation, he emphasized the readiness of the Kuwaiti army, driven by clear directives from high-ranking officials.

Concerning the northern borders, Dashti clarified that they manage these areas in accordance with established international agreements with neighboring countries, ensuring a consistent and cooperative approach.

The championship's final competitions took place under the patronage and in the presence of Prof. Meshari Al-Harbi, Acting Director of Kuwait University. The event was hosted at the Roman Theater within the College of Life Sciences at Sabah Al-Salem University City on Wednesday. A significant number of Kuwait University faculty members were in attendance.

Prof Harbi expressed his pride in the students' outstanding performance during the ninth edition of the debate league competitions. He highlighted the students' ability to embrace diverse opinions, respect others' viewpoints and engage in meaningful debates. This, he emphasized, reflects the high level of cultural awareness among the university's exceptional students.

Furthermore, Dr Al-Harbi underscored the university's commitment to fostering a wide range of student activities, supervised by the Deanship of Student Affairs. The university's debate league is

Gifted students' take on AI, society and education

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: Lujain Hussain Abdulhafour, Nour Mohamed Al-Zayed and Fajr Mashael Hussein are gifted students searching for their potential and aspirations for the future, away from the academic lethargy that accompanies traditional studying methods. Kuwait Times spoke with them to shed light on their views on various matters such as the artificial intelligence revolution, their ambitions for societal progress and their opinion on traditional education and its impact on them as gifted students.

Kuwait Times: What are the opinions of gifted students regarding artificial intelligence? Are they enthusiastic about this revolution or are they concerned about it?

Lujain: Artificial intelligence is unavoidable as technology is constantly and rapidly evolving, which humans may not be able to keep up with. It is up to humans to learn how to coexist with it and how to structure their lives around its existence in order to optimize its use.

Nour: We are excited about the revolution, but we fear that it will replace jobs that we want to work in and increase the unemployment rate. However, artificial intelligence, in general, brings progress and will save time and effort in most workplaces.

Fajr: Artificial intelligence can be a source of motivation as it presents a great opportunity for advancement in various fields. However, it can also be a cause for concern due to its social and ethical impact when used for unethical purposes.

Kuwait Times: What are your aspirations and plans for the future? How do gifted students intend to contribute to society and its advancement?

Lujain: It is up to the individual to hold onto

their aspirations and strive to achieve them. Personally, I aspire to become a neurosurgeon with innovative contributions that serve the field, in order to make the world a better place through science and innovation.

Nour: In the future, we will strive to work in jobs and contribute our ideas and creativity to solve existing problems in every sector and contribute to development in most workplaces.

Fajr: Many people strive for academic and professional success and to contribute to societal development. Personally, I aspire to serve the community and achieve success through my studies in the med-



ical field, finding ways to enhance and apply these sciences to help others.

Kuwait Times: What are the challenges faced by gifted students in traditional classrooms?

Lujain: Feeling bored and losing enthusiasm and desire for creativity are some of the negatives of traditional classrooms for gifted students. Therefore, being in an environment that includes talented students like them helps in developing their skills and abilities and pushes them to be the best version of themselves psychologically and scientifically.

Fajr: The challenges faced by gifted students in traditional classrooms include feeling bored and frustrated due to the slow pace of content delivery. There is also difficulty in communication and social interaction with peers due to intellectual differences.

PAM tightens issuance of work permits

KUWAIT: In an ongoing effort to adjust the population structure and regulate the job market, the Public Authority of Manpower has temporarily halted the renewal of work permits of thousands of expatriates across various sectors to ensure the authenticity of their academic certificates and to verify that their roles align with their job descriptions.

The authority has also initiated stricter scrutiny of job descriptions within the legal sector. Additionally, it has revised the regulations to specify that the title of "legal researcher" is reserved for expatriates with a law degree from an accredited university. Furthermore, the issuance of job descriptions in the media sector is now subject to approval by the ministry of information.

Simultaneously, the manpower authority has given its approval to a project by the Kuwait Engineers Society that aims to enhance the validation of labor in the construction, infrastructure and related engineering sectors. This project includes a program for validating engineering jobs, which has revealed numerous cases of fraudulent labor certificates in various engineering professions.

Meanwhile, according to an official report, the total number of Kuwaiti citizens registered as job seekers

in the automated systems of the Public Authority of Manpower has reached 17,307. The desire for government jobs among registered citizens has been prominent, surpassing the private sector's preferences, constituting 32.2 percent of the total registered citizens, with a total of 5,588 jobseekers.

The cumulative number of jobseekers registered with the authority for more than 6 months, currently not employed, not receiving a pension and not enrolled in any educational institutions, stands at 18,926 citizens. A noteworthy 56 percent of them hold university degrees, along with 306 individuals holding master's degrees and 9 with doctorates.

The report indicates a decline in the number of jobseekers on the authority's system who possess a secondary certificate with a one-year cycle or one year of experience. Enrollment in vocational qualification, parallel education and those with below-average qualifications, with at least two years of experience, has also been limited. The number of diploma holders is substantial, with 4,198 jobseekers, and 1,072 individuals holding a secondary school diploma with a two-year or longer course.

In addition, the labor market system's report reveals that the total number of registered national workers in the private sector amounts to 71,833 Kuwaitis. The total number of individuals with insurance coverage in the private sector has reached 49,764 citizens, while the number of insured individuals pertaining to small and medium enterprise owners has increased to 16,846 entrepreneurs. Furthermore, there are 21,000 Kuwaiti citizens employed in state-owned oil companies, with an additional 1,664 individuals insured in the oil sector.

College of Education team wins Debate League Championship

KUWAIT: The College of Education team clinched victory in the Kuwait University Colleges Debate League Championship for the academic year 2023/2024, marking its ninth edition in Arabic. They achieved this by defeating the College of Arts team in the final round. The debate topic revolved around "This council believes that boycotting companies only harms the local agent." The draw determined the roles of the two teams, with the College of Education taking the opposition role and the College of Arts the role of loyalty.



The winning College of Education team.



The runners-up College of Arts team.

one such activity that harnesses students' energies, enriches the student community with valuable skills and talents and hones the experiences necessary

for their personal and academic development. These activities serve as a complement to the overall educational process.

Local

Kuwait army holds exercises

Forces also head to Saudi to participate in joint drills



The Kuwait army holds "Desert Horizon" exercises. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti army conducted the "Desert Horizon" exercise on Wednesday with the participation of ground and air forces and the involvement of the 25th Brigade, in the presence of the Chief of the General Staff Maj Gen Dr Ghazi Al-Shammari and several high-ranking military leaders. The ministry of defense stated in a press release that the exercise is in line with the directives of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, which he emphasized during his meeting with the members of the Military Defense Council on Monday.

The directives called for strengthening and enhancing the readiness and efficiency of all units of the Kuwaiti Army in light of the current regional circumstances. The exercise involved live ammunition and was participated in by the 4th Reconnaissance Battalion of the Ground Force, F-18F aircraft, Apache helicopters for support and air power and the Infiltration Company from the 25th Brigade. The exercise simulated scenarios of complex and asymmetric operational environments and aimed to improve coordination and cooperation among different military sectors.

Meanwhile, the Duty Force, affiliated with the Kuwaiti Land Force, departed through the Salmi border crossing to participate in the "Gulf Shooting 2023" exercise, the second edition of which



The Duty Force heads to Saudi Arabia to participate in the second edition of the Gulf Shooting 2023 exercise.

will be conducted in the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from Wednesday until Nov 17. The ministry of defense stated in a press release that the joint exercise, whose first edition was held in Nov 2021 in Kuwait, is being conducted with formations representing the Kuwaiti Land Force, the

Royal Saudi Land Forces and the Spartan force from the US Army. The participation in this exercise comes within the framework of common cooperation, enhancing collective work, and raising combat readiness and preparedness for the participating forces. — KUNA

Why do wars never end?

By Passant Hisham

KUWAIT: When the word "war" is mentioned, one often conjures up images of dark, stagnant pools of blood, lifeless bodies scattered about, fiery explosions, billowing smoke and an overwhelming sense of terror. It's only natural to assume that those who endure war not only suffer physical harm but are also plagued by mental health issues. However, Dr Talal Alali, an assistant professor at Kuwait University's psychology department, suggests that this isn't always the case.

In an interview with Kuwait Times, Alali acknowledged that wars undeniably elevate the risk of various negative psychological disorders, including chronic depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress. Nevertheless, most individuals living in war-torn areas are not diagnosed with these conditions.

Alali delved deeper into this subject during a discussion at Kuwait University, where he explored the psychological causes and effects of warfare. Surprisingly, after extensive research and a PhD journey, he discovered that a significant number of people living in war zones can adapt to their circumstances. This adaptation, referred to as "pathological adaptation," involves the normalization of violence, aggression and abuse after prolonged exposure to these elements.

During the session, Alali said, "The majority of people continue to lead their daily lives as if nothing is amiss." He illustrates how people manage to work, teach and even engage in creative activities like making music during times of conflict. This pathological adaptation, he explains, acts as a self-defense



Dr Talal Alali

mechanism, and paradoxically, contributes to the perpetuation of wars.

As time passes, nations embroiled in these conflicts may no longer recognize the extent of their problem, hindering efforts to find a solution. "If you don't realize that you're in a problem, how are you going to solve it?" he asked rhetorically. Alali emphasizes that this high exposure to violence can transform innocent victims into aggressors seeking revenge in the same manner they were attacked.

In Alali's perspective, the normalization of violence is a key factor in the continuation of wars. However, other reasons are also directly responsible for the outbreak of conflicts.

Mentally disturbed leaders

Alali points out that mentally disturbed leaders often play a pivotal role in escalating global conflicts. He cites historical figures like Adolf Hitler and Saddam Hussein, both of whom exhibited a range of psychological disorders, including paranoid, sadistic, antisocial and narcissistic personality disorders. These disorders led historians to characterize them as impulsive, egocentric, cold, aggressive, non-empathetic and manipulative individuals.

Dehumanization of others

One of the fundamental cognitive processes humans possess is social categorization, wherein individuals are grouped based on social characteristics such as sex, race, age and other attributes. Mentally disturbed leaders take this categoriza-

tions and medical supplies and other matters of mutual interest. They agreed to establish a mechanism for ongoing communication and understanding on various health-related issues.

During the visit, Dr Awadhi, in coordination with USHAS, toured a Turkish pharmaceutical factory. He was briefed on the factory's significant services and products, which are involved in collaborations with several countries worldwide.

Additionally, Dr Awadhi and his accompanying delegation, which included the assistant undersecretary for foreign health services affairs and the assistant undersecretary for drugs and medical equipment affairs, visited Basaksehir Cam ve Sakura Sehir Hastanesi. This hospital, operated by the Turkish government, is one of the largest in Istanbul and boasts a bed capacity exceeding 4,000, including over 400 intensive care beds. It serves around 100,000 patients daily.

At the hospital, Dr Awadhi received a presentation on the healthcare services and various medical departments it offers. He also learned about the potential services that the Turkish ministry of health,

tion to extremes, using it to justify their heinous acts. They often classify people into two groups: Humans and non-humans.

Alali cites Hitler's approach to Jewish people as an example, as he dehumanized them to rationalize their mass murder. Hitler even convinced his army that exterminating Jews was their duty to protect the nation from harm. Alali explained this is why these mentally sick leaders use powerful terms such as "ethnic cleansing", as if they are fulfilling a noble role of purifying the land by removing these non-humans from the earth.

Irrational actions

Modern society continues to grapple with the aftermath of the irrational actions of leaders like Hitler and Saddam. Alali noted contemporary events mirror these historical atrocities. For instance, everyone is witnessing now how the Zionists are repeating the same scenario with Palestinians, as they became a modern representation of Hitler.

He argued that a consequence of such irrational actions is that most casualties in modern wars are civilians, as opposed to the primarily soldier-based casualties of the past. Alali points out that children, particularly those under five years old, often bear the brunt of these conflicts. He references a study from the 1990s that indicated more than 500,000 children in this age group were killed in just one year.

According to Alali, the detrimental effects of these actions extend beyond loss of life and include a crumbling healthcare system, power shortages, damage to education, increased illiteracy and the infringement of women and children's rights, ultimately resulting in societal decay and loss of life. In conclusion, Alali stressed that war is a complicated issue, with its impact lasting for centuries, and in many cases, never truly fading away.



ISTANBUL: Kuwaiti Health Minister Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi visits Basaksehir Cam ve Sakura Sehir Hastanesi.

through USHAS, can provide. The discussions focused on the exchange of experiences and the potential for collaborative efforts between Kuwait, represented by the ministry of health, and the Turkish healthcare system.

In my view

An invitation to peace



By Nejouad Al-Yagout

Local@kuwaittimes.com

We live in a world where war coverage is live, social media keyboard warriors are loud and fierce, and racism and "anti-thisism" and "anti-thatism" ring loudly in our ears. Every day, we are bombarded with negativity and violence and horrific images of war and racial slurs and vandalism. Every day, we hear about children being displaced and sold into slavery, women being raped and subjugated, and refugees fleeing their homes only to be treated as inferior citizens by those who reluctantly open their borders to them or deny them entry.

The world has been poignantly divided into perpetrators and victims, enemies and allies, black and white, men and women, nationals and refugees/stateless/foreigners, politicians and citizens, and rich and poor. Never has the divide been so obvious thanks to social media and viral videos. Everywhere we turn, people take sides, point fingers, condemn the other, forgetting that we created the mess we see projected before our eyes. We shudder when one of our own is killed but rejoice when the so-called enemy is slaughtered. The world is in shambles and our way to respond is to further fuel the fires of war by discriminating against anyone who does not share our views or religion or nationality.

Oceans and forests and rivers welcome us all. The sun shines on us all. The sky is available to all. And yet, we refuse to live in harmony, even with all the examples nature sets for us. We choose chaos and borders and deportation and enmity and divisiveness. The very few peace activists on our planet receive death threats for daring to unite humanity. Those who choose nonviolence are considered weak and submissive. Those who root for all of humanity are verbally and physically abused and shunned and considered traitors. Those who want to unite the world are ostracized, mocked and referred to as idealists who have no grip on reality.

But we cannot afford to be afraid of what others think. Oneness is worth it. Oneness is the only solution to all our woes. Oneness can save humanity, no matter how deeply conditioned we are to believe otherwise. We are here to face the darkness within ourselves, transcend it, and then shine our light on one another. We are here to remind each other that nationality, borders, gender disparity, abuse and racism are manmade constructs that are destroying any chance for peace we have on this planet. Our political ambitions and nationalism are responsible for the massacre, genocide and displacement of our fellow brothers and sisters. The politicians we condemn are projections of our collective madness.

The problem is within each of us, individually and collectively, and not what we see paraded on our screens. The conflict is in our egos, in the way we each move in the world, in the way we choose to hate the "other". The struggle we see among people is the struggle we each face, when we dare to look at the war within us every day, deep within our psyches. The struggle is primordial: Humans refer to it as the battle between good and evil, the battle between darkness and light.

We cannot claim to be innocent or on the side of good when we revel at the sight of a fellow human being in suffering or cheer when politicians threaten to get rid of expatriates or those who are not like us. How many of us would give water to an enemy stranded in the desert? How many of us would extend words of love rather than insults to those who do not share our beliefs? How many of us would choose peace over war? How many of us dream of a world in which people of all races, beliefs, nationalities are united in peace and love?

Only when we surrender our egos, only when we see that every single human being has a right to security, will we see the futility of war, occupation, genocide, apartheid, colonization and resistance. When we live in sync with nature, when "isms" dissolve, when we prize oneness over expansionism, we can finally inhabit a world that is safe for our children.

Until then, we can continue to subdue one another and fan the flames of racism by taking sides and engaging in whataboutism. We can continue to judge and intimidate the enemy, and galvanize others to destroy the enemy, putting in danger our own communities and even humanity in the process, or we can come to the realization that the enemy, the true enemy, is closer than we think. As is peace: Individual and collective peace. Oh!

News in Brief

Ministry of Education to
set operational action plan

KUWAIT: Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education Anwar Al-Hamdan has issued directives to various departments within the ministry to create an operational action plan in preparation for the upcoming semester. Simultaneously, they are instructed to assess the ministry's requirements for new schools. Hamdan presided over a meeting of the board of undersecretaries, attended by key officials. The meeting focused on discussing significant educational developments, identifying obstacles and the necessity for prompt solutions to ensure the smooth running of the education system. Hamdan emphasized the importance of holding regular meetings to enhance coordination, streamline administrative procedures and automate processes across all sectors. Additionally, they discussed the need to review and update regulations. Hamdan also encouraged all sectors to present their development projects in the forthcoming periodic meetings.

MoE to resume
national operetta

KUWAIT: After a 4-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 crisis, the ministry of education has announced the revival of the national operetta to celebrate national holidays. The ministry has allocated KD 500,000 to organize the concert in collaboration with the ministry of information, which will involve approximately 1,200 students. Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Development and Activities Maryam Al-Enezi hoped the event would provide an opportunity to identify talented students in singing, allowing them to showcase their abilities in front of a representative from the ministry of information for potential selection. In a bulletin distributed to all girls' primary schools in both public and private education, Enezi called for a gathering at the general technical guidance office for music education in the Hawally educational zone on Nov 8 at 9 am. The ministry of education provides an annual reward of KD 300 for each student participating in the national operetta.

Photo of the day

A house crow (*Corvus splendens*) takes off of a tree branch at a beach in Sulaibikhat on Nov 2, 2023. — Photo by Yasser Al-ZayyatArabic the fastest-developing and
most influential language globally

Arabic connects cultures and knowledge across boundaries

SHARJAH: Writers and experts in the study and teaching of the Arabic language affirmed on Thursday that Arabic is the fastest-developing and most influential language globally. Over 160 languages have been transcribed using Arabic letters, and it has enriched many languages with its terminology.

This consensus emerged during a session titled "The Aesthetics and Impact of the Arabic Language", which took place at the Sharjah International Book Fair 2023. The event drew the presence of numerous scholars, writers, and translators worldwide who have a deep interest in the Arabic language.

Dr Al-Khalil Al-Nahawi, an expert at the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization and the President of the Council of the Arabic Language in Mauritania, noted the remarkable influence of the Arabic language. He highlighted its reach into non-Muslim African languages, stating that Arabic vocabulary has found its way into various domains such as trade and agriculture. Nahawi emphasized that Arabic is not exclusive to Arabs; it is truly universal.



SHARJAH: Session on "The Aesthetics and Impact of the Arabic Language" held at the Sharjah International Book Fair 2023 on Nov 2, 2023. — KUNA

"There are indicators of the status of languages, such as the geographical extent index, which ranks Arabic second only to English. Arabic is present in 60 countries, either as a mother tongue or a language that is taught," Nahawi further explained.

Linguistic researcher Amna Al-Hashemi shared her insights from participating in the historical dictionary of the Arabic language project. She revealed that Arabic occupies a distinguished position among world languages today. It is a historical language that has withstood the test of time and has the adaptability to engage with life, sciences and various forms of knowledge. According to her, Arabic has amassed a wealth of

linguistic structures, formulas and methods over centuries, enabling it to offer depth, inspiration, and diversity to human history.

Spanish academic and translator Luis Miguel expressed his deep connection with Arabic. He described it as a beautiful language that hundreds of millions consider not just a human language but a divine one. Miguel's passion for Arabic has grown since he began studying it at the age of 18. He became a translator because he firmly believed that Arab culture has much to offer Western culture. His enthusiasm for the Arabic language expanded as he had the opportunity to travel and explore various Arabic dialects. — KUNA

Dar Suad takes
part in event on
Masoudi's works

DOHA: Dar Suad participated in an event held in Qatar, organized by Rosa Publishing House, featuring a diverse group of more than 20 prominent figures from the worlds of literature and media. The event was titled "Significance and Meaning: Writing Techniques in Ali Al-Masoudi's Literary Productions".

During this gathering, participants delved into various aspects of storytelling, poetry, research and media related to the works of the writer Ali Al-Masoudi, covering around 20 of his books. They collectively painted a vivid picture that highlighted the most prominent aspects of his writing experience and shed light on the artistic and intellectual dimensions that captivated his interests. The contributions from the participants took various forms, including critical studies, newspaper articles and dialogues, with a focus on a wide range of Masoudi's works.

In the field of critical studies, Fatima Al-Ali, a storyteller, novelist and critic, examined Masoudi's collection of short stories, particularly the work "Photo Session". She analyzed his techniques involving parallel texts, such as titles and conclusions, as well as his use of poetic language, description and brevity, among others.

The poet Saadia Mufarreh offered her perspective on Masoudi, describing his storytelling as both earnest and introspective. She noted that in his narratives, he opens up his inner worlds with candor, as if he is endeavoring to reveal his entire being to the reader, making his in-

ner self an external experience and vice versa.

Masoudi's stories, according to Mufarreh, don't rely on predetermined themes but rather emerge from his recollections, memories, and spontaneous writing, assuming an enhanced level of intelligence in the reader, encouraging them to engage in the process of recalling and interpreting the narrative in their own way.

Abdulkarim Al-Miqdad identified a key characteristic in Masoudi's collection of stories titled "R. Return." He highlighted the focus on the characters' inner worlds, explaining that the storyteller consistently entrusts the narrators with the task of delving into the characters' subconscious, documenting their memories and exploring their concerns and dreams. This often involves a narrator whose perspective aligns with the narrative or narrators with an understanding of psychology who can unearth the character's past and explore their innermost thoughts.

Hassan Hamed analyzed the modernist style present in Masoudi's work, particularly in a group of stories under "Photo Session". He expressed his belief that Masoudi succeeded in transcending the conventions of traditional shorthand narrative texts and modern short stories. Instead, he introduced narrative techniques that encapsulate a wide range of emotions, feelings and perspectives that arise from the contemporary narrative text. These techniques engage the readers, energize their imagination, and broaden their perception of the world.



Ali Al-Masoudi

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Zionists kill 3 Palestinians in West Bank

US decries 'destabilizing' settler violence, tells Zionist entity it 'needs to stop'



RAMALLAH: People carry the body of Ayham Sahfei, who was killed during the Zionist army raid, during his funeral in Ramallah in the occupied West Bank on Nov 2, 2023. — AFP photos

RAMALLAH: Three Palestinians were killed Thursday by Zionist forces during two separate raids in the occupied West Bank, the Palestinian health ministry said. On Thursday in El-Bireh, near the seat of the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah, two Palestinians, Ayham al-Shaifei, 14 and Yazan Shiha, 24, were killed and two others wounded when Zionist troops opened fire during a raid, the Palestinian health ministry said.

A 19-year-old Palestinian, Qusai Quran, was killed by Zionist forces during a raid on Qalqilya in the northern West Bank, according to the ministry, reporting two others were wounded. The Zionist army did not immediately comment on the incidents.

Also on Thursday, the Palestinian health ministry reported the death of 14-year-old Hamdan Hamdan of wounds sustained Monday by Zionist fire in a village near Nablus. For several months, the West Bank has seen increasing Zionist army raids and attacks on Palestinians by Zionist settlers.

Alongside their attacks in Gaza, the Zionist entity has been continuously conducting a series of raids and detentions targeting Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem since Oct 7. Zionist forces persist in their violations in the West Bank, Jerusalem and its surroundings, including killing, arrests, damage to

Palestinian properties, and infrastructure in the region. These violations have intensified in recent times.

The military increased their raids against Palestinians in all cities of the occupied West Bank, especially Tulkarem and Jenin, and destroyed Palestinian buildings in the Nour Shams and Jenin refugee camps, causing great damage to vehicles and property.

According to the Palestinian ministry, Zionist forces and settlers have killed around 130 Palestinians in the West Bank since Oct 7. During this period, 13 Palestinians in Jerusalem and its suburbs, 24 in Tulkarem in the West Bank, 21 in Jenin, 21 in Nablus, 18 in Ramallah, 15 in Hebron, 5 in Jericho, 6 in Qalqilya, 5 in Tubas, 4 in Bethlehem and 1 in Al-Birah lost their lives in Zionist attacks. In the same period around 1,900 have been arrested by Zionist security forces, according to the Palestinian Prisoners' Club advocacy group.

Settler attack

Elsewhere, a Zionist has died after his car came under fire near the settlement of Einav, according to first responders from the Zionist Magen David Adom emergency response organization. Zionist officials have not identified the fatality.

The army said in a statement it "has set up roadblocks in the area and is hunting down the terrorists" behind the alleged shooting

near the Palestinian city of Tulkarm in the northern West Bank. After the Zionist man's death, dozens of settlers stormed the Palestinian village of Dayr Sharaf, located about seven kilometers (four miles) from the Einav settlement, an AFP correspondent said. The correspondent saw the Zionist settlers setting Palestinian businesses and fields ablaze and smashing empty cars. Most states and international bodies recognize that Zionist settlements are illegal under international law.

'Severe abuse'

Some media and rights organizations have said videos circulating on social media show Zionist soldiers filming the abuse and humiliation of detained Palestinians. In a statement this week, Geneva-based Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor said it "has documented severe abuse and torture against Palestinian civilians and detainees at the hands of the (Zionist) army".

The NGO said Palestinians near Hebron in the south of the West Bank had been "dragged and assaulted by (Zionist) soldiers". "The Palestinian civilians in the footage have been stripped of their clothes, have their hands and feet tied, and appear to have been left outdoors for hours at a time," the statement said.

The United States warned on Wednesday that violence by settlers in the West Bank was "incredibly destabilizing". A



Black smoke fills the air in the Palestinian village of Dayr Sharaf, in the West Bank located after dozens of Jewish settlers stormed the village on Nov 2, 2023.

State Department spokesman called settler violence "counterproductive to (the Zionist entity's) long-term security" and said Washington had been clear with the Zionist authorities that it "needs to stop".

On Wednesday, Zionist army bulldozers demolished 17 historic homes in the southern occupied West Bank. Hassan Brijijeh, Director of the Wall and Settlement Resistance Committee in the city of Bethlehem, said the Zionist army and set-

tlers "demolished 17 houses in the village of Shushahla, near Bethlehem" pointing out that the houses "are built of old stone, and are at least 200 years old."

Shushahla, a small village located near the Gush Etzion settlement bloc, between Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Hebron, is inhabited by a few Palestinian families, most of whom had been displaced during the past years, as a result of settler attacks. — Agencies



HASBAIYA: Syrian workers sort freshly harvested olives near the southern Lebanese town, near the Zionist-Lebanese border on Oct 29, 2023. -- AFP photos



Farmer Hussein Shaheen is seen harvesting olives.

Lebanon farmers brave Zionist fire to harvest olives

HASBAIYA: Farmer Ghassan Hassan and his laborers have been toiling tirelessly to harvest olives in fields near Lebanon's southern border, undeterred by nearby Zionist bombings and the whirr of surveillance aircraft. Olive harvesting is a main source of income for villagers, but this year the season has coincided with cross-border exchanges between Zionist troops and the Hezbollah as the Zionist entity intensifies its attack on Gaza.

"Aircraft hover over our heads day and night while we work, making the workers anxious. They sometimes get so frightened they leave," said Hassan, in his 50s, who is picking green and purple olives near the town of Hasbaya. "This year is unlike the ones before," he added.

As he spoke, one of his workers received news his village had been hit by a bombardment. Stopping work, he frantically tried to call relatives with trembling hands before hearing they were all safe, breathing a sigh of relief as he returned to work.

So far, Zionist strikes have killed at least 63 people in Lebanon according to an AFP tally, mostly combatants but also five civilians. Eight people have been killed in the Zionist entity, the majority of which are Zionist soldiers. The escalating

exchanges of fire have made olive picking near the border particularly dangerous. Despite the frequent nearby shelling and non-stop buzzing of reconnaissance aircraft, the farmers have not stopped coming to their lands.

'Risking their lives'

Lebanese farmers mostly rely on Syrian laborers during harvest season, but many living near the border have fled, Hassan said. "It has become difficult for us to find workers," he told AFP. So far, thousands have fled the south due to the border tensions, with nearly 29,000 people displaced across the whole of Lebanon, figures from the UN's International Organization for Migration show.

Zionist attacks have also set olive groves and greenery ablaze. Rights groups and Lebanese officials have repeatedly accused the Zionist entity of using white phosphorus which catches fire on contact with the air and can inflict serious burns — allegations Zionist authorities have previously denied. An Amnesty International investigation has found evidence of the Zionist forces firing shells containing the substance in military operations along Lebanon's southern border between Oct 10 and 16, 2023. Amnesty said an attack on the town of Dhayra on Oct 16 must be investigated as a war crime because it was "an indiscriminate attack that injured at least nine civilians and damaged civilian objects and was therefore unlawful."

Farmer Hussein Shaheen, in his 70s, was one of those picking the tiny fruit outside Hasbaya as explosions resonated in the distance. But he has been clear with his workers: they must have the olives packed up and ready for trans-

port so they can move quickly if shelling hits.

Across the border regions of Hasbaya and Marjayoun, families and laborers are out and about in the olive groves, resting in the shade or climbing trees to pick the fruit. "People are risking their lives" because olives are their main source of income, Shaheen said. "Every year, they await harvesting season so they can sell olive oil and make a living," he said. "When bombs fall, they go home" only to return the next day, he said.

'The harvest is like your child'

The Hasbaya region counts about a million and a half olive trees, according to Rasheed Zuwaheed of the local olive cooperative. "Whether there is bombing or not, people have no choice but to go out to the fields," said the 73-year-old, a retired teacher who owns an olive press. "They certainly take risks, but they are forced" to do so to survive, he said.

In a nearby field, the Shaar family are picking olives together. "We are not afraid, but the buzzing of aircraft ... is playing with our nerves," said Mona Shaar, 54, smiling as she gathered olives in her apron. Some of her relatives covered the ground with a plastic sheet to catch the fruit while others took turns hitting the branches with a stick to harvest the fruit.

Working nearby, Mona's cousin Adnan said he's used to the sound of explosions, now a regular occurrence in the area. "I know people who couldn't harvest because they are closer to the border and under bombardment," he told AFP. "They left their harvest, their land... It's hard," he said. "Your harvest is like your child, you care for it as you would for your own son." — Agencies

Time running out to prevent Gaza 'genocide': Experts

GENEVA: A group of UN-mandated human rights experts, including the special rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories, said Thursday that "time is running out to prevent genocide and humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza".

"We remain convinced that the Palestinian people are at grave risk of genocide," the experts said in a joint statement. "The time for action is now. (The Zionist entity's) allies also bear responsibility and must act now to prevent its disastrous course of action." UN special rapporteurs are unpaid, independent figures mandated by the Human Rights Council. They do not speak for the United Nations but report their findings to it as part of the council's fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms. "The situation in Gaza has reached a catastrophic tipping point," the experts said, warning of the "dire need" for food, water, medicine, fuel and essential supplies and the risk of looming health hazards.

The statement was signed by Francesca Albanese, special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967. The other signatories were the special rapporteurs on safe drinking water; food; physical and mental health; internally displaced persons; freedom of expression; and on contemporary racism.

The UN experts called for the immediate release of all civilians being held captive since the Oct 7 Hamas attack on the Zionist entity. "All parties must comply with their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law," they said. "We demand a humanitarian ceasefire to ensure that aid reaches those who need it the most. A ceasefire also means channels of communication can be opened to ensure the release of hostages," the experts said.

Gaza's health ministry said 195 people were killed in two days of Zionist strikes on Jabalia, Gaza's largest refugee camp, with hundreds more missing and wounded. The UN experts voiced "deepening horror" about the Zionist strikes, calling them "a brazen violation of international law — and a war crime". "Attacking a camp sheltering civilians including women and children is a complete breach of the rules of proportionality and distinction between combatants and civilians," the special rapporteurs said. "(The Zionist entity) and Palestinian armed groups must bear in mind that even wars have rules." — AFP

International

China censors Li praise as it honors former premier

'In death, it seems, Li Keqiang has been sidelined too'

BEIJING: China's Communist Party leaders publicly honored former premier Li Keqiang on Thursday as he was laid to rest, but censors scrubbed praise of the reform-minded bureaucrat once seen as a rival to Xi Jinping to become president. Li, an economist and fluent English speaker, died from a sudden heart attack in Shanghai last week at the age of 68, just months after stepping down as the country's second-ranked leader.

The low-key but affable technocrat was viewed by many as an advocate for political liberalization and economic reform but came to be sidelined by Xi's more centralized and domineering governance style. As flags flew at half-mast across the country in tribute to what the Communist Party called a "loyal communist soldier", authorities were on high alert for any hints of public mourning for Li translating into criticism of Xi.

The Weibo social media site on Thursday showed more than 30,000 comments beneath a hashtag commemorating Li shared by state broadcaster CCTV. But only 13 of them were visible, suggesting Chinese censors were scrubbing vast numbers of comments from the site. Those that remained were distinctly apolitical, wishing the late premier "farewell" and promising he would "forever be in our hearts".

Tight control

Charlie Smith, co-founder of GreatFire, which monitors Chinese censorship online, told AFP "authorities are tightly controlling the messaging around the death of Li". He pointed to a number of censored comments saved by his group, including one that hailed Li as a "modern man with modern social concepts and a modern vision of civilization."

Another praised Li for working to "streamline" Chinese bureaucracy. "The authorities make it ap-

pear as if everybody is indifferent about Li's death, and there is no room to express sentiment otherwise," Smith, who writes under a pseudonym, said.

More pointed comments could be found on the former Weibo page of the whistleblower doctor Li Wenliang, who died from COVID in early 2020 after officials silenced his efforts to warn others about the deadly disease, triggering a public outcry. "All the flags in the whole country are at half-mast, and we can't do anything except bow and bid him farewell," one user wrote. "They won't let us search for anything online, and bottling this up is unbearable," wrote another.

Li Keqiang's decade-long tenure saw a shift from the more consensus-based rule of former leaders towards Xi's more concentrated style. Public reflection and nostalgia after the demise of former leaders can be highly sensitive for the Communist Party.

The death last year of former leader Jiang Zemin at the height of anti-COVID lockdowns sparked a wave of online nostalgia for his more relaxed, open rule in the 1990s. And David Bandurski, director of the independent China Media Project, wrote that the party had honored Li with a "paint-by-numbers treatment". "In death, it seems, Li Keqiang has been sidelined too," he said.

'Grief into strength'

The appointment of a key Xi ally as Li Keqiang's successor was seen as a sign that his reformist agenda had fallen by the wayside as Beijing tightened its grip over the economy. Social media users have shared some of Li Keqiang's best-known quotes since his death, including a renewed declaration of support for China's reform and opening policy made as the country groaned under isolating COVID curbs in 2022.

"The Yellow River and Yangtze River will not change course," Li said at the time, characterizing



CHUZHOU: This photo taken on Oct 30, 2023 shows flowers left at a place where former Chinese premier Li Keqiang used to work at in Chuzhou, in China's eastern Anhui province. — AFP

the reform process as an unstoppable force of nature. The Communist Party has urged the Chinese people to "turn grief into strength" by rallying even closer around their leaders.

His body was cremated at Beijing's Babaoshan Revolutionary Cemetery on Thursday, at an event attended by the country's top leadership, including Xi, state broadcaster CCTV reported. Hu Jintao — the former president and mentor of Li who was dramatically escorted from a party

conclave last year as Xi sealed a third term in power — sent a wreath, it added.

National flags in a smoggy Tiananmen Square and at other locations in Beijing were lowered to half-mast on Thursday. And near Babaoshan, where scores of notable Chinese officials are buried, around 200 mostly elderly people gathered. But they were outnumbered by law enforcement, with attempts to film the entrance of the cemetery from a moving car blocked by a police vehicle. — AFP

Uganda captures militia chief accused of tourist murders

KAMPALA: Uganda said Thursday it has captured the head of a militia squad blamed for the murder of two honeymooning foreign tourists and their local guide in a national park last month. He was the only survivor of a night-time military operation on Tuesday against a unit of the feared Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) that killed six other fighters, the army said.

A Briton and a South African were murdered along with their guide in an attack on Oct 17 while on safari in Queen Elizabeth National Park. Uganda

blamed the ADF, an armed militia based in the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo that is affiliated with the Islamic State (IS) group.

The IS group later claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it had killed "three Christian tourists". Uganda's deputy military spokesman Deo Akiki told AFP that the unit commander, identified only as Njovu, had been injured in the back during a gunbattle on Tuesday.

"This was a successful joint military intelligence-led operation and the whole squad that had been sent by the ADF to cause mayhem, kill tourists, burn schools, hospitals, was eliminated," Akiki said. "The only survivor is the commander whom we captured," he said, adding that he was being treated in a secret location and would face trial. Akiki said Njovu was found with some of the belongings of the murdered tourists and their Ugandan guide's identity card.

The victims of the October attack have been

named as British national David Barlow, his South African wife Celia and the guide, Eric Ayai. Major General Dick Olum, who oversees Uganda's military operations against the ADF in the DRC, said another six members of the squad were shot dead in Tuesday's operation. It took place on Lake Edward, which straddles the Uganda-DRC border and lies to the west of the park where the three were slain.

'Eliminate splinter groups'

Olum said the captured fighter had been plotting "another mission to carry out more terror attacks", unaware the military was monitoring the group's movements. "The squad had seven members including their commander whom we captured. Four of the terrorists were shot and drowned in the water, two tried to swim across the water and were shot dead as well," he said. "Our mission now is to hunt for the

remaining ADF splinter groups and eliminate them."

After the October attack, President Yoweri Museveni called on the security forces to ensure the ADF was "wiped out" and the military has carried out a number of air strikes against its positions in the DRC. The ADF is historically a Ugandan rebel coalition whose biggest group comprised Muslims opposed to Museveni. Established in eastern Congo in 1995, the group is accused of slaughtering thousands of civilians in the violence-ravaged region.

In June, ADF fighters killed 42 people including 37 students in an attack on a high school in western Uganda near the DRC border. Britain has advised its nationals to avoid travel to certain areas of Uganda, including the Queen Elizabeth park. Tourism is a top foreign exchange earner in Uganda, generating almost 10 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) last year, according to government figures. — AFP

Australian woman charged with murder over mushroom deaths

SYDNEY: Australian police charged a woman with murder Thursday over a mushroom meal that left three people dead and a local preacher fighting for his life. Erin Patterson, 49, faces three counts of murder and two of attempted murder over the meal, Victoria state detectives said in a statement. She has publicly denied any wrongdoing.

The charges were laid just hours after detectives had arrested her and searched her home in the

rural town of Leongatha, southeast of Melbourne. In addition, police said they had charged Patterson with another three counts of attempted murder over three earlier incidents in 2021-2022 when a 48-year-old man "became ill after meals". It was the latest twist in a saga that has gripped the nation.

Patterson allegedly served a beef Wellington meal on July 29 to her estranged parents-in-law Don and Gail Patterson, local Baptist pastor Ian Wilkinson and his wife Heather. Later that night, the two couples were taken to hospital with food poisoning symptoms as their health rapidly deteriorated. Within a week, three of them were dead.

Of the four, only 69-year-old pastor Wilkinson survived after spending nearly two months gravely ill in hospital. He was released on September 23. He appeared for the first time in public

in early October at a memorial for his wife, with a local newspaper describing him as "frail-looking" and "using a walking frame".

Police have said their symptoms were consistent with those caused by eating highly toxic death cap mushrooms, though they made no reference to the ingredient in their latest statement. "Today's charges are just the next step in what has been an incredibly complex, methodical and thorough investigation by Homicide Squad detectives," said Detective Inspector Dean Thomas of the Victorian police homicide squad.

"I think it is particularly important that we keep in mind that at the heart of this, three people have lost their lives," he said. In smaller communities, "a tragedy such as this can reverberate for years to come", he added. Police had named

community newsletter editor Patterson as a suspect soon after the fateful meal. Patterson always insisted she was innocent, reportedly saying in August that she had unwittingly bought the mushrooms from an Asian grocery store and that the poisonings were accidental.

"I am now devastated to think that these mushrooms may have contributed to the illness suffered by my loved ones," she said in a statement provided to Australian media at the time. "I really want to repeat that I had absolutely no reason to hurt these people whom I loved."

Death cap mushrooms sprout freely throughout wet, warm parts of Australia and are easily mistaken for edible varieties. They reportedly taste sweeter than other types of mushrooms but possess potent toxins that slowly poison the liver and kidneys. — AFP

Kuwait demands ceasefire as...

Continued from Page 1

The medicines will be sorted and distributed to hospitals in the next few hours, Abu Daya told KUNA, noting the Zionist occupation keeps interrupting the delivery process of the rest of the humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip including medical equipment and ambulances. He added the KRCS aid provided to Gaza comes as part of Kuwait's relief air bridge, which has been maintained for more than 10 days now, carrying 10 tons of medicine and more than six ambulances provided by KRCS and Kuwaiti charities.

Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah received on Thursday a phone call from US Secre-

tary of Defense Lloyd J Austin to discuss the latest developments in Palestine. In a press release, the ministry of defense said that both sides discussed bilateral ties, ways to enhance cooperation between Kuwait and the US, topics of common interests and the latest regional and international developments. During the phone call, Sheikh Ahmad affirmed the necessity for immediate action to lift the siege on Gaza, to end the unjustified military operations and work on facilitating the entry of humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people.

Also on Thursday, Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah left Kuwait for Russia on an official visit. The minister and his accompanying delegation will hold multiple meetings with officials in Moscow to strengthen bilateral ties between both sides. In the meetings, both sides will discuss several vital topics and issues regionally and internationally, especially developments in the region. — KUNA

been a champion of the Palestinian cause.

The fundraising campaign unveiled Thursday fits "within the framework of the kingdom's well-known historic role in standing with the brotherly Palestinian people," said Dr Abdullah Al-Rabeeah, head of the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported. King Salman donated 30 million Saudi riyals (roughly \$8 million) to the campaign, while Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman donated 20 million Saudi riyals (roughly \$5.3 million), SPA said. As of early Thursday evening, more than 186,000 donors had contributed 118.4 million Saudi riyals (roughly \$31.5 million), according to an official website.

Politics-free messaging seems to resonate with some Saudis like Jamila, who told AFP that such matters were best left to those in power. "I feel sad for the Palestinians and I can donate to them, but we cannot stop our lives," said the 28-year-old fitness coach, who wanted to be identified by a pseudonym.

Hovering over any discussion of the war is continued speculation about whether Saudi Arabia would still consider recognizing the Zionist entity for the first time. — Agencies

MP files to grill commerce...

Continued from Page 1

several containers of petroleum products that have been at Shuwaikh Port for a long period, thus risking the safety of the main commercial port. The lawmaker alleged in his grilling that the minister has committed

More foreigners flee as death toll...

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"People were going to hospitals to sleep, there are a lot of martyrs, there is no Internet, no communications and no electricity. Our house was bombed ... so we came here to Rafah." The evacuation marks a tiny proportion of the 2.4 million people trapped in Gaza under weeks of bombardment.

Violence has also flared in the Zionist-occupied West Bank, where more than 130 Palestinians have died since Oct 7 according to the Palestinian health ministry. Three Palestinians were killed Thursday by Zionist fire in the West Bank, the ministry said, and a Zionist was killed in a Palestinian shooting attack. In embattled

UN chief leads calls for 'united'...

Continued from Page 1

risked "possible long-term negative consequences" — on everything from jobs to culture — while its concentration in a few countries and companies "could increase geopolitical tensions".

He also warned that it might "exacerbate the enormous inequalities that already plague our world", demanding a "united, sustained, global strategy, based on multilateralism and the participation of all stakehold-

ers". New solutions should be based on existing principles found in his organization's 1945 charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, he added.

The release of ChatGPT and other generative AI systems, which are capable of quickly producing text, images and audio from simple commands in everyday language, has captivated the public and offered a glimpse into the technology's potential. The summit coincided with the release of a "new" Beatles song produced with AI's assistance more than four decades after it was originally recorded as a demo. But the emergent tech has also prompted concerns around issues ranging from job losses to cyberattacks and the control that humans actually have over the systems. — AFP

Gaza, more than 20,000 people are wounded, according to aid group Doctors Without Borders.

Ground battles flared again overnight in northern Gaza as Zionist troops have sought to destroy Hamas, the Islamist movement that controls the territory. The Zionist army is also seeking to free around 240 hostages captured by Hamas. Some 332 soldiers have already died since the Oct 7 attacks and in the Zionist offensive the Hamas assault triggered.

Global concern has risen sharply over the Zionist entity's response, in which the army says it has struck more than 12,000 targets so far. The Gaza health ministry says more than 9,000 people have died, mostly women and children. Special concern has focused on repeated heavy strikes on Gaza's largest refugee camp — densely populated Jabalia, north of Gaza City — where explosions brought down residential buildings. — AFP

International

Storm Ciaran batters western Europe

Five killed by falling trees as storm blows record winds

BRUSSELS: Five people were killed by falling trees as Storm Ciaran battered Western Europe on Thursday, bringing record winds as high as 200 kilometers per hour, floods, blackouts and major travel disruptions. Some 1.2 million French homes lost electricity overnight as the storm lashed the northwest coast, and most remained without power on Thursday. Falling trees killed a lorry driver in his vehicle in France's Aisne region, a man in the Dutch town of Venray, a woman in central Madrid, a person in Germany and another person in the Belgian city of Ghent, according to police reports. "The wind gusts are exceptional in Brittany and many absolute records have been broken," Meteo-France, the national weather service, said on X (formerly Twitter).

The prefect for the local department said gusts as high as 207 km/h were recorded at Pointe du Raz on the tip of the northwest coast, while the port city of Brest saw winds hit 156 km/h. In southern England, hundreds of schools were closed as large waves powered by winds of 135 km/hour crashed along the coastline. On the Channel Island of Jersey, residents had to be evacuated to hotels overnight as gusts of up to 164 km/hour damaged homes, according to local media.

The Netherlands urged people to stay home and more than 200 flights were cancelled at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport, a major European hub. Air, rail and ferry services saw cancellations and long delays across several countries. Roosmarijn Knol, weather forecaster for Dutch public broadcaster NOS, said the timing of the storm was important.

"Due to a warm autumn with a lot of rain, trees still have their leaves, and the ground is as wet as a sponge," said Knol. "Therefore, especially weak trees have a good chance of falling over. That is a big difference from an autumn storm at, say, the end of November, when all the leaves have already fallen."



ILE-TUDY: Municipal employees cut and move fallen trees in Ile Tudy, western France, on Nov 2, 2023. - AFP

Floods

Britain's Environment Agency warned of "significant flooding along parts of the south coast and along parts of the Yorkshire and Northeast coasts". The effects of the storm were felt as far south as Spain and Portugal, with Spanish authorities warning of waves as high as nine meters along the Atlantic coast.

In France's northern Pas-de-Calais, authorities

opened gymnasiums and shelters for migrants who converge on the region hoping to make it to Britain by boat. But despite some damaged buildings and cars, there was some relief in France. "We were expecting worse. There was obviously a big blast of wind, but no major damage," said one local mayor, Olivier Lepick. There was disappointment, however, for the hardy athletes of the annual Dutch "headwind cycle championships" race.

They only hold their race along the Oosterschelde storm surge barrier in the western Netherlands if the wind is above a gale seven on the Beaufort Scale (up to 61 kilometers per hour), but they finally met their match with Storm Ciaran and had to cancel. There were "many disappointed faces," organizer Robrecht Stoekenbroek told local agency ANP, vowing to go ahead when the storm passed. - AFP

Donald Trump Jr says 'not involved' in financial papers

NEW YORK: Donald Trump Jr, the former president's eldest son, on Wednesday told the judge in the civil fraud trial that threatens the family real estate business in New York that he had not been involved in the financial documents at the center of the prosecution. Don Jr, 45, is the first member of the Trump family to testify in the case in which the Trump Organization is accused of inflating the value of its assets by billions of dollars to obtain more favorable bank loans and insurance terms. Don Jr's younger brother, Eric Trump, 39, is also expected to testify this week and the former president himself may be questioned on Monday, a day shy of one year before the November 5, 2024 presidential election that he hopes will sweep him back into the White House.

In a dark blue suit, light-colored shirt and pink tie, Don Jr confirmed his role at the top of the Trump Organization, a myriad of companies managing residential and office skyscrapers, luxury hotels and golf courses around the world. State attorney Colleen Faherty asked him who took over the Trump Organization once his father entered the White House in January 2017. "A combination of myself, my brother (Eric) and Allen Weisselberg," the former chief financial officer who was sentenced in 2022 to time served for tax fraud, Don Trump replied, appearing at ease.



NEW YORK: Donald Trump Jr. and lawyer Alina Habba are seated for the fraud trial of the Trump Organization on Nov 1, 2023. - AFP

But he also presented himself as unfamiliar with accounting principles in the annual financial statements since 2016 that offer a snapshot of the family business and are the heart of the state attorney's case. Trump Jr explained that he had put his trust in their accounting firm, Mazars. "I wasn't involved in the compilation of this statement," he said. "The accountants worked on it. That's what we paid them to do." If the 77-year-old Trump takes the stand in the Manhattan courtroom where the trial is taking place it will be the first time he testifies publicly in any of the various civil and criminal cases facing him. The former president's daughter, Ivanka Trump, who left the Trump Organization in 2017 to become a White House advisor to her father, is not a codefendant in the case but has also been ordered to testify. She has appealed the subpoena.

The court adjourned for the day before Don Jr finished testifying. He is to return to the stand on Thursday. The former president and his sons do not risk going to jail in the fraud case brought by New York state attorney general but face up to \$250 million in penalties and potential removal from management of the family company.

Prior to his son's testimony, Trump lashed out at Judge Arthur Engoron, who is presiding over the case, and told him to "leave my children alone." In a series of posts on his Truth Social platform, Trump called the judge a "political hack" who is "doing the dirty work for the Democrat Party." "Engoron is crazy, totally unhinged, and dangerous," the former president said of the judge, who has already ruled that Trump, his sons and other senior executives of the Trump Organization committed fraud. "Leave my children alone, Engoron," Trump said. "You are a disgrace to the legal profession!" - AFP

Putin revokes ratification of nuclear treaty

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday signed a law revoking Russia's ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. The 1996 treaty outlaws all nuclear explosions, including live tests of nuclear weapons, though it never came into force because some key countries — including the United States and China — never ratified it.

The West has accused Russia of using reckless nuclear rhetoric since it launched its offensive on Ukraine

last February. Putin last week oversaw ballistic missile drills in what Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said was practice for a "massive" retaliatory nuclear strike against an unnamed enemy. Putin also said last month he was "not ready to say" whether Russia would carry out live nuclear tests. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) has urged Russia to continue its commitment to the treaty, including the use of monitoring stations capable of detecting the slightest explosion in real time. "Today's decision by the Russian Federation to revoke its ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is very disappointing and deeply regrettable," CTBTO head Robert Floyd said on X, formerly known as Twitter.

France, one of the treaty's original signatories, said it "deplored" Russia's decision to revoke the ratification. "Russia's decision compromises the work of mak-

ing the treaty universal. We reaffirm the importance of the CTBT and its full implementation," it said.

The bill to revoke the treaty passed through Russia's parliament last month in a fast-track process. During parliamentary hearings, State Duma speaker Vyacheslav Volodin said the move to revoke the treaty was a response to the United States' "cynicism" and "boorish attitudes" on nuclear weapons.

Although it never entered into force, the agreement was ratified by 178 countries, including nuclear powers France and Britain, and has symbolic value. Its backers say it established an international norm against live tests of nuclear weapons, but critics say the potential of the deal remains unrealized without the ratifications of major nuclear powers. Russia's parliament ratified the agreement in June 2000, six months after Putin first became president. - AFP

Democracy levels trending downwards across world: Report

STOCKHOLM: Nearly half the world's countries are seeing the level of democracy decline, an international think tank said Thursday. And some countries with historically long democratic traditions are among them. The Stockholm-based International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) said 85 out of 173 countries surveyed had "suffered a decline in at least one key indicator of democratic performance in the past five years".

"Many established democracies are experiencing setbacks ... ranging from declines in social group equality in the United States, freedom of the press in Austria and access to justice in the United Kingdom," it added. "This is the sixth year that we've seen more countries with democratic declines than improvements," its program officer, Michael Runey, told AFP. He is one of the authors of "The Global State of Democracy 2023" report.

That six-year trend represented the longest "democratic recession" the organization had seen since it started collecting data in 1975, he added. The rule of law embodied by independent courts and freedom from political violence was also weakening in countries such as Austria, Hungary and Peru, the report noted. The "bedrocks of democracy are weakening across the globe", it warned. While the declines could be seen in all parts of the world, in Africa they were exemplified by the wave of coups d'etat there.

Checks, balances weakened

In the rights category, the authors noted declines in freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, though overall declines were not significant. In the category of rule of law, there were improvements "after many years of stagnation in levels of corruption", though the picture was "not unambiguously positive", the report said.

Democratic deterioration has also been exacerbated by an erosion of "checks and balances", which in the authors' view goes beyond the traditional understanding of the term. Institutions keeping powers in check also include entities such as human rights organizations, civil society networks as well as investigative journalists. "We're also seeing declines in historically high performing democracies in Europe and North America and in Asia," Runey said.

The organization had noted a democratic downturn tied to the Covid-19 pandemic, and Runey said that now with data from after the peak of the pandemic that had not seen any type of "rebound" yet.

Some positive developments were noted, such as improvements in the area of rule of law in several countries in Central Europe as well as lower levels of corruption and increased political participation in several African countries. "We see signs of hope in isolated countries around the world. But overall, the picture is still quite negative," Runey said.

The report's analysis was based on several metrics, including civil liberties, judicial independence and political participation, with the report identifying four top line categories — representation, rights, rule of law and participation. - AFP

How harm reduction plays a role in our everyday lives



Harm reduction in the very broadest sense refers to any opportunity we have to reduce the negative consequences of something we consume or expose ourselves to. Harm reduction in our daily lives can therefore be as simple as using your seatbelt when driving to minimize harm in the event of an accident or replacing sugar with alternative sweeteners in your morning coffee to reduce your sugar intake.

Harm reduction in its many forms has been a focus for branches of society as a means of improving public wellbeing for generations. Individuals, social organizations and businesses have long applied behavioral, cognitive and social sciences to nudge consumers towards healthier habits¹. For instance, increased concern for better eating habits, sound sleeping patterns, and cognitive exercises such as mindful meditation all pose opportunities for companies to support consumers with in-demand products and services that all fall under the harm reduction umbrella.

Today, according to McKinsey, the global wellness market is worth over \$1.5 trillion and is estimated to grow by five to ten percent annually thanks to the gradual rise in consumer interest and purchasing power². The same McKinsey survey of approximately 7,500 individuals across six countries found that 79% believe wellness is important, and 42% were convinced of wellness being their top priority.

Beyond the deepening interest among citizens in personal wellbeing, governments have, naturally, always leveraged their influence to support wellness broadly, setting legislation and diverting resources to tackle specific health-related challenges facing the local population.

For example, the UAE government has set key performance indicators to measure its healthcare performance as a key pillar of its Vision 2021 agenda. These indicators include average healthy life expectancy, consumption of tobacco products, and prevalence of diabetes, among others³. In Saudi Arabia, the Vision 2030 is looking to build a progressive future for the country through three main pillars, with one of the pillars being

a vital society focusing on the happiness of citizens and residents, social well-being, and a positive living environment⁴.

According to the World Health Organization estimates, more than one billion people continue to smoke worldwide, and the number of smokers is unlikely to decline in the foreseeable future.

Smoking causes a number of serious diseases (including cardiovascular, pulmonary diseases and cancer) and increases the risk of early death. With around eight million attributed deaths every year, cigarette smoking is a formidable public health challenge for governments, regulators and public health authorities worldwide⁵. The shift in public perceptions to prioritize personal wellbeing and healthier choices as outlined above should be seen as a cause for optimism when we consider the challenge posed by smoking to public health. What's more, options and opportunities for tobacco harm reduction continue to advance at pace.

We all agree that the best thing adult smokers can do is quit smoking and nicotine altogether, but the reality is that many don't. For those adult smokers who will continue to smoke, the opportunity to switch to scientifically substantiated, better alternatives have the potential to accelerate the decline in the number of people smoking cigarettes. This is the principle of tobacco harm reduction.

Harnessing science and technological innovation — like the innovations behind smoke free products such as heated tobacco products, which although not risk free can reduce the harm caused by cigarettes — is a public health opportunity. Harm reduction takes on many guises today — from smoke-free alternatives to cigarettes to the sunscreen cream you pack for the beach. As society sharpens its focus on living a less harmful life, each of us can take steps towards our own wellness by embracing the many iterations of harm reduction that surround us.

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¹<https://www.psychoinformatics.org/observer/nonchance-of-small-changes>

²<https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/consumer-packaged-goods/our-insights/feeling-good-the-future-of-the-1-5-trillion-wellness-market>

³<https://u.ae/en/information-and-services/health-and-fitness/vision-2021-and-health>

⁴<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0046958020984682>

⁵<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tobacco>

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2023

Japan PM Kishida unveils \$113bn stimulus as poll numbers slump

Package will likely add to Japan's debt mountain

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida announced a stimulus package worth more than \$100 billion on Thursday as he tries to ease the pressure from inflation and rescue his premiership with his poll ratings at a record low.

Voters in the world's third-largest economy have been reeling from rising prices since Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine last year, pushing up energy costs and putting pressure on the government. "We are seeing that the tide is turning from the vicious cycle of deflation—symbolized by low prices, low wages and low growth," Kishida told a meeting where he revealed the size of the package would be around 17 trillion yen (\$113.2 billion).

"For the first time in 30 years, we are facing a great opportunity to move to a new economic stage," he added. "On the other hand, in the current situation where the rise in wages is not catching up with the rise in prices, it is necessary to support people's disposable income temporarily so as to avoid moving back to deflation," he said.

The plan involves income and residential tax reductions of 40,000 yen per person, and 70,000 yen cash handouts to low-income households, Kishida told reporters. He also pledged to "lead the way (next year) in urging the business community to raise wages to a level higher than this year". The package was approved by the cabinet on Thursday, and according to public broadcaster NHK, the government plans to submit a draft of the supplementary budget to parliament this month. The program will be worth 37.4 trillion yen taking into account private sector spending, local media reported. There will be funds to promote investment in high-tech areas including the chip and electric vehicle industries.

Debt mountain

The package will likely add to Japan's debt mountain, which stood at 261 percent of gross do-

mestic product in 2022, one of the world's highest. The government has already injected hundreds of billions of dollars into the economy over the past three years since the COVID-19 pandemic.

GDP has been slowly picking up speed, with growth of 1.2 percent in April-June, but it is expected to have contracted since. Japan was for decades beset by deflation but like other economies around the world, prices have risen since the Ukraine war began in February 2022.

A weaker yen, meanwhile, while welcome news to Japanese exporters, makes imports pricier and stokes inflation for households. Unlike other major central banks, the Bank of Japan refused to tighten monetary policy and instead continues to keep interest rates below zero and bond yields ultra-low in a bid to boost economic growth.

That has come even as inflation continues to rise—the core consumer price index is at a three-decade high—with officials insisting the increase is temporary despite ramping up its forecasts for this year and next. But its stance has added to pressure on the yen, one of the world's worst-performing major currencies in 2023.

Poll slump

Poll ratings for Kishida are at their lowest levels since he took office two years ago, in part because of voter unease over inflation. Kishida, 66, can govern until 2025 but there has been speculation that he might call a snap election ahead of a likely tough internal leadership vote in his ruling Democratic Party (LDP) next year.

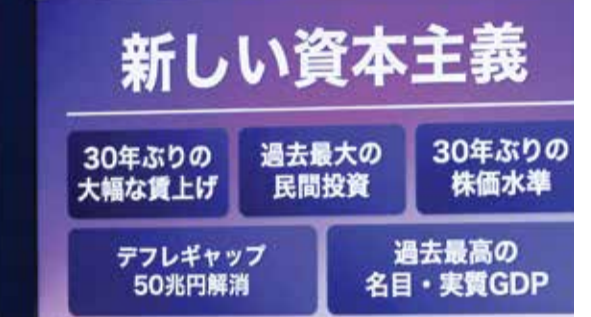
He told reporters on Thursday he "is committed to tackling issues that cannot be postponed" and "is not thinking about anything else". Hideo Kumano, chief economist of Dai-ichi Life Research Institute, said he was "sceptical" whether the package will help either the economy or the prime minister.



TOKYO: Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida speaks during a news conference at the prime minister's official residence in Tokyo on Nov 2, 2023. — AFP

Kishida has oscillated between stressing fiscal discipline and wanting to boost spending, he told AFP. "Those who had opposed any tax hike to finance government policy hadn't supported Kishida. Now, those who had opposed distributing money widely will leave him," the analyst told AFP.

Voters need to be convinced. "Everyday prod-



新しい資本主義

30年ぶりの大幅な賃上げ	過去最大の民間投資	30年ぶりの株価水準
デフレギャップ 50兆円解消	過去最高の名目・実質GDP	

ucts have become more expensive so I have no choice but to look for cheaper items," Tokyo resident Masaharu Kashima told AFP. "I've cut my purchases in half," the 74-year-old said. "I don't think (the stimulus) is going to change much... They also already gave us 100,000 yen (during COVID) but it didn't change anything." — AFP

Energy giant Shell's net profit up 4.5%

LONDON: British energy giant Shell on Thursday said net profit rose 4.5 percent to \$7 billion in the third quarter from a year earlier, as it benefits from high oil prices. "Shell delivered another quarter of strong operational and financial performance, capturing opportunities in volatile commodity markets," chief executive Wael Sawan said in a statement.

"We continue to simplify our portfolio while delivering more value with less emissions," he added in an earnings statement. Energy majors are benefiting in the current fourth quarter from elevated oil prices, which are being fuelled by concerns the Zionist entity-Hamas conflict could widen across the crude-rich Middle East.

Shell on Thursday also announced a fresh buyback of shares worth \$3.5 billion. Adjusted earnings in the third quarter stood at \$6.2 billion, up compared with the second quarter, on "robust operational performance and higher oil prices and refining margins".

Over the first nine months of 2023, Shell's profit was however down sharply, reflecting lower oil prices year-on-year. Crude futures had soared at the start of 2022 following the invasion of Ukraine by major oil producer Russia.

After later falling somewhat, they are once more on the rise thanks also to output cuts by Saudi Arabia and Russia, the main players in the OPEC+ oil-producing cartel. "Higher oil prices have coincided conveniently for Shell with a three-percent increase in production... reaching the equivalent of 1.75 million barrels of oil a day," Susannah Streeter, head of money and markets at Hargreaves Lansdown, noted Thursday.

Following its update, Shell's share price rose 1.54 percent to almost £27 (\$33) on London's benchmark FTSE 100 index, which was rising 1.2 percent overall. "Shell is still flirting with an all-time high in its share price, with the decision by CEO Wael Sawan to refocus on the hydrocarbons business, while pivoting more slowly to renewables," Streeter added.

As expected, Shell's latest bumper profits drew the ire of environmentalists. "People are sick of watching oil bosses feign concern about the planet while slashing jobs and investment in renewables and ploughing money into dividends, share buybacks, and new fossil fuel projects," Charlie Kronick, senior climate advisor at Greenpeace UK, said in reaction to the company's results.

Shell in June said it planned to keep oil output steady until 2030, while maintaining that its overall goal to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050 remains intact. Meanwhile last month, Qatar agreed to supply Shell with natural gas for 27 years. Shell rival BP on Tuesday posted net profit totalling \$4.9 billion for the third quarter. — AFP

Anti-obesity drugs fatten Novo Nordisk profits

COPENHAGEN: Danish drugmaker Novo Nordisk reported Thursday a sharp rise in third quarter sales and profits driven by the success of its anti-diabetes and anti-obesity treatments Ozempic and Wegovy. Net profit rose to 22.5 billion kroner (\$3.2 billion) in the period from July to September, a 56 percent increase from the same time last year.

Sales meanwhile rose 29 percent to 58.7 billion kroner. The results came in slightly better than analyst forecasts of a net profit of around 21.5 billion kroner on sales of 57.7 billion. Over the first nine months of the year, sales rose by 33 percent to 166.4 billion kroner at constant exchange rates, with a 58 percent jump in sales for Ozempic and a near five-fold increase for Wegovy.

"We are very satisfied with the sales growth in the first nine months of 2023, which is reflecting that more people than ever are benefiting from our inno-

vative diabetes and obesity treatments," chief executive Lars Fruergaard Jorgensen said in a comment. Ozempic is an injectable anti-diabetic treatment which became wildly popular on social networks for its slimming properties, even though it is not approved for such use.

Novo Nordisk then launched Wegovy, which has the same active ingredient as Ozempic in a different dose, but which was approved by US regulators to treat obesity. Wegovy is also marketed in Denmark, Norway, the United Kingdom and Germany.

Obesity, which leads to many people developing diabetes, is a growing health problem, with the World Obesity Federation estimating that one in four people could be obese by 2035. The success of the drugs has led to Novo Nordisk becoming a darling among investors who have driven up the company's share price so much that the company is now Europe's largest by market capitalisation.

Novo Nordisk, which employs nearly 61,400 people in 80 countries, has also become one of the main drivers of the Danish economy. Over the first six months of the year, GDP of the small Scandinavian country rose by 1.7 percent year-on-year, but without the contribution of the pharmaceutical industry it would have fallen by 0.3 percent, according



COPENHAGEN: In this file photo an employee sits next to a door bearing the logo of Novo Nordisk at the factory in Hilleroed on Sept 26, 2023. — AFP

to the national statistics office.

In its quarterly report, Novo Nordisk maintained its annual outlook of an increase in annual operating profit of between 40 and 46 percent on a rise in sales of between 32 and 38 percent. — AFP

BoE freezes rate, rules out cuts any time soon

LONDON: The Bank of England on Thursday held its key interest rate at 5.25 percent, a day after the Federal Reserve also froze borrowing costs as global inflation retreats. The BoE had already kept its rate steady at the central bank's previous monetary policy meeting in September, snapping a streak of 14 hikes in a row. However, the UK interest rate remains the highest in more than 15 years, with the nation's annual inflation the most elevated among G7 rich nations.

'Too early' to cut

Governor Andrew Bailey said it was "much too early" to think about cutting rates. Bailey joined five

policymakers in voting for a pause. But the three others called for a hike to 5.5 percent. "We've held rates unchanged this month, but we'll be watching closely to see if further rate increases are needed," Bailey added in a statement.

This even as the BoE on Thursday forecast the UK economy to flatline next year, down from its prediction in August for growth of about 0.5 percent in 2024. The latest BoE announcements come amid a lingering UK cost-of-living crisis as oil prices rally on the Zionist entity-Hamas war.

On Wednesday, the Federal Reserve left US interest rates at a 22-year high for a second straight meeting as it moved to slow stubbornly-high inflation without damaging a robust US economy. In a widely expected decision, the Fed kept the benchmark lending rate between 5.25 percent and 5.50 percent.

The European Central Bank last week left eurozone borrowing costs unchanged after raising them in each of its previous 10 meetings. "Several central banks... have reached the point where they are like-

Stocks soar, dollar slumps as markets eye end to US rate hikes

LONDON: Stock markets and oil prices jumped while the dollar slid Thursday after the Federal Reserve hinted it was at an end of its rate-tightening cycle as inflation retreats. Asian and European traders picked up the baton from their Wall Street counterparts after the Fed froze US interest rates Wednesday. Wall Street's main stock indices continued pushing higher at the start of trading Thursday. The Bank of England, as expected, kept its key interest rate steady, Governor Andrew Bailey saying it was "much too early" to think about cutting rates.

On the corporate front, all eyes will be on Apple earnings later Thursday. There is "a sense that the Fed has come to an end of its rate hike cycle", said Saxo's Redmond Wong. The US central bank held interest rates at a 22-year high for a second straight meeting. The Fed kept its benchmark lending rate between 5.25 percent and 5.5 percent. However, Fed Chair Jerome Powell cautioned that "the process of getting inflation sustainably down to two percent has a long way to go".

He added that the US central bank was not at all thinking about rate cuts and maintained the option to hike them if developments warrant. "It is the market, however, that thinks that is empty lip service that won't ultimately translate into an actual rate-hike action," said market analyst Patrick O'Hare at Briefing.com. Yields on US Treasuries also fell after the decision, which was also positive for stocks, which have slid in

recent months. "The market was oversold and speculation was rising that it was due for a bounce from its oversold condition and, lo and behold, that is what is taking place," said O'Hare.

The drop in future rate-hike expectations—some put the chances of a December lift at about only 20 percent—saw the dollar slide against its peers. Notably, it eased to just above 150 yen, having surged towards a three-decade high 152 at one point this week after a Bank of Japan policy tweak fell short of what some had forecast.

The softer dollar and the prospect of easier financial conditions for companies pushed up crude oil, which is priced in the greenback. The commodity had been falling in recent days on hopes that the Zionist entity-Hamas conflict would not widen across the crude-rich Middle East. — AFP

Iraq inches toward solar-powered future

Despite vast oil wealth, Iraq struggles to provide electricity to its people

HAZAR MERD, Iraq: In a small village in the mountains of Iraqi Kurdistan, solar panels adorn most homes, part of a small but growing effort to harness the sun's energy in Iraq, where electricity is scarce. "Solar covers all our needs: The refrigerator, television, air cooler, washing machine, vacuum cleaner," said Daniar Abdallah, 33, a resident of Hazer Merd who converted to solar and hasn't looked back. "It has helped us a lot," said the father of two, who spent \$2,800 in 2018 to install photovoltaic panels for his family home.

Despite its vast oil wealth, Iraq struggles to provide enough electricity to its 43 million people after decades of conflict and sanctions, as well as rampant corruption and crumbling infrastructure. And even though it is blessed with more sunshine than most other countries, it has proved difficult to wean Iraq's economy off fossil fuels - one of the themes of the upcoming COP28 climate talks in Dubai.

Although it receives a third of its energy needs from neighboring Iran, there are still daily power cuts, which worsen in the hot summer months when temperatures approach 50 degrees Celsius (120 Fahrenheit). The tranquil silence of Hazer Merd is striking in a country where the roar of large neighbourhood generators used to provide back-up power is ever-present. "Before, we had a generator that broke down all the time" to overcome power cuts which can sometimes last 12 or 13 hours a day, said Abdallah, who works as a soldier for local Kurdish forces. Several friends have swiftly followed his example and now 17 out of the 25 homes in his village boast solar panels.

Fossil fuels dominate

Nationwide, however, the use of solar power remains scarce. In nearby Sulaymaniyah, the second-largest city in northern Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region, only 500 out of the 600,000 households are equipped with solar panels, said Sirwan Mahmud, a spokesman for the province's electricity department.

Solar power had seen "rapid progression", he said, after the region's parliament adopted incentives in 2021 to compensate households for any excess electricity that they generate. The region aims to build three commercial solar power plants with a total capacity of 75 megawatts (MW), he added.

But that would only represent a small boost to the 24,000 MW that Iraqi power plants produce. To end power outages, the country would need to produce at least 32,000 MW. Despite its huge potential, renewable energy remains under-used in Iraq, even though it experiences more than 3,000 hours of sunlight across the 8,760 hours in a year.

"The worst solar site in Iraq has resources that are almost two-thirds higher than the best site in Ger-



SULAIMANIYAH: Solar panels installed atop the roof of a house in the Hazer Merd village near Sulaymaniyah in northern Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region are pictured on September 19, 2023. — AFP

many," said Ali al-Saffar, climate director at the New York-based Rockefeller Foundation. A recent World Bank report highlighted that more than 98 percent of Iraq's electricity is still generated from fossil fuels. Authorities say they aim to harness green energy to meet a third of the country's needs by 2030. But despite several major projects being announced with great fanfare, that has yet to materialise. TotalEnergies says it hopes to deliver "the first phase" of a 1,000 MW solar plant within two years.

In 2021, Baghdad signed an agreement with the Emirati company Masdar to build five solar plants with a combined capacity of 1,000 MW.

'Lack of solar culture'

To encourage renewable energy, Iraq's Central Bank in 2022 announced the allocation of \$750 million in almost zero-interest loans for individuals and

private companies adopting solar power. But the initiative is "stalling due to a lack of cooperation from banks", according to Mohamed al-Duleimi, an expert in renewable energies. Iraq lacks a "solar culture", said Ali al-Ameri, the executive director of Solar Energy Universe, which installs solar infrastructure. This year, however, more people are turning to solar, he said, with his company installing photovoltaic panels at about a dozen sites. "Prices start at \$4,500 and can go up to \$6,000," he said.

Among his clients are academics and doctors, but also humanitarian agencies and farmers. Since 2020, he has installed panels on 70 buildings, mainly houses, in Baghdad, the neighboring province of Anbar and the south. Despite the slow progress, Iraq's solar potential could be an "opportunity to resolve once and for all its chronic electricity shortages," he added. — AFP

News in Brief

Lufthansa profits surge

FRANKFURT: Lufthansa reported a surge in third-quarter profits Thursday after a strong summer travel season, and said it expected the boom to continue in the months ahead. The German airline group booked a net profit of 1.2 billion euros (\$1.3 billion) from July to September, up 47 percent on the same period a year earlier. The jump was driven by "strong demand, higher capacity" and more expensive ticket prices, Lufthansa said. The group—whose carriers include Lufthansa, Eurowings, Austrian, Swiss and Brussels Airlines—said sales rose by eight percent to 10.3 billion euros, delivering "the strongest quarter in its history in revenue terms". — AFP

ING profits rocket

THE HAGUE: Top Dutch bank ING said Thursday third quarter profits had more than doubled on the back of retail and wholesale banking despite a slowing global economy and geopolitical instability. Net profit year-on-year soared by 102.5 percent in the third quarter to 1.98 billion euros (\$2.1 billion) and revenue rose by 32.4 percent to 5.8 billion euros during the July-September period. "Notwithstanding the cooling economy and amid polarising geopolitical developments, which impacted business and consumer confidence, both our Retail and Wholesale Banking businesses posted strong results," ING chief executive Steven van Rijswijk said. — AFP

Colombia levies high taxes

COLOMBIA: Colombia on Wednesday began levying a tax on sugary drinks and ultraprocessed foods, a policy designed to reduce soaring rates of obesity. The tax, approved by Congress at the end of 2022 and upheld by the Constitutional Court in the face of multiple legal challenges, will scale up from 10 percent through the rest of 2023, to 15 percent in 2024 and on to 20 percent in 2025. "This is not to take money from you. This is so that you choose healthy foods and improve the health of the Colombian people," President Gustavo Petro posted on his account on X, formerly Twitter. Products high in salt and trans fats, like cold cuts, chocolates and puffed grain cereals, are affected by the new tax as well as sodas, processed juices and energy drinks blamed for worsening diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. — AFP



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KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 2 NOVEMBER 2023

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No.	Ticker	Sector	Price Movement & Performance											Valuation Multiples *			
			Open Price	Close Price	Week High	Week Low	Range	Volume	WTD Change	WTD %	YTD %	Support Level	Resistance Level	P/E	P/B	Yield	Beta
101	National Bank of Kuwait	Banking	865	881	885	838	47	23,351,991	15	1.73%	-14.19%	860	895	12.7	1.64	3.9%	1.02
102	Gulf Bank	Banking	244	244	244	235	9	25,356,553	0	0.00%	-17.89%	242	245	11.6	1.10	3.9%	1.31
106	Kuwait International Bank	Banking	148	143	150	141	9	63,335,772	-5	-3.38%	-20.18%	141	147	14.8	0.54	2.6%	1.11
107	Burgan Bank	Banking	165	164	165	157	8	4,677,657	0	0.00%	-21.37%	157	165	17.0	0.61	4.7%	1.35
108	Kuwait Finance House	Banking	677	690	694	659	35	110,618,218	12	1.77%	-7.78%	689	704	16.8	1.74	2.5%	1.17
109	Boubyan Bank	Banking	588	581	588	563	25	15,021,774	-7	-1.19%	-22.82%	579	593	35.8	2.33	1.0%	1.20
201	Kuwait Investment	Financial Services	116	120	122	115	7	3,225,117	3	2.56%	-21.05%	119	123	8.4	0.55	4.2%	1.82
204	National Investments	Financial Services	192	191	192	182	10	11,824,289	0	0.00%	-19.41%	188	195	144.5	0.84	15.1%	2.03
205	Kuwait Projects	Financial Services	108	108	109	103	6	6,866,864	-2	-1.82%	-3.57%	101	110	26.3	0.61	0.0%	1.01
212	Arzan Financial Group	Financial Services	168	159	170	156	14	8,785,818	-9	-5.36%	41.03%	155	162	30.4	1.20	2.5%	1.16
222	Aayan Leasing and Investment	Financial Services	148	160	160	145	15	36,635,107	8	5.26%	20.30%	158	163	9.2	1.12	4.8%	1.64
252	Al Imtiaz Investment	Financial Services	53.2	53	55.4	52	3.9	6,887,108	-2.1	-3.82%	-29.37%	51.9	53.0	NM	0.33	17.3%	1.35
401	Kuwait Real Estate	Real Estate	162	157	164	154	10	23,910,898	-5	-3.09%	49.73%	154	158	14.5	1.11	1.9%	1.07
413	Mabanee	Real Estate	838	800	838	798	40	3,455,818	-11	-1.36%	2.40E-07	799	811	16.7	1.78	1.7%	1.05
418	The Commercial Real Estate	Real Estate	96	95.4	99	94.0	4.7	19,041,314	-3.0	-3.05%	-0.65%	94	96	17.5	0.60	3.0%	0.61
501	National Industries	Financial Services	182	183	185	176	9	43,099,641	-1	-0.54%	-11.45%	179	186	126.2	0.85	2.7%	1.62
505	Gulf Cable	Industrials	1,155	1,190	1,210	1,136	74	4,369,617	28	2.41%	-2.06%	1,171	1,202	13.3	1.10	5.0%	1.04
506	HEISCO	Industrials	730	776	776	702	74	8,550,711	50	6.89%	26.59%	769	776	22.5	1.97	2.6%	0.91
514	Boubyan Petrochemical	Basic Materials	615	607	623	601	22	4,305,673	-7	-1.14%	-24.13%	601	633	11.3	1.29	9.9%	0.96
603	Agility	Industrials	512	520	531	498	33	15,600,532	7	1.36%	-27.78%	500	520	19.1	0.69	0.0%	1.53
605	Zain	Telecommunications	459	483	487	451	36	15,166,027	22	4.77%	-14.21%	480	503	9.7	1.65	7.4%	0.63
623	Human Soft Holding	Industrials	3,033	3,178	3,250	2,981	269	715,613	185	6.18%	-5.20%	3,160	3,200	8.8	3.66	12.7%	0.65
642	ALAFCO	Industrials	165	165	167	162	5	2,574,182	0	0.00%	-18.72%	162	167	NM	0.72	0.0%	1.16
654	JAZEERA	Consumer Discretionary	1,434	1,449	1,540	1,404	136	1,184,198	14	0.98%	-23.74%	1,405	1,485	17.0	10.17	5.3%	1.47
813	GFH Financial Group	Financial Services	76.9	77	77.9	74.2	3.7	14,673,336	0.5	0.65%	1.58%	76.6	79.0	8.4	0.90	6.4%	1.37
821	Warba Bank	Banking	171	172	174	165	9	16,922,030	0	0.00%	-24.61%	169	188	23.5	0.92	1.7%	1.14
823	Mezzan Holding	Consumer Staples	505	505	508	490	18	2,987,326	1	0.20%	28.50%	490	519	74.5	1.49	2.4%	0.46
824	Integrated Holding	Industrials	426	438	449	420	29	3,555,289	7	1.62%	18.38%	435	445	35.8	1.84	3.4%	0.67
826	Shamal Az-Zour	Utilities	174	177	177	171	6	1,644,814	1	0.57%	-5.85%	176	178	14.1	1.58	6.9%	0.43
827	Boursa Kuwait	Financial Services	1,728	1,732	1,750	1,700	50	744,153	22	1.29%	-15.59%	1,700	1,770	22.3	5.67	4.9%	0.91
830	AL GHANIM	Consumer Discretionary	1,060	1,079	1,087	1,039	48	2,813,450	28	2.66%	34.04%	1,069	1,123	12.3	3.81	6.4%	0.65

* As of end of week closing

Cheap electricity and jobs keep Serbia tied to coal

Fuel ensures low electricity prices and provides thousands of jobs

VREOCI: The Kolubara coal mine in Serbia never closes — 24 hours a day, 365 days per year, excavators work around the clock gnawing away at the soil to extract the fossil fuel. Although most of the world is shifting away from using coal because of accompanying pollution, Serbia continues to rely on it, depending on coal for some 70 percent of its power.

The fuel ensures low electricity prices and provides thousands of jobs in the poor Balkan nation. Aside from coal, a quarter of Serbia's power comes from hydroelectric power stations, with the remaining fraction from renewable energy sources.

The coal extracted at Kolubara reportedly powers enough stations to produce half of the country's electricity, with more than 11,000 workers employed to extract between 26 million and 27 million tonnes of coal every year. Electricity prices are significantly lower in Serbia than in much of Europe—in June, a kWh was 0.096 euros, a third of the average of 0.289 in the European Union. Serbian populist president Aleksandar Vucic often mentions the low electricity prices during his speeches.

However, Serbia has been under pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to raise prices and has had three tariff hikes this year. "Ongoing electricity and gas tariff hikes have helped to reduce fiscal subsidies and will be critical for financing essential energy investments over coming years," the IMF said in a press release in June.

'Divine gift'

Moving away from fossil fuels is due to be a key discussion topic at the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai next month. But in places such as Serbia, which have relied on coal for decades and have limited resources for the investment required to switch to greener alternatives, weaning off the power source still seems like a distant project.

"For years, coal has been considered a kind of divine gift in our energy production," Hristina Vojvodic of the Renewables and Environmental Regulatory

Institute (RERI) told AFP. Serbia adopted the emissions reduction plan (NERP) in 2020 and vowed to "decarbonise" completely by 2050. But coal's share in power generation has not changed much since.

"The country has no real intention of getting out of coal. There are plans and strategies being drawn up, but when it comes to getting out of coal, the decisions aren't there," Vojvodic said. She said that Serbia also promised to reduce the use of coal by up to a quarter by 2030.

"That could mean five percent. It could mean 20 percent. We don't know anything about it," said the lawyer, whose institute last year succeeded in having a Belgrade court recognise the harmful role of thermal power stations on health.

The court also ordered EPS, the state-owned electricity company, to reduce its sulphur dioxide (SO2) emissions because of the threat they pose to health and the environment.

Pollution

In 2022, SO2 emissions from coal were five to six times higher than the allowed limit for all thermal power stations in the country, depending on the source. "We have nothing against switching to green energies, which are better for health and the environment, and which would also provide better working conditions for miners," said Vladimir Radosavljevic, vice-president of the United Trade Unions of Serbia—Sloga, which is responsible for the industry sector.

But "the energy sector employs a large number of people here, especially in the big mines, and abandoning coal mining would lead to a lot of redundancies", he said. Serbian president Vucic said in 2021 that the country "will not run from" its thermal capacities and promised the miners that they would have jobs for at least the next three decades.

For the time being, there are no redundancies in sight, and Serbia is due to open a new unit at its Kostolac coal-fired power station in the coming



BRENOVAC: File photo show trains delivering coal to the "Nikola Tesla A" power plant near Obrenovac, 40km west of Belgrade. Every single day, excavators work around the clock gnawing away the soil to extract coal at Kolubara, the biggest mine in Serbia. — AFP

months, thanks to Chinese funding, as well as an extension to the Drmno coal mine.

It is not clear when the new block—dubbed "B3"—will open. But Vojvodic said her organisation learned that tests have been under way since January. "We became aware of this a few days ago—residents called to tell us they were extremely worried because they could see black smoke coming out of the chimney. We asked for documents, and we discovered that tests were being carried out."

B3 is equipped with a desulphurisation unit—but

"the figures speak for themselves: even with it, emissions are higher" than Serbia's commitments, she says. In Kolubara, there is talk of possibly moving the mine and the infrastructure around it.

"To be honest, we don't know whether Serbia is planning to expand its mines any further," said Vojvodic. "The Ministry of Construction is planning new facilities, the Ministry of Mines and Energy says it's not possible, and the Ministry of the Environment has nothing to say. So we don't know what the plans are." — AFP

Ooredoo Kuwait offers largest 5G, VoLTE coverage in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait, the leading telecommunications company, has unveiled a series of impressive achievements, positioning itself as a frontrunner in the industry. With an unwavering commitment to innovation, the company has announced that it offers the largest 5G/ Voice Over LTE (VoLTE) coverage in Kuwait.

Pioneering roaming connectivity

Ooredoo Kuwait breaks new ground in global connectivity, with an impressive array of over 175 countries and encompassing over 350 operators, ensuring travelers experience uninterrupted service and connectivity, no matter where their travels take them.

Largest 5G and VoLTE roaming footprint

Ooredoo Kuwait takes pride in operating the region's largest 5G and VoLTE networks. Their 5G services are currently available in 50 countries through a network of 76 operators.

Expanded offerings for seamless travel

Ooredoo's dedication to delivering top-notch telecommunications services is further exemplified by their extensive range of roaming packs. These packs have been meticulously designed to surpass the competition, offering customers increased data quotas and a variety of bundles tailored to meet individual customer requirements, ranging from global and regional options to single-country passport packs.

Furthermore, Ooredoo Kuwait also extends its offerings to include a variety of in-flight roaming packs.

Game-Changing unlimited roaming Internet

Notably, Ooredoo is the sole operator in Kuwait to offer unlimited internet while roaming. This groundbreaking feature ensures customers never run out of data while traveling, making international experiences hassle-free and enjoyable.

Savings and convenience

Ooredoo Passport offers remarkable savings compared to standard roaming charges, providing customers with cost-effective and reliable communication during their travels.

The rapid expansion and remarkable achievements of Ooredoo Kuwait underscore their unwavering pursuit of excellence in the telecommunications industry. With a firm commitment to delivering top-tier services to their customers, Ooredoo Kuwait continues to raise the bar and redefine the standards for telecom operators in the region.

SA hosts US-Africa trade summit after diplomatic tensions

JOHANNESBURG: A summit on trade relations between Africa and the United States got under way in South Africa on Thursday, as Pretoria and Washington mend relations after a spat over accusations that the former has cozied up to Russia. Ministers from about 40 sub-Saharan African countries benefiting from the African Growth and Opportunity Act, or AGOA, are to hold talks with US envoys for three days in Johannesburg.

The choice of South Africa as host for the annual summit was "a sign of our commitment to our bilateral relationship", Joy Basu, US deputy assistant secretary of state for African affairs told AFP.

Approved by the US Congress in 2000, AGOA is the cornerstone of US economic and trade policy on the continent.

The pact offers duty-free access into the world's largest economy for countries that meet democratic criteria assessed on a yearly basis.

NBK receives Mastercard's award for 'Driving E-Commerce Tokenization'

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has received MasterCard's award for "Driving E-Commerce Tokenization for Seamless Checkout" at the Mastercard EDGE 2023 forum which envisions the Future of Digital, Gateways & E-Commerce, held in Dubai on October 19.

The award is a testament to NBK's leading endeavors in digital transformation, excellence in innovative digital services and ongoing investments in developing seamless and secure payment services and solutions.

The award was given based on fact that NBK was pioneer in tokenization enablement and processing across their merchants which helped in transforming online checkout experience to be easier and more secure.

Tokenization is a process that enhances the security of card payment transactions by replacing sensitive

cardholder data with unique tokens. These tokens are used to represent the actual card information during payment processing, reducing the risk of data breaches and fraud. By using tokenization, sensitive card data is never exposed during the transaction process, making it significantly more secure. Even if a token is intercepted, it cannot be used to fraudulently access the cardholder's account or make unauthorized purchases.

This enables seamless checkout which does not require customers to re-enter their sensitive card credentials during payments, thus allowing quicker and more secure payments, as consumers look primarily for safety and security whenever they shop.

NBK is a trailblazer in adopting the most advanced systems to enhance its banking network operations. It has a highly professional team and advanced programs that solidify its leadership as a

provider of cutting-edge digital banking services and incorporating the digitization culture across all its operations.

It is also the first bank to introduce the latest technology in payments and instant transfers in Kuwait, including

tracking transfers through its digital channels, namely NBK Mobile and Online Banking, as well as NBK Online Corporate Banking, enabling customers to check transfer status online in a quick and secure way.

offers along with benefits of Kalyan's 4-level assurance certification on their jewellery purchases, ensuring a seamless service-backed shopping experience. The Kalyan Jewellers 4-level assurance certificate, guarantees purity, free lifetime maintenance of ornaments, detailed product information and transparent exchange and buy-back policies. The certification is part of the brand's commitment towards offering the very best to its loyalists.

Kalyan Jewellers offers popular house brands such as, Muhurat – wedding jewellery Line, Mudhra – hand-crafted antique jewellery, Nimah – temple jewellery, Glo – dancing diamonds, Ziah – solitaire like diamond jewellery, Anokhi – uncut diamonds, Hera – daily wear diamonds, Rang – precious stones jewellery, and the recently launched Lila – coloured stones and diamond jewellery.



JOHANNESBURG: Commissioner of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), Albert Muchanga speaks on the first day of the 20th AGOA summit in Johannesburg on November 2, 2023. — AFP

group of US lawmakers later called for the country to be kicked out of AGOA in response. An independent panel appointed by President Cyril Ramaphosa to investigate the matter has since concluded that there was no evidence to suggest weapons were loaded onto the ship.

"We really appreciated the Ramaphosa's administration investigations into the concerns that were raised," said Basu. "South Africa is fully eligible to maintain its AGOA benefits". Trade under the pact accounts for 21 percent of South Africa's annual exports to the United States, which range from automotive products to raw materials and in 2022 were worth about \$3 billion.

"AGOA has been pivotal in strengthening economic ties and promoting growth and development



Homoud Al-Nasrallah head of Merchant Business and Customer Loyalty Management at NBK with the award.

provider of cutting-edge digital banking services and incorporating the digitization culture across all its operations.

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tracking transfers through its digital channels, namely NBK Mobile and Online Banking, as well as NBK Online Corporate Banking, enabling customers to check transfer status online in a quick and secure way.

Kalyan Jewellers celebrates festive season with exciting mega Diwali offers

KUWAIT: Kalyan Jewellers, one of the most trusted and leading jewellery brands, recently kicked off the festive celebrations with the launch of its Mega Diwali offers campaign. As part of this, the jewellery brand has announced mega giveaways and bumper discounts for patrons. The unique promotion aims to ensure that patrons maximize the value of jewellery purchases from Kalyan Jewellers, by getting free gold coins weighing up to 2 grams on their purchases above KD 550.

As part of these exciting offers, the brand has announced assured gold coin giveaways for patrons on jewellery purchases worth KD 350 and above. Kalyan Jewellers will be rewarding patrons with a 2 gram gold coin on every KD 550 spent on diamond jewellery, whereas a 1 gram gold coin on purchase of uncut/precious/platinum jewellery worth every KD 550 or pur-

chase of diamond jewellery valued above KD 350. Furthermore, the company has announced ½ gram gold coin giveaways to patrons making gold jewellery purchases worth every KD 550 or uncut/precious/platinum jewellery valued above KD 350. The jewellery brand is also offering patrons with an assured gold coin on purchase of gold jewellery worth KD 350 and above. This exciting array of giveaway offers can be availed until 24th December 2023 across all their Kuwait outlets.

Speaking about the offer, Ramesh Kalyanaraman, Executive Director – Kalyan Jewellers said, "At Kalyan Jewellers, our commitment is to empower our customers by ensuring they derive maximum value from their purchases while enjoying an exceptional shopping journey. In line with this, we are thrilled to introduce our Mega Diwali offers campaign, designed to help our patrons make the most of their jewellery purchases. We are confident that our customers will continue to show their unwavering love and support for Kalyan Jewellers, making this initiative a big success."

Kalyan Jewellers is committed to providing exceptional experiences and fostering a sense of delight for its valued patrons. Customers can avail the exciting range of



Lifestyle

Huge 'blobs' inside Earth are from another planet, study suggests

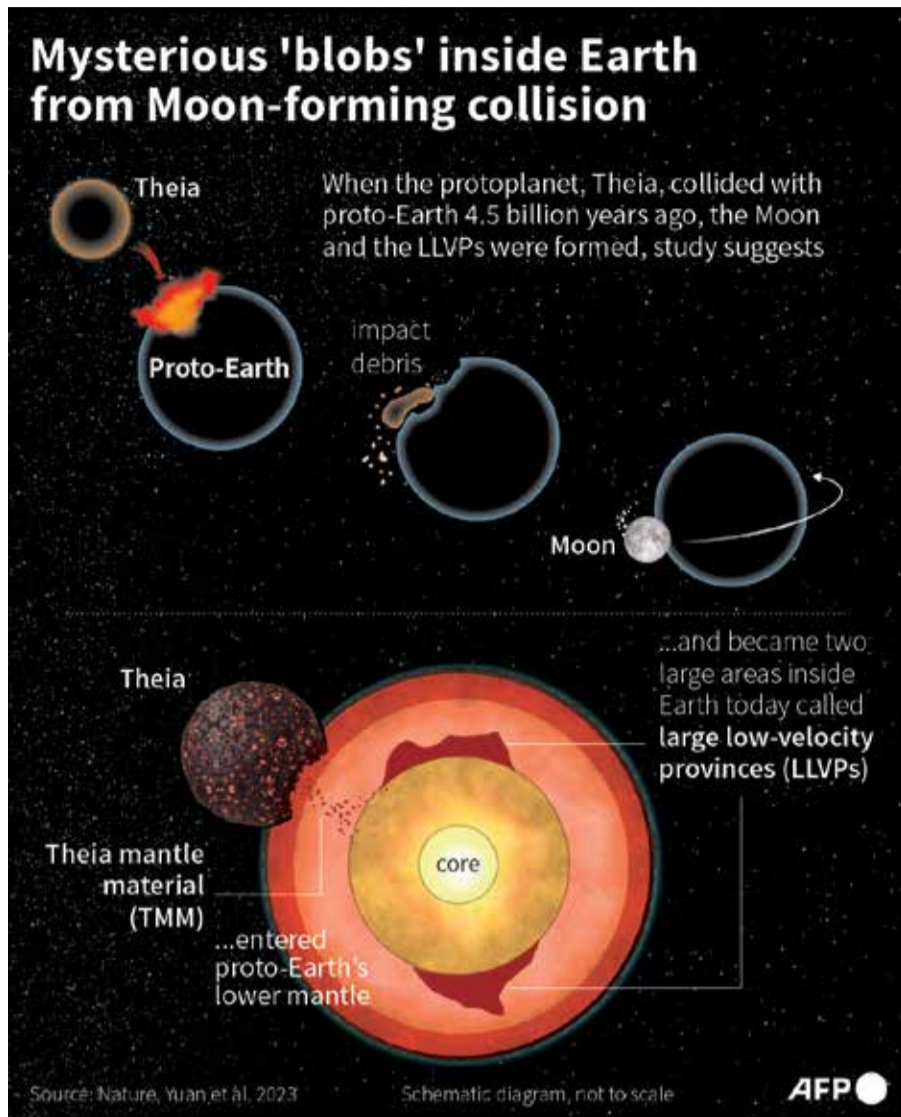
Scientists proposed a novel idea on Wednesday that could solve two of the world's mysteries at once — one that passes over our heads every night, and one that sits far below our feet. The first mystery has puzzled everyone from scientists to inquisitive children for millennia: where did the Moon come from? The leading theory is that the Moon was created 4.5 billion years ago when a would-be planet the size of Mars smashed into the still-forming Earth. This epic collision between early Earth and the proto-planet called Theia shot an enormous amount of debris into orbit, which formed what would become the Moon.

Or so the theory goes. Despite decades of effort, scientists have not been able to find any evidence of Theia's existence. New US-led research, published in the journal *Nature*, suggests they might have been looking in the wrong direction. Around 2,900 kilometers (1,800 miles) below Earth's surface, two massive "blobs" have baffled geologists since seismic waves revealed their existence in the 1980s.

These continent-sized clumps of material straddle the bottom of Earth's rocky mantle near its molten core, one below Africa and the other underneath the Pacific Ocean. Scientists have determined that the blobs are much hotter and more dense than the surrounding rock, but much else about them remains a mystery. The new research on Wednesday indicates the blobs are "buried relics" of Theia that entered into Earth during their formative collision — and have been hiding near our planet's heart ever since. As well as creating the Moon, this collision and the remnants it left behind may have helped Earth become the unique life-hosting planet it is today, the researchers proposed.

'Very, very strange'

Qian Yuan, a geodynamics researcher at the California Institute of Technology and the study's lead author, told AFP it is "very, very strange" that no evidence of the Theia impact has been found. It was during a class



held by a planetary scientist discussing this mystery that Yuan first connected the dots. "Where is the impactor? My answer is: it's in the Earth," he said. The planetary scientist holding the class had never heard of the blobs. The research has since required experts in the often separate fields of space and geology to join forces.

Yuan said that when Theia smashed into proto-Earth, it was travelling at more than 10 kilometers (six miles) a second, a speed that allowed

some of it to penetrate "very deep into the Earth's lower mantle".

A video developed by the team simulating this process illustrates how clumps of Theia's mantle tens of kilometers wide swirled inside Earth. As the mostly molten Theia material cooled and solidified, its high level of iron caused it to sink down to the border of Earth's mantle and core, the scientists proposed.

Over the years it accumulated into two separate blobs - officially called

large low-velocity provinces (LLVPs) - that are now each larger than the Moon, Yuan said. Testing a theory based so far back in time — and so deep under Earth — is incredibly difficult, and Yuan emphasized that their modelling could not be "100 percent" certain.

'Why Earth is unique'

But if true, the implications could be immense. Earth remains the only planet in the universe known to be capable of supporting life. The Theia collision, which is believed to be Earth's last major accretion event, significantly changed its composition in just 24 hours, Yuan said. "My feeling is that this initial condition is why Earth is unique — why it's different to other rocky planets," he said. Previous research has suggested that Theia could have brought water, the key ingredient of life, to Earth.

The blobs have been observed sending up "mantle plumes" — columns of magma — towards the Earth's surface, and have also been linked to the evolution of supercontinents. Theia "left something in the Earth — and that played a role in Earth's subsequent 4.5 billion years of evolution," Yuan said. Christian Schroeder, an expert in both Earth science and planetary exploration at Scotland's University of Stirling, told AFP the theory "fits several strands of evidence".

"It is a very significant and exciting finding," said Schroeder, who was not involved in the research. He emphasized that the mystery of the Moon's formation had not been solved. But the research gives more weight to the Theia impact theory — and provides "a credible explanation for these anomalies at the core-mantle boundary at the same time," he said. The remnants of Theia potentially preserved underneath us "may be responsible for important processes on Earth ongoing to this day," Schroeder added. — AFP



British writer John Le Carre attends a screening of Berlinale Special Series "The Night Manager" by Danish Susanne Bier and British David Farr during the 66th Berlinale Film Festival in Berlin. - AFP

Spy writer John Le Carre's 'vulnerable' final interview

The master of the spy novel — and a man of mystery himself — John Le Carre offers an emotional account of his life in his final interview which airs on Apple TV from Friday. Le Carre sat down with acclaimed American documentary filmmaker Errol Morris in 2019 neither knowing that it would be the author's last interview before his death the following year. "I don't think he had any intention of dying at all," said one of Le Carre's sons, Simon Cornwell, who helped produce the film, "The Pigeon Tunnel". "His death really changed the dynamic of the film — it's his final interview, his final legacy on camera," he told AFP.

Le Carre's books have sold more than 60 million copies and been endlessly adapted for film and TV, from "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy" to "The Constant Gardener" to "The Night Manager", with more in the works. More than just popular page-turners, his books helped define an era of post-colonial decline in Britain and the dirty spy games of the Cold War — something he knew intimately as a former spook himself. Morris "was the ideal conversation partner", said his son, since the writer was a huge fan of his Oscar-winning film "The Fog of War", an astonishingly frank account of the Vietnam War by one its architects, former US secretary of defense Robert McNamara.

Morris similarly draws out unexpected emotion from Le Carre, whose real name was David Cornwell, a famously reserved and private individual. The former British intelligence officer chokes up when discussing his mother abandoning him as a child. — AFP



People pray and light candles in front of a religious statue at Manila North cemetery on All Saints' Day in Manila.



People offer flowers and candles on a tomb at Manila North cemetery on All Saints' Day in Manila.

FILIPINOS THROG CEMETERIES ON ALL SAINTS' DAY

Filipinos carrying flowers, candles and bags of food thronged cemeteries across the Catholic-majority Philippines on Wednesday to pay their respects to dead loved ones on All Saints' Day. Hundreds of thousands of people fanned out across sprawling graveyards in the capital Manila to hold picnics on tombs or pray quietly in front of a relative or friend's final resting place. Among the visitors at Manila North Cemetery was Zenaida Cruz, 77, who walked slowly with her husband to the tomb of her parents and grandparents to offer candles and a prayer.

Cruz used to leave flowers at the

gravesite, but inflation had pushed prices of even simple bouquets beyond her limited budget. "As long as I can walk, I will still visit, because this is a tradition," Cruz told AFP. "This tradition won't fade, but of course, it won't be as grand as before when there were many flowers and many candles."

The annual ritual is an ancient Christian tradition honoring all saints and martyrs who died for the faith. In the deeply religious Philippines, the day is a public holiday to enable people to travel hours to visit gravesites in far-flung parts of the country. Police Colonel Arnold Ibay said he expected around a million vis-

itors to Manila North Cemetery, where poor families live alongside the dead in shanties and mausoleums.

Jenny Rose De Vera, 31, was joined by her friends, family and in-laws to offer her partner of 15 years pieces of prawn crackers from a fast-food chain and half a hotdog. That had been his favorite food before he was killed in a road accident in September. "It's important (to visit the dead) so they can still feel that they are still important to us and that we will never forget them," De Vera told AFP. — AFP



Flower vendors call for customers at Manila North cemetery on All Saints' Day in Manila. - AFP photos



Civilian volunteers walk past graves of fallen soldiers with lighted candles at the heroes' cemetery in Manila.



People visit the Manila North cemetery on All Saints' Day in Manila.

Lifestyle



A picture shows anti-US signs hanging in the building formerly hosting the embassy of the United States in Tehran.



A picture shows the depiction of a hostage crisis scene in the building formerly hosting the embassy of the United States in Tehran.



A woman walks past anti-US mural outside the building formerly hosting the embassy of the United States in Tehran.

Time capsule US embassy in Iran highlights decades of hostility



A picture shows a skull adorning the outside wall of the building formerly hosting the embassy of the United States in Tehran.



A portrait of former US president Jimmy Carter adorns a scene depicting the ambassador's office in the building formerly hosting the embassy of the United States in Tehran.

It's hard to miss the former United States embassy in the centre of Iran's capital Tehran, because it is daubed with striking anti-American murals. The building, today known as the "Den of Spies" museum, encapsulates the hostility of Iran-US relations marred by decades of mistrust and crises, including the current Zionist entity-Hamas war. Visitors to the site are greeted by a tattered Stars and Stripes flag and a mural of the Statue of Liberty, her arm carrying a crumbled-away torch of freedom, while another depicts her with a skull face. Inside, the building is a time capsule from the day it was seized by Iranian students on November 4, 1979. It showcases the furniture and office equipment including shredders, computers and painstakingly reconstituted documents that embassy staff frantically tried to destroy in the hours before the compound was stormed.

A portrait of former US president Jimmy Carter still hangs on the wall of what was once the ambassador's office. Fifty-two embassy staff were held hostage for 444 days by the students, who demanded that Washington hand over Iran's recently toppled shah, who was being treated in the

United States for cancer. The crisis came less than nine months after the removal of the US-backed shah, and was "a founding act of the Islamic Republic", master's student Hossein told AFP near the museum.

Washington officially broke off relations with Tehran in 1980, and they have been frozen ever since. Today, the museum receives "on average 100 to 200 visitors a day, 70 percent of whom are tourists", said Majid Alizadeh, the compound's director. "Foreigners, especially Russians and Chinese, seem more interested than Iranians." Some tourists "come to see the place where the Americans were humiliated", he said.

Tensions and sanctions

Relations between Washington and Tehran have never recovered from the crisis. "It came at a very high price," said Hossein, because "the Americans never forgave it and we have lived since in an atmosphere of tensions and sanctions". Since the 1979 revolution Iran has maintained strong anti-American rhetoric that sits at the heart of its foreign policy.

On Wednesday, supreme leader

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei praised the storming of the embassy ahead of Saturday's 44th anniversary of its seizure. "The students entered the American embassy, captured it and exposed its secrets and confidential documents. America's reputation is gone," he told a student gathering. "This was the blow the Iranian nation inflicted on America."



A picture shows the depiction of an office in the building formerly hosting the embassy of the United States in Tehran, now dubbed the "Den of Spies" museum.

Crowds of Iranians gather each year on November 4 outside the building to denounce the "arrogance" of the United States which is often referred to in the country as the "Great Satan". The former embassy has for years

been secured by the Basij forces, a paramilitary wing of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the IRGC.

The Swiss delegation represents American interests in Iran, and recently facilitated a painstakingly negotiated prisoner swap between Tehran and Washington. Iran is represented in the US capital by the Pakistani embassy.

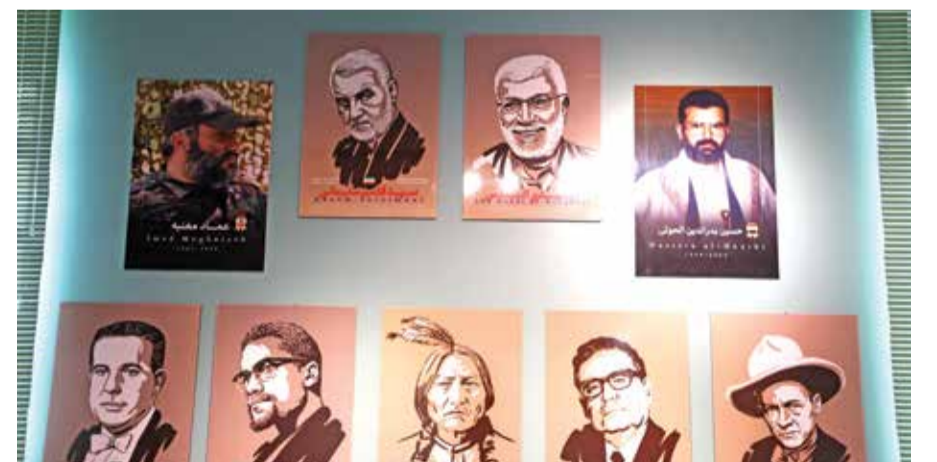
Iran and the United States have worsened since the October 7 attacks on Zionist entity by the Palestinian Hamas militant group, which Zionist officials say killed at least 1,400 people. Another 240 were seized as hostages and taken into the Gaza Strip.

Iran has lauded Hamas's attacks and labeled as "genocide" the Zionist entity's withering bombing campaign against Gaza, which the Hamas-controlled health ministry said on Wednesday had killed more than 8,750 people. Tehran has also lambasted Washington for backing the Zionist entity, with Khamenei saying on October 25 that the United States was a "definite accomplice of criminals". For its part, Washington has accused Tehran of "actively facilitating" attacks on US forces in the Middle East.

Despite nearly 50 years of hostility, museum director Alizadeh believes the American embassy could be reopened "if the United States accepts and respects Iran's position in the region". Generally, "Iranians have never had any personal problems with the Americans", he added.—AFP



Men walk past anti-US mural outside the building formerly hosting the embassy of the United States in Tehran.



A picture shows a view of anti-US mural inside the building formerly hosting the embassy of the United States in Tehran.

Shakespeare in space to mark First Folio 400th anniversary

A portrait of English playwright William Shakespeare and a speech from "A Midsummer Night's Dream" have been sent into space in a weather balloon to mark the 400th anniversary of the publication of his first collected works. Footage of the initiative is included in one of six short films celebrating the four-century milestone by film maker Jack Jewers. Each film takes one of Shakespeare's most famous poems or speeches and reimagines them for the 21st century.

Subjects touched upon include

the impact of COVID-19, the war in Ukraine, space exploration and social justice protests. The first printed edition of Shakespeare's collected plays, known as the First Folio, was published in 1623, seven years after the Bard's death. In one of the films, Jewers remotely directs Ukrainian civilians in Kyiv to create a new interpretation of Shakespeare's "Band of Brothers" speech from his history play "Henry V".

Another features "Our Revels Now Are Ended" from "The Tempest" and explores themes of loneliness and iso-

lation caused by the pandemic, as well as the joy of reunions with loved ones. In another, real footage of migrants at sea is combined with a speech defending refugees from an unperformed play. Jewers said he chose the subjects for the films to reflect parallels with 1623.

"Everything that has been happening to us in the past few years of upheaval — mass disease, concerns about immigration, protest, conflict in Europe, a growing desire to challenge authority and speak truth to power — was also happening in 1623," he said.

When the First Folio was published, there was an outbreak of plague and English migrants were crossing the Atlantic Ocean in boats to start new lives in North America. "The parallels are uncanny and Shakespeare's words are fresher now than ever before in their ability to speak powerfully to our own contemporary lives," Jewers added. The films will be screened in central London on November 8.—AFP



Lifestyle



Pedestrians pass a mural depicting members of British rock band The Beatles (from left to right) Ringo Starr, John Lennon, Paul McCartney and George Harrison on the side of a building in Liverpool, northwest England on October 13, 2020, as new local lockdown measures are set to be imposed to help stem a second wave of the COVID-19.

New BEATLES single 'NOW AND THEN' set for release

A new Beatles song produced with a little help from artificial intelligence and including the vocals of John Lennon will be released on Thursday, more than four decades after it was originally recorded as a demo. "Now And Then", first written and sung by Lennon in 1978, was finished by his fellow band members Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr—and AI.

The track will be unveiled at 1400 GMT by Apple Corps, Capitol and Universal Music Enterprises, with a music video debuting on Friday. McCartney, 81, announced the song's release in June, in what has been dubbed in a promotional trailer "the last Beatles song". "It's quite emotional and we all play on it, it's a genuine Beatles recording," he said in a video on YouTube ahead of the release. "Now And Then" was one of several tracks on a cassette that Lennon had recorded for McCartney at his home in New York's Dakota Building in 1979 -- a year before his death.

It was given to him by Lennon's widow Yoko Ono in 1994. Two other songs, "Free As A Bird" and "Real Love", were cleaned up by the producer Jeff Lynne, and released in 1995 and 1996. An attempt was made to do the same with "Now And Then" but the project was abandoned due to background noise on the demo.

tempt was made to do the same with "Now And Then" but the project was abandoned due to background noise on the demo.

'Kind of scary'

AI has now made that possible, although the use of the technology in music is the subject of industry-wide debate, with some denouncing copyright abuses and others praising its progress. After the recording was processed using the new technology "there it was,

John's voice, crystal clear", McCartney said. The two surviving Beatles finished "Now And Then" last year, including George Harrison's electric and acoustic guitar recorded in 1995. Recording at Capitol Studios in Los Angeles, they also added Starr's drum part alongside bass, piano, a slide guitar solo by McCartney—inspired by Harrison—and

very emotional for all of us". "It was like John was there, you know. It's far out." Sean Ono Lennon, the son of Lennon and Ono, said it was "incredibly touching" to hear the former Beatles working together again "after all the years that dad had been gone". "It's the last song my dad, Paul, George and Ringo got to make together. It's like a time capsule and all feels very meant to be," he added. The Beatles—Lennon, McCartney, Starr and Harrison—split in 1970, with each going on to have solo careers, but they never reunited.

McCartney said he agonized initially about whether they should complete the song or leave it unfinished. "Every time I thought like that I thought 'Wait a minute, let's say I had a chance to ask John' ... I'm telling you. I know the answer would have been 'Yeah'."

Lennon was shot dead in New York in 1980 aged 40, while Harrison died of lung cancer in 2001, aged 58. "Now And Then" will be released as a double A-side, with the band's 1962 debut single "Love Me Do", and cover art by US artist Ed Ruscha.—AFP



Former Beatles members Paul McCartney (right) and Ringo Starr perform on stage during the 56th Grammy Awards at the Staples Center in Los Angeles, California, January 26, 2014.

bate, with some denouncing copyright abuses and others praising its progress. After the recording was processed using the new technology "there it was,

more backing vocals. Starr, 83, added the process "was the closest we'll ever come to having him (Lennon) back in the room so it was



English band the Beatles (from left to right) John Lennon, Ringo Starr, Paul McCartney and George Harrison, arrive at John F Kennedy Airport in New York, United States, where they're greeted by a large crowd on February 7, 1964. --AFP photos



This photo taken on June 30, 1966 shows British band The Beatles, (from left to right) Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, George Harrison and John Lennon, performing during their concert at the Budokan in Tokyo.

Not-so-famous four things about THE BEATLES

One of the world's most famous music bands, The Beatles, are back 53 years after they broke up with a "new" record to be released Thursday. Here are a few lesser-known facts about the legendary quartet from Liverpool:

Beetles with beat
Also known as the "Fab Four", The Beatles are always listed in the order they joined the band: John (Lennon), Paul (McCartney), George (Harrison) and Ringo (Starr). But in their earliest days, before Ringo came on board, the quartet had included drummer Pete Best and bassist Stuart Sutcliffe. Their name had been different too. In 1956 they briefly called themselves the "Black Jacks", and then the "Quarrymen".

They also appeared on stage as "Johnny and the Moondogs" and "The Silver Beetles" before settling on the name, a wordplay of "beetles" and "the beat". The insect allusion was, apparently, a tribute to US rock and roll singer Buddy Holly, an idol of Lennon and McCartney, whose band was called "The Crickets".

Beach Boys rivals
Much has been made over the years of the rivalry between The Beatles and The Rolling Stones. But it was California band The Beach Boys who were their real competitors. When the Fab Four set out to conquer the United States, the country was in the midst of Beach Boys mania after the release of the album "Surfin' USA" (1963).

In 1964 The Beatles released "I Want to Hold Your Hand", and when Beach Boys frontman Brian Wilson heard it he knew everything had changed. Between the two groups, who admired each other, the battle raged in albums over several years.

The devil's horns
The Beatles were great innovators, with pioneering moves including being the first to put their song lyrics in a booklet inside each album. They were also the ones to turn the horn sign into what is now the rock symbol par excellence.

The clenched fist with index and little fingers extended is no longer associated with the devil but a celebratory, happy gesture often made at rock concerts. John Lennon is the first artist known to have done it, for the cover of the single "Yellow Submarine".

Lucy's bones
The "oldest" woman in the world, the Australopithecus called Lucy aged around 3.2 million years, owes her name to nothing other than the Fab Four song "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds". Discovered by paleontologists in 1974 in Ethiopia, the famous fossil revolutionized ideas about human origins. The nickname was inspired by the excavations when the team listened to the album "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" on repeat, which includes the song.—AFP

North American birding group to ditch names honoring racists, others

Out with the Bachman's Sparrow and the Couch's Kingbird -- the top authority in North American birding is ditching human names in a move to cut ties between the feathered creatures and the misdeeds of those whose names they carry. The American Ornithological Society, which catalogs the official English-language names for birds in North and South America, announced Wednesday that it would rename all birds honoring humans within its jurisdiction, as part of an effort to "address past wrongs and engage far more people in the enjoyment, protection, and study of birds."

Debate has been brewing for years at the organization about what to do about birds named after slave owners, racists or other people with unsavory pasts. "There is power in a name, and some English bird names have associations with the past that continue to be exclusionary and harmful today," AOS President Colleen Handel said in a statement. "We need a much more inclusive and engaging scientific process that focuses attention on the unique features and beauty of the birds themselves."

The AOS will begin in 2024 with a pilot program targeting 70-80 species that live in the United States, which it promises will be done in "an open, inclusive and scientifically rigorous" manner. The move comes after a high profile reckoning in the birding community in 2020, after a white woman walking her dog in New York's Central Park

falsely accused a Black bird watcher of assaulting her after an argument. That incident happened just as the George Floyd protests were kicking off, rekindling longstanding debates and frustrations over racism in the United States.

The AOS said that the name changes are more than just superficial fixes, and are designed to help bring more people into the mostly white world of bird watching.

Sparrow, named after a slave owner, the Couch's Kingbird, whose eponym took part in US military action against Native Americans in Florida.

While the decision is likely to spark pushback in some quarters, it also will hopefully bring more interest in birding, advocates said -- a crucial move considering North America has lost some three billion birds since 1970, per the AOS' count. "To reverse these alarm-



Couch's Kingbird



Bachman's Sparrow

"Ornithologists have long grappled with historical and contemporary practices that contribute to the exclusion of Black, Indigenous, and other people of color, including how birds are named," it said. Likely on offer are birds like the Bachman's

ing bird population declines, we need as many people as possible to get excited about birds and unite to protect them," said executive director Judith Scarl.—AFP

Sports

Djokovic return win, Medvedev loses cool and Zverev grinds through

Reigning Bercy champion Holger Rune stay on track for q-final meeting with Djokovic

PARIS: Novak Djokovic returned to the court on Wednesday, cruising past Tomas Martin Etcheverry 6-3, 6-2 and strengthening his hold on top spot in the rankings after his two closest rivals both lost at the Paris Masters. Second seed Carlos Alcaraz tumbled out against qualifier Roman Safiullin late the previous evening and earlier on Wednesday, Daniil Medvedev, seeded third, threw another Paris tantrum as he lost 6-3, 6-7 (4/7), 7-6 (7/2) to Grigor Dimitrov.

Djokovic, playing in his first individual tournament since winning the US Open in September, broke Etcheverry, an Argentine ranked 31 in the world, in the eighth game of the first set and twice in the second, to win in one hour and 24 minutes.

"At the start of the match, I had a little trouble finding my rhythm, my tempo, but by the end of the second set, it was really good," said Djokovic, who has won at Bercy a record six times. After beating Medvedev in the final in New York on September 10, the 36-year-old Djokovic dashed back from the US Open to help Serbia into the Davis Cup quarter-finals on September 15.

He then skipped the ATP Tour's return to China, instead spending time with his family. Djokovic will next play Dutchman Tallon Griekspoor. Earlier Medvedev

threatened to stop in the second set if the crowd kept whistling him, although he later said he was determined to win over the Paris fans.

Medvedev has had a series of run-ins with Parisian fans. In May, he gestured for the crowd to shut up at Roland Garros and has complained on previous visits to Bercy. After Dimitrov took the first set on Wednesday, Medvedev broke in the sixth game of the second set and led 5-2.

'They're stupid'

When the Bulgarian broke to 5-5, Medvedev threw his racket which brought whistles from the crowd. That further upset the Russian. "I'm not going to play when they whistle," Medvedev shouted at the umpire.

"They're stupid! If they don't whistle, I'll play!", Medvedev said before telling the crowd. "I play guys, but shut your mouths, okay!" After a time violation warning from the umpire, Medvedev resumed and edged the tie-break on his first set point. "When I throw my racket, I'm allowed to get whistled at, it's a bad reaction," he later told the press conference. "On the other hand, if I serve, and they whistle and applaud at the same time, it's a bit weird."

"That's the public at Bercy, everyone

knows it, not everyone likes playing here. I played much better at Bercy when there was nobody there," he said, mentioning his victory in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the final set, Medvedev saved six match points before forcing a tie-break in which he won two points before Dimitrov finally prevailed. Currently in the last qualifying spot for next month's ATP Finals in Turin, reigning Bercy champion Holger Rune stayed on track for a quarter-final meeting with Djokovic by seeing off former US Open winner Dominic Thiem 6-4, 6-2.

Sixth seed Rune, now coached by Boris Becker, won his first Masters title in Paris last year by beating Djokovic in the final. Greek seventh seed Stefanos Tsitsipas saved six of seven break points and dodged four set points as he beat Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-3, 7-6 (7/4).

Dutch qualifier Botic van de Zandschulp beat 12th-seeded Tommy Paul 6-4, 2-6, 6-3 to end the American's chances of squeezing into the top eight for the ATP Finals. German Alexander Zverev took another big step in the race for Turin by edging out the last remaining hometown hope Ugo Humbert 6-4, 6-7 (3/7), 7-6 (7/5) in a marathon encounter.

The Frenchman displayed spirit to



PARIS: Serbia's Novak Djokovic plays a backhand return to Argentina's Tomas Martin Etcheverry during their men's singles match on day three of the Paris ATP Masters 1000 tennis tournament at the Accor Arena - Palais Omnisports de Paris-Bercy - in Paris. — AFP

break Zverev as he served for the match in the second set and then level affairs with a dominant tie-break performance. Despite this, and a partisan crowd against him, the 10th seed eventually rallied in the final set to recover from an early break and grind out an

exhausting win in over three hours.

Zverev now plays Tsitsipas on Thursday in a crucial round-of-16 match that will offer up invaluable points for whoever should claim victory in this meeting between two men that have shared bad blood in the past. — AFP

Swiatek downs Gauff to stay unbeaten at WTA Finals

CANCUN: World number two Iga Swiatek defeated third-ranked Coco Gauff 6-0, 7-5 in a showdown of reigning Grand Slam champions on Wednesday in a group-stage match at the WTA Finals. Poland's 22-year-old Swiatek, the French Open winner and a four-time Grand Slam champion, took only 89 minutes to dispatch 19-year-old American Gauff, who won the US Open last month.

"In the second set, obviously, it got more tight," Swiatek said. "I was happy I stayed focused. I had plenty of chances in her first service games to break back, but I knew somehow I would use one of those chances." The victory also boosted Swiatek's chances to overtake Australian Open champion Aryna Sabalenka for the year-end world number one ranking at the season-ending outdoor hardcourt event in Mexico. Tunisia's Ons Jabeur beat Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova of the Czech Republic 6-4, 6-3 in a rematch of the Wimbledon final in the night's other group-stage match. The result meant Swiatek has not clinched a semi-final berth despite her 2-0 start. In windy conditions, Gauff hit only six winners compared to 31 unforced errors while Swiatek hit 11 winners, half her number of unforced errors.

"I would say this match wasn't consistent, in terms of the level," Swiatek said. "So for sure adjusting to everything that happened was the most important thing." Swiatek, a three-time Roland Garros champion and last year's US Open winner, improved to 9-1 all-time against Gauff, whose only triumph in the rivalry came in August's Cincinnati semi-finals ahead of her first major title at New York.

Swiatek, the 2022 year-end number one, also beat Gauff in their most recent prior meeting last month at a Beijing semi-final but the US teen was nursing a right shoulder injury. Gauff could not become the first teen to win multiple matches at a WTA Finals since Serbian Ana Ivanovic in 2007.

Gauff netted a forehand to surrender the first break and a 2-0 lead in the opening set and Swiatek smashed a backhand shot on the baseline to break again at love for a 4-0 edge. Swiatek hit a backhand volley winner for another break to claim the first set in 27 minutes. Gauff broke for a 2-1 lead in the second set when Swiatek hit a forehand volley wide, her third unforced error of the game, and Gauff held in a dramatic 12-minute sixth game for a 4-2 edge.

Serving for the set, however, Gauff made four double faults in a row and was broken to 5-5, then broken again by Swiatek in the final game, netting a forehand volley on the final point. "I'm happy that I could actually problem solve a little the way to win these last games," Swiatek said. "The key was maybe being confident and mentally not focusing on the score, but really just sticking with the plan that worked in the first set."

Sabalenka must defeat Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan on Thursday in a group-stage rematch of January's Australian Open final to qualify for Saturday's semi-finals. Sabalenka would clinch the year-end top spot by reaching Sunday's final. — AFP

Australia prepare to strike final blow on old enemy England

AHMEDABAD: Australia can deliver the final blow to old enemy England's dismal World Cup campaign on Saturday with memories of their acrimonious Ashes series still fresh. Jos Buttler's defending champions sit rock bottom of the 10-nation group with one win in six games, requiring a mathematical miracle to squeeze into the semi-finals.

On Saturday, they face an Australian

team who come into the game at the world's biggest cricket stadium in Ahmedabad with four straight wins. However, the five-time winners will be without two key players in Glenn Maxwell and Mitchell Marsh.

England's most recent loss was a 100-run thrashing at the hands of unbeaten India in Lucknow where coach Matthew Mott faced down questions over the team's brittle batting line-up and claims of dressing room unrest. Opening batsman Dawid Malan slammed reports of Mott, who had conceded the World Cup campaign was over for the 2019 champions, losing the confidence of the players.

"Motty is not the one walking out on the field," Malan told BBC. "As players,

we need to take responsibility when we cross that rope. We are being given everything we need to perform. The facilities and work, everything is being done as it always has been."

He added: "It is really hard to sum up. We just can't seem to get anything going at the moment or any rhythm or momentum. We're not used to being in that position." England's only win so far was against Bangladesh.

They lost to Afghanistan while in their last two games their batting folded for 156 (against Sri Lanka) and then 129 (India). Defeat to Australia will not only knock them out of contention for a semi-final spot but also put them in danger of missing the 2025 Champions Trophy. — AFP

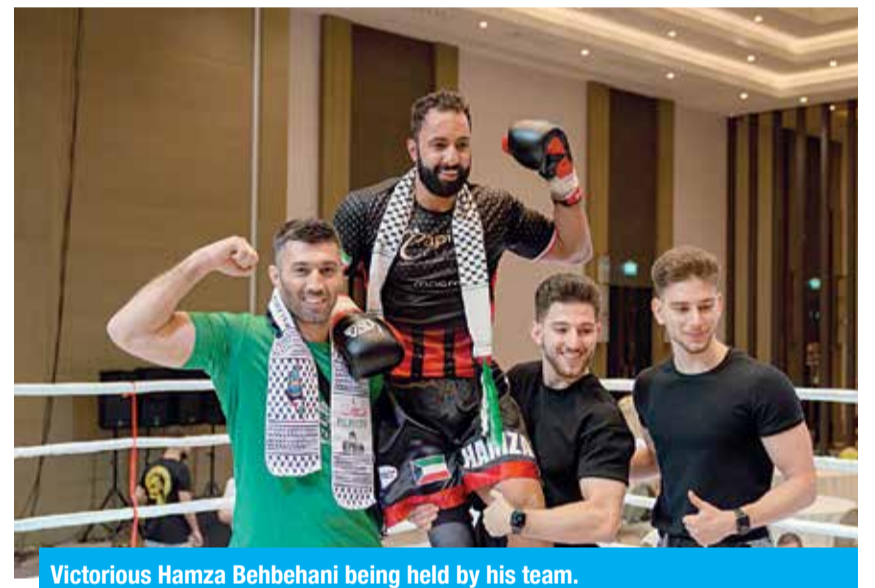
Kuwait's boxer Behbehani knocks out Turkey's Namli

KUWAIT: Kuwait's boxer Hamza Behbehani became champion of Turkey's unified International Championship, that is sanctioned by Universal Boxing Organization (UBO) and World Boxing Council, as he beat Turkish boxer Orhan Namli in the second round by technical knockout.

Behbehani made a gesture in solidarity with the Palestinian people by wearing the Kofiya before the match. He said that his stand was in solidarity with the people in Gaza and the sacrifices they are making day after day in defense of their lands. He said "this is the least we give to our be-

sieged brothers in Gaza, and hope this will end soon".

Behbehani thanked Kuwait Olympic Committee Board member Sheikh Mubarak Al-Faisal Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah for his support of Kuwaitis in various sports, adding that Turkish International Championship was sanctioned by UBO and WBC, is an advanced step in my professional carrier, and my win was few month after the ligament operation that I made in Kuwait, and being out of action for a long time. He said "this will help raising my ranking in both organization and hope to continue my winning ways.



Victorious Hamza Behbehani being held by his team.

Italy's dormant bobsleigh track ready for troubled 2026 Winter Olympics

CESANA TORINESE: The Cesana Torinese bobsleigh track has been dormant for over a decade since being built for the 2006 Winter Olympics but is ready to come to the aid of the troubled Milan-Cortina edition in just under two years' time. Sun, snow and the passage of time have had their effect on the track which snakes down the Piedmontese Alps but at the entrance one bright red message can be read—"Passion lives here".

Only a true Olympics fanatic would remember that it was the slogan of the Turin Games, or maybe the local mayor Roberto Vaglio. In the four years he has led this small town of 960 inhabitants, located at an altitude of 1,300 metres, Vaglio has been wondering what on earth to do with an unused track which cost 110 million euros to build. Then all of a sudden it found itself in the middle of a sporting and political soap opera, the sort of which Italy seems to specialise in.

'This Olympics is Italian'

The next Winter Olympics will be held over February 6-22 in 2026, and as with every organizing country Italy is wondering what to do about the event's bobsleigh and luge track. It is a structure which is costly to build and maintain and holds little interest for the local population, as well as being slammed by environmental protection organizations.

The initial idea to build a new track on the same site as for the 1956 Cortina d'Ampezzo Games was eventually abandoned over budgetary problems, and two weeks ago the head of Italy's Olympic Committee (CONI) Giovanni Malago told an ICO Session in Mumbai that sliding events would have to be held outside the host nation. But only a few days later a major meeting called by the Italian government led to the idea of using Cesana or Cortina being brought back to life. "We were told to make ourselves available," confirms Vaglio. "This Olympics is Italian so it would be a bit strange to send events abroad, and spend money abroad, when we have the possibility to get this track back up and running at relatively low cost."



CESANA TORINESE: A picture shows the former venue for bobsleigh, luge and skeleton during the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin, in Cesana Pariol. — AFP

Renovating the Cesana track, which would also mean rebuilding the refrigeration system which was demolished because it used the outdated method of using ammonia to make ice, would cost roughly 30 million euros compared to the 80 million euros needed to build a new track from scratch.

Asked by AFP about the possibility of using the Cesana track, the Milan-Cortina organization committee said that it was "evaluating different options with the relevant authorities".

Ski Dome

The prospect of hosting Olympic events for the second time hasn't created much enthusiasm in Cesana itself. "I don't know what to think, of this project like all the others," said one patron of the only bar open outside the tourist season.

Vaglio says that many locals were seduced by plans for a Ski Dome, in which the bobsleigh track

would be demolished and on the same site a new indoor skiing centre was to be built, one that was open all year round and capable of attracting ski enthusiasts from Italy and nearby France.

"It's doable and would have less impact on the environment, but there's just one problem: the cost," he says. "We're talking about 50 million euros which no-one, neither the province, the region nor the local council can cover." The Cesana track is 200 kilometres from Milan and a whopping 600km from Cortina, and if it were to be used the 2026 Games would be the most geographically spread out in history.

And this prospect is unlikely to please local environmental activists, who for years have also been fighting the Lyon-Turin high-speed rail link which is under construction not far away. They left a simple message underlining their disapproval on the track's concrete walls: "2006 Olympics, devastated mountains". — AFP



AHMEDABAD: England's cricket players attend a practice session ahead of their 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup one-day international (ODI) match against Australia at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on November 2, 2023. — AFP

Sports

Nuggets mauled by Timberwolves, Celtics extend unbeaten start

Lakers staged second-half rally to end 11-game losing streak

LOS ANGELES: The defending NBA champion Denver Nuggets crashed to their first defeat of the season in an upset 110-89 loss to the Minnesota Timberwolves on Wednesday, while Boston extended their unbeaten start with a brutal thrashing of Indiana.

Denver began the season in imperious form, building to a 4-0 start, but were stopped in their tracks after a dominant performance from the Timberwolves at Minneapolis's Target Center. Anthony Edwards led the Minnesota scoring with 24 points while Karl-Anthony Towns finished with 21 in a wire-to-wire victory for the Timberwolves, who led by 19 points at half-time.

Rudy Gobert delivered a crucial defensive performance with 12 rebounds and two blocks to help shut down Denver's free-scoring offense. Two-time NBA Most Valuable Player Nikola Jokic led the Denver scorers with 25 points, 10 rebounds and three assists. "It just shows what we're capable of, honestly," Minnesota's Mike Conley said after the win. "We know we can be a great team — we've got to put it together for four quarters."

"Tonight we beat a really good team and were able to stick with the easy things and let that just bring us home," added Conley, who finished with 17 points. While Denver kissed goodbye to their unbeaten record, there were no such problems for the Celtics, who romped to a 155-104 blowout over the Pacers to improve to 4-0 at the top of the Eastern Conference.

The points total was the second-highest ever in Celtics history, behind the 173 scored in a win over Minneapolis in 1959. Jayson Tatum led Boston with 30 points and 12 rebounds, with Derrick White adding 18 points and Sam Hauser 17 from five three-pointers.

LeBron snaps streak

The game was over as a contest well before the finish, allowing Celtics coach Joe Mazzulla to rest his starters for the entirety of the fourth quarter. In other games, LeBron James produced a vintage 35-point performance as the Los Angeles Lakers staged a second-half rally to end their 11-game losing streak to city rivals the Los Angeles Clippers with a 130-125 overtime victory.

The Lakers trailed by 19 points early in the game but roared back in the second half to complete a dramatic win, the team's first over the Clippers since 2020. For long periods James appeared to be locked in a toe-to-toe battle with Clippers veteran Paul George, who scored 20 points in a remarkable fourth quarter to force the contest to overtime.

George, who finished with 35 points, fouled out early in overtime and momentum swung back to the Lakers who closed out the win. James received scoring support from Anthony Davis and D'Angelo Russell with 27 points each, while Austin Reaves added 15.

In San Francisco, Klay Thompson drained a jump shot with 0.2 seconds remaining to clinch a thrilling 102-101 win for the Golden State Warriors over the Sacramento Kings. Thompson's last-gasp bucket settled an engrossing duel between the two northern California teams which saw the lead change hands no fewer than 12 times. The Warriors improve to 4-1 to move up to second in the Western Conference standings. In Toronto, the Milwaukee Bucks fell to 2-2 for the season after slumping to a 130-111 defeat on the road. Pascal Siakam scored 26 points in a balanced offensive effort for the Raptors, who saw all five starters finish in double figures.

German international Dennis Schroder had 24 points and Scottie Barnes added 21 as Toronto



MINNESOTA: Anthony Edwards #5 of the Minnesota Timberwolves shoots the ball while Nikola Jokic #15 of the Denver Nuggets defends in the third quarter at Target Center on November 1, 2023 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The Timberwolves defeated the Nuggets 110-89. — AFP

outgunned the Bucks' twin-pronged line-up led by Giannis Antetokounmpo and new signing Damian Lillard. Antetokounmpo was restricted to 16 points while Lillard finished with 15 as the Raptors cruised to their second win of the season against a Bucks team led by their former assistant coach Adrian Griffin.

In Dallas, the Mavericks maintained their perfect start to the season to improve to 4-0 with a 114-105 defeat of the Chicago Bulls. Grant Williams had 25 points, Tim Hardaway Jr. posted 24 points while Luka Doncic added 18 points with 10 assists as Dallas overturned a five-point deficit early in the fourth quarter to close out victory. — AFP

Bayern eliminated from German Cup by Saarbruecken

DORTMUND: Bayern Munich crashed out of the German Cup in the second round for the third time in four years after a remarkable 2-1 loss at third-division Saarbruecken on Wednesday, thanks to a last-minute winner from Marcel Gaus.

With the scores locked at 1-1 and the match looking destined for extra time, defender Gaus netted in the sixth minute of injury time to grab his team a famous victory. "When a first-division team like Bayern comes to Saarbruecken and loses, then we did something wrong," veteran Thomas Mueller told ARD after the match.

Bayern were beaten by Holstein Kiel on penalties at the same stage three years ago, then thrashed 5-0 by Borussia Moenchengladbach in round two in 2021. The record 20-time winners also lost in the quarter-finals at home to Freiburg last season. "There could be 100 explanations or maybe none at all. We had injuries but some will say we should win anyway," Bayern coach Thomas Tuchel said.

An "incredibly proud" home coach Ruediger Ziehl said he had told his players that Thursday's training session was now "voluntary" "If we don't celebrate today, then we can never celebrate." Bayern, who travel to Bundesliga rivals Borussia Dortmund on Saturday, lost central defender Matthijs de Ligt to a potentially serious knee injury early in the match, leaving the side with only one fit centre-back.

Six-time Cup winner Mueller looked to have Bayern on the right track for a routine victory at their less-fancied opponents, before De Ligt injured his knee in a tussle soon after and signalled immediately to the bench. The injury forced midfielder Joshua Kimmich into defence and appeared to put Bayern on the back foot against a resurgent Saarbruecken. The hosts struck next, Patrick Sontheimer tapping in a pass from Lukas Boeder after Saarbruecken pressed midfielder Frans Kratzig into a mistake.

Tuchel brought on the calvary, including Kingsley Coman, Jamal Musiala and Serge Gnabry, but star striker Harry Kane stayed on the bench ahead of Saturday's crunch match. With the England captain warming up ahead of what looked like certain extra



SAARBRUECKEN: Saarbruecken's players celebrate after winning the German Cup (DFB Pokal) second round football match 1 FC Saarbruecken v FC Bayern Munich at Ludwigspark stadium in Saarbruecken, south-western Germany. — AFP

time, veteran defender Gaus popped up with a moment that will go down in Saarbruecken history.

Dortmund, Leverkusen into last 16

Earlier on Wednesday, a strike from Marco Reus gave Borussia Dortmund a 1-0 home win over Hoffenheim. Teenagers Jamie Bynoe-Gittens and Youssef Moukoko were given rare starts as coach Edin Terzic shuffled his deck before Bayern's visit, but it was veteran forward Reus who gave Dortmund the lead late in the opening half.

Bynoe-Gittens dribbled down the left flank and shaped to shoot before finding Reus who looped in a one-touch finish to score his 165th goal for the club and give Dortmund a deserved half-time lead. The hosts spared chances but Hoffenheim posed little danger and were reduced to 10 men in injury time when former Liverpool defender Ozan Kabak saw red. Dortmund sporting director Sebastian Kehl, who won the German Cup once during a 13-year career at the club, said: "Against a team which has won all of their away games, I thought we did

very, very well." Bundesliga leaders Bayer Leverkusen scored three goals in the final five minutes to win 5-2 at third-tier Sandhausen.

Argentinian World Cup winner Exequiel Palacios gave Leverkusen an early lead from the spot after Amine Adli was brought down in the box. Sandhausen levelled twice early in the second half, Christoph Ehlich and Yassin Ben Balla scoring either side of a Jonathan Tah goal for the visitors.

Leverkusen forward Adam Hlozek scored in the 85th minute to give the visitors the lead, before Adli added two of his own to round out a nervous victory. Elsewhere, Freiburg were beaten 3-1 at home by second-division Paderborn, meaning the 2022 finalists join Bayern, holders RB Leipzig, Champions League participants Union Berlin and five-time winners Schalke to be eliminated early.

Five-time winners Eintracht Frankfurt won at third-division Viktoria Cologne, while Hertha Berlin beat Mainz, Magdeburg edged out Holstein Kiel on penalties and four-time winners Nuremberg beat Hansa Rostock in extra time. — AFP

Hamilton, Verstappen set for epic Brazil contest again

SAO PAULO: Two years on from their epic battle for the 2021 world title, Lewis Hamilton and Max Verstappen look set to lock horns, or be in close proximity again, at this weekend's Sao Paulo Grand Prix. After finishing second on track behind Red Bull's three-time champion in Austin and Mexico, Mercedes hope that Hamilton can deliver a victory in Brazil, as his team-mate George Russell did 12 months ago to claim his maiden success in a one-two for the Silver Arrows.

But they know that Verstappen will not be giving anything in commitment or pace as he seeks to continue his record-breaking swathe of victories at the atmospheric Interlagos circuit that has hosted many racing dramas. Mercedes' last win came in Brazil with Russell last year while since then Red Bull have reeled off 19 wins, 17 by Verstappen and two by Sergio Perez, in an unprecedented run of success broken only by a solitary Carlos Sainz triumph for Ferrari in Singapore.

Russell also won the sprint last year while Hamilton, with a brilliant drive through the field, won the 2021 Grand Prix. With the team winning six of the last eight at Interlagos, overall confidence is high this

weekend. "We go there knowing we have a good car and believing that if we put all our ducks in a row then we can have a very strong weekend," said Mercedes team chief Toto Wolff.

Hamilton agreed, suggesting: "These next two will be very close, but I'm sure Max will get 18 or 19 this year." Hamilton, a three-time winner in Brazil, was genuinely competitive in the last two races, even if he was disqualified in Texas, and with vociferous support in a country that has adopted him as an honorary Brazilian, is sure to do all he can to repay the fans who regard him as one of their own in the absence of a Brazilian driver.

Unstoppable Verstappen

Verstappen will have a 52nd career victory in sight, and his 17th of the year, to move within a win of four-time world champion Sebastian Vettel's tally of 53. "He's not obsessive in chasing records, or statistics," said Red Bull team boss Christian Horner.

"But he knows more than you think — he just has an inner desire, an inner belief, an inner hunger that drives him all the time. It's something he shares with all the greats." After his opening-lap crash and retirement in Mexico, Perez will also be acutely motivated.

He lies second in the title race with only a 20-point advantage on Hamilton, with three races remaining, and Horner has impressed how keen he is for Red Bull to finish first and second for the first time. "Mexico was devastating for me, but these things happen," said Perez, whose future with the



MEXICO CITY: Red Bull Racing's Dutch driver Max Verstappen (L) is greeted by second-place Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton after winning the Formula One Mexico Grand Prix at the Hermanos Rodriguez racetrack in Mexico City. — AFP

team has been the subject of much speculation.

"You can't afford to go over what happened or what may have been. My focus is to finish second and to have a great weekend in Brazil." In another sprint race weekend, with only a single practice session on Friday, Ferrari will also hope to be a competitive force and McLaren to demonstrate more consistency in what promises to be an action-packed weekend. — AFP

US basketball coaching legend Bob Knight dies

WASHINGTON: American college basketball coaching legend Bob Knight, an outspoken and controversial figure who guided the United States to 1984 Los Angeles Olympic gold, died Wednesday. He was 83.

In addition to directing a US squad with future NBA superstars Michael Jordan and Patrick Ewing to Olympic gold, Knight coached Indiana University to US college basketball crowns in 1976, 1981 and 1987. "It is with heavy hearts that we share that Coach Bob Knight passed away at his home in Bloomington (Indiana) surrounded by his family," the Knight family said in a statement.

"We are grateful for all the thoughts and prayers and appreciate the continued respect for our privacy as Coach requested a private family gathering, which is being honored. We will continue to celebrate his life and remember him, today and forever as a beloved Husband, Father, Coach, and Friend."

Knight once hurled a chair across the court during a game to earn an ejection and was fired from Indiana in 2000 after a confrontation with a student. Over his 42-year college head coaching career, Knight went a combined 902-371 during stops at Army (1966-71), Indiana (1972-2000) and Texas Tech (2001-2008).

At the time of his retirement, Knight was the winningest coach in US college history. He currently ranks sixth on the list. Knight, inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 1991, coached the Hoosiers to an undefeated championship campaign in 1976. He also coached a US squad to a title at the 1979 Pan American Games in Puerto Rico. — AFP

Mongolian Olympic chief robbed of jewels in Paris

PARIS: French police have arrested three men for robbing the head of the Mongolian Olympic delegation during a visit to Paris, making off with a bag containing almost 600,000 euros worth of jewels in a drive-by heist, law enforcement sources told AFP.

France is preparing to host the Summer Olympics in 2024 and the member of the International Olympic Committee arrived in Paris to attend a security committee meeting ahead of the Games.

The three men were arrested last week in Seine-Saint-Denis, a low-income suburb north of Paris that is to host key Olympic events and the athletes' village, several law enforcement sources, who asked not to be named, told AFP late on Wednesday.

On October 11, the Mongolian official, who was not named, and his wife were travelling from Charles de Gaulle Airport when they were robbed in the Landy Tunnel heading to the centre of the capital, according to the prosecutors. The 1.3 km (0.8 mile) long tunnel is notorious for smash-and-grab thefts.

During the heist, a scooter with two men approached the car, with one of the thieves breaking a window and snatching a bag containing jewellery from the back seat, a police source said. The Mongolian couple estimated the contents of the stolen bag at 570,000 euros (\$605,000), prosecutors said.

According to the International Olympic Committee, the victim runs several companies in Mongolia. On October 25, three men aged between 22 and 25 were arrested in Saint-Denis, the sources said. Investigators believe that on October 2 the same team robbed two Saudi travellers, stealing 500,000 euros worth of jewels and other valuables. — AFP

Texas Rangers blank D-backs to capture first World Series title

‘Everything I have ever worked for is for this moment’



PHOENIX: The Texas Rangers pose for photos after beating the Arizona Diamondbacks 5-0 in Game Five to win the World Series at Chase Field in Phoenix, Arizona. — AFP

LOS ANGELES: Delivering a historic title with an unbeaten road playoff run, the Texas Rangers captured the World Series in their 63-year history on Wednesday by defeating Arizona 5-0. Marcus Semien's two-run home run, a run-scoring Mitch Garver single and a pivotal ninth-inning Diamondbacks error produced the runs that enabled Texas to win Major League Baseball's best-of-seven championship final 4-1.

"It's just emotional," Semien said. "Everything I have ever worked for is for this moment." The Rangers went undefeated in 11 post-season contests away from their suburban Dallas home ballpark, capped by sweeping three games in Phoenix over the Diamondbacks.

"It's such a treat," the Rangers' Nathaniel Lowe said. "We really did a great job of finishing here on the road. Maybe we struggled at home but we've got a special group." The Rangers, who began as the Washington Senators in 1961 before relocating to Texas in 1972, had reached

the World Series in 2010 and 2011, losing first to San Francisco and then St. Louis.

"That's one of the coolest feelings of my life," Texas slugger Jonah Heim said. "It's what your work your whole life for. We accomplished our goals. I'm so proud of this team." The D-backs suffered their first World Series defeat, having won the 2001 crown in their only prior appearance.

"This is painful. This is just plain painful. And I can't quite move past that right now. But I will," D-backs manager Torey Lovullo said. "The reason why it hurts so bad is because we care so much." Arizona pitcher Zac Gallen kept Texas hitless through six innings, the 28-year-old US right-hander baffling the same batters who blasted out 11 runs the night before. "He had his good stuff working," Lowe said. "But we finally got to him."

The Rangers pounced in the top of the seventh with three consecutive hits as Corey Seager singled to left field, reached third base on Evan Carter's double and scored the first run on Garver's

single up the middle. "It was kind of a crazy game. We got no-hit until the sixth," Semien said. "But we came through. Once Corey got the first hit everybody kind of woke up." Texas shortstop Seager homered three times and drove in six runs in the World Series to win the Most Valuable Player award, becoming only the fourth player to take it twice after his MVP role for the 2020 champion Los Angeles Dodgers.

"It truly is incredible. But it's not just me," Seager said. "Just happy to be part of this team." Only Hall of Famers Bob Gibson, Sandy Koufax and Reggie Jackson had won multiple Series MVP awards. "I don't think you can ever fathom that," Seager said. "It's a pretty special group."

Josh Jung and Lowe singled to open the ninth for the Rangers and both scored on an error by Arizona's Alek Thomas on Heim's single to make it 3-0. Semien then blasted a two-run homer into the left-field seats to all-but settle matters.

When Josh Sborz struck out Ketel Marte for

the final out, ending the Arizona batter's 20-game playoff hit streak, the Rangers began a wild celebration.

Bochy gets fourth title

Bruce Bochy, who came out of retirement last year to manage the Rangers, won his fourth World Series title at age 68 after three with San Francisco. "To get this call, to be a part of this, I know how blessed I am," Bochy said. "I can't thank these guys enough."

The Rangers had missed the playoffs in six consecutive losing seasons before this year's title run. Arizona advanced runners into scoring position in each of the first five innings but came away empty-handed, going 0-for-10 at the plate thanks to Rangers pitcher Nathan Eovaldi mystifying the D-backs when it mattered early.

"Evo was incredible to get out of jams like that," Seager said. "He kept it 0-0 when we couldn't get anything going." — AFP

Man Utd dumped out of League Cup by Newcastle

MANCHESTER: Manchester United's defence of the League Cup came to a limp end in a 3-0 home defeat by Newcastle on Wednesday as Arsenal were well-beaten 3-1 at West Ham. Liverpool overcame Bournemouth 2-1 to progress to the quarter-finals, while Chelsea saw off Championship side Blackburn 2-0.

In a repeat of last year's final, which Erik ten Hag's men won 2-0, both managers named much-changed sides at Old Trafford. But it was Newcastle's strength in depth that showed as United slumped to an eighth defeat in 15 games in all competitions this season — their worst start to any campaign since 1962/63.

"This is not good enough. We have to take responsibility, I have to take responsibility," said Ten Hag. "I feel sorry for the fans, it is below our standards and we have to put it right." Tino Livramento and Lewis Hall have had to wait for their chance to shine since signing for the Magpies but the young full-backs played a huge role as Eddie Howe's side got revenge for defeat at Wembley in February.

Livramento's surging run set up Miguel Almiron to open the scoring on 28 minutes. Chelsea loanee Hall



MANCHESTER: Manchester United's English striker #10 Marcus Rashford (C) heads the ball as he defends the goal from a corner shot during the English League Cup fourth round football match between Manchester United and Newcastle United at Old Trafford, in Manchester. — AFP

then volleyed home a brilliant effort from the edge of the box just eight minutes later. Joe Willock's solo run and stunning finish then drew the sting from any chance of a United fightback on the hour mark. After eliminating both Manchester City and United, Newcastle's reward is another tough draw away to Chelsea in the last eight.

Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta was left to rue leaving Declan Rice out on his return to the London

Stadium, with the England international alongside Bukayo Saka, Martin Odegaard and William Saliba on a star-studded Gunners' bench.

Aaron Ramsdale was handed a rare start since he was dropped in favour of David Raya, but it was a night to forget for the Arsenal goalkeeper. Ben White beat Ramsdale to Jarrod Bowen's dangerous in-swinging corner but could only head into his own net after 16 minutes. — AFP

India rout S Lanka by 302 runs to seal WCup s-final spot

MUMBAI: Mohammed Shami took five wickets as India's pacemen produced a devastating display to skittle out Sri Lanka for just 55 as the unbeaten tournament hosts secured a World Cup semi-final place with a colossal 302-run win in Mumbai on Thursday. Sri Lanka's woeful innings featured five noughts, with both their openers falling for golden ducks as they slumped to 14-6 chasing 358. Shami took 5-18 in five overs after Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj struck with the new ball in an innings with a top score of just 14

Bumrah, with 1-8 in five overs, and Siraj (3-16 in

seven) did the early damage before Shami took two wickets in two balls as Sri Lanka's rapid collapse continued. India's winning-margin was their biggest, by runs, in a World Cup game surpassing their 257-run defeat of non-Test nation Bermuda during the 2007 edition in the Caribbean.

Sri Lanka's total did top the 50 all out they made in a 10-wicket Asia Cup defeat by India in Colombo in September. They also avoided the embarrassment of setting a new record for the lowest total in any one-day international of 35 and the World Cup mark of 36, posted by Canada against Sri Lanka in Paarl, South Africa, in 2003. These were meagre consolations to a Sri Lanka side suffering their fifth defeat in seven games at this World Cup. Earlier, there was some disappointment for the home crowd when Virat Kohli missed out on equalling Sachin Tendulkar's all-time record of 49 one-day international hundreds. — AFP



MUMBAI: India's Mohammed Shami (L) celebrates with teammates after taking five wickets during the 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup one-day international (ODI) match between India and Sri Lanka at the Wankhede Stadium. — AFP

Emotional Jabeur to donate prize money to Palestinians

CANCUN: An emotional Ons Jabeur said she would donate part of her WTA Finals prize money to Palestinians after avenging her Wimbledon final defeat to Marketa Vondrousova on Wednesday. After earning her first win of the week at the season-ending championships in Cancun, Tunisia's Jabeur choked back tears as she spoke on court.

"I am very happy with the win, but I haven't been happy lately," said the only Arabic woman to reach a Grand Slam final. "The situation in the world doesn't make me happy," Jabeur added as she broke down in tears, before composing herself enough to talk about the Zionist-Hamas conflict.

"It's very tough seeing children, babies dying every day," she said. "It's heartbreaking, so I've decided to donate part of my prize money to help the Palestinians. "I cannot be happy with just this win, with what is happening. I'm sorry guys, it's supposed to be about tennis, but it's very frustrating looking at videos every day. "I'm sorry — it's not a political message, it's just humanity. I want peace in this world and that's it."

Later, in her post-match press conference, the 29-year-old Jabeur said it had been a challenge to focus on tennis. "I try to stay off social media as much as I can, but it's very tough," Jabeur said. "You go through videos, photos, they're horrible, horrible photos every day. It doesn't help me sleep or recover very well and the worst thing is I feel hopeless."

"Maybe donating some money would help a little bit with what they have been going through. But I know money doesn't mean anything right now to them. So I wish freedom for everybody and really peace for everyone." Jabeur must beat world number two Iga Swiatek in the final match of round-robin play on Friday to have any chance of qualifying for the semi-finals in Mexico. — AFP