

3 Japanese Society in Kuwait holds beach cleaning drive



6 At least 157 dead in Nepal earthquake



7 Battling public mood, Turkey quietly assimilates Syrians



16 Mainz sack Ghazi after Germany opens probe into posts on Gaza



US envoy faces Arab anger

Fierce fighting rages in Gaza after Zionist entity rebuffs US pause call



(Left) Protesters hold up the keys representing homes abandoned by Palestinians as they fled their homes in Palestine in 1948 during a rally in solidarity with the Palestinian people at Irada Square on Nov 3, 2023. (Right) A Palestinian man gestures as he stands on the rubble of a collapsed building as a fire burns following a strike by the Zionist military on Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on Nov 4, 2023. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat and AFP

Kuwait, Russia FM's call for Gaza ceasefire



MOSCOW: Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov on Nov 3, 2023. — KUNA

MOSCOW: Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov held official talks in Moscow on Friday with discussions focusing on various regional and international issues. They expressed strong support for efforts to end the ongoing war in Gaza, emphasizing the importance of an immediate ceasefire and the opening of humanitarian corridors to provide aid to the civilian population. They also highlighted their commitment to a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian issue and emphasized the need for peace and stability in the region. The ministers addressed other regional topics and reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing stability and security in the region.

Talks also focused on developments on the repercussions related to the incorrect historical findings issued by the Iraqi federal supreme court regarding the Khor Abdullah agreement, and the issue of completing demarcating the Kuwaiti-Iraqi maritime borders beyond mark No 162, as well as the necessity of finalizing the demarcation of maritime borders between Kuwait and Iran. — KUNA (See Page 2)

GAZA: The Zionist entity battled into the fifth week Saturday of its war to crush Hamas, showing no signs of letting up even as US Secretary of State Antony Blinken faced a rising tide of anger in meetings with Arab foreign ministers. Blinken reaffirmed US support for "humanitarian pauses" in the fighting in Gaza to ensure desperate civilians get help a day after the Zionist entity's hawkish Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave the idea short shrift.

Speaking at a news conference in Amman about sparing civilians and speeding up aid deliveries, the US top diplomat said: "The United States believes that all of these efforts will be facilitated by humanitarian pauses." Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi called for all sides to work together to "stop a ca-

Turkey recalls envoy, 'writes off' Netanyahu

ISTANBUL: Turkey said Saturday it was recalling its ambassador to the Zionist entity and breaking off contacts with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in protest at the bloodshed in Gaza. Ankara announced the decisions on the eve of what promises to be a difficult visit to Turkey by US Secretary of State

Hezbollah chief warns war could become regional

BEIRUT: Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah warned Friday that war between the Zionist entity and Hamas could turn into a regional conflict if attacks on Gaza continue, placing responsibility firmly on the United States. In his first speech since war broke out almost four weeks ago between Hamas militants and the Zionist entity, the head of the powerful Iran-backed movement warned that "all options" were open for an expansion of the conflict to Lebanon.

"America is entirely responsible for the ongoing war on Gaza and its peo-

ple, and (the Zionist entity) is simply a tool of execution," Nasrallah said in a televised broadcast, calling the conflict "decisive." "Whoever wants to prevent a regional war — and this is addressed to the Americans — must quickly stop the aggression on Gaza," he said.

Thousands of supporters gathered to hear the fiery speech at an event in Beirut's southern suburbs, a Hezbollah stronghold, held in memory of the group's fighters killed in Zionist bombardments. Others gathered elsewhere in Lebanon and the region, including Tehran and Baghdad. Since Hamas militants launched a shock Oct 7 attack on the Zionist entity from the Gaza Strip, Lebanon's southern border has seen escalating tit-for-tat exchanges, mainly between the Zionist entity and Hezbollah, an ally of the Palestinian group, stoking fears of a broader conflagration.

Antony Blinken. Palestinian ally Turkey had been mending torn relations with the Zionist entity until last month's start of the Zionist-Hamas war. But its tone hardened against both the Zionist entity and its Western supporters — particularly the United States — as the fighting escalated and the death toll among Palestinian civilians soared. The Turkish foreign ministry said ambassador Sakir Ozkan Torunlar was being recalled for consultations "in view of the unfolding humanitarian tragedy in Gaza caused by the continuing attacks by (the Zionist entity) against civilians,

and (the Zionist entity's) refusal (to accept) a ceasefire".

Meanwhile, Honduras became the latest Latin American country Friday to recall its ambassador to the Zionist entity for consultations on what it described as the "serious humanitarian situation" facing Palestinians in Gaza. "In the face of the serious humanitarian situation suffered by the Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip, the government" has called envoy Roberto Martinez to Tegucigalpa "for consultations," foreign minister Enrique Reina said on X, formerly Twitter. Zionist forces have encircled Ga-

za's largest city while trying to crush Hamas in retaliation for Oct 7 raids into the Zionist entity. The health ministry in Gaza says around 9,500 people — mostly women and children — have since been killed in Zionist strikes and the intensifying ground campaign.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan separately told reporters that he held Netanyahu personally responsible for the growing civilian death toll in the Gaza Strip. "Netanyahu is no longer someone we can talk to. We have written him off," Turkish media quoted Erdogan as saying.

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BEIRUT: Supporters of the Lebanese movement Hezbollah watch a televised speech by its leader Hassan Nasrallah on Nov 3, 2023. — AFP



Local

Kuwait and Russia to support efforts to end war on Gaza

Sheikh Salem holds talks with Duma chief Volodin

MOSCOW: Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his Russian Federation counterpart Sergei Lavrov held official talks in Moscow on Friday. At the outset of the meeting, Sheikh Salem conveyed greetings on behalf of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, government and people of Kuwait to Russian President Vladimir Putin and to the Russian government and people.

Sheikh Salem then expressed wishes for continued growth, prosperity, progress and prosperity for Russia and its people, praising the strength, durability and close cooperation of such historical relations that lasted for 60 years. For his part, Lavrov expressed his best regards to the political leadership in the State of Kuwait, appreciating the deep ties that bring together the two countries and peoples, and expressing his country's pride in the distinguished path of relations and existing cooperation with the State of Kuwait in all fields.

Later, discussions delved into frameworks for strengthening bilateral relations and pushing those to advanced positions, including ways to achieve the visions of the leadership of the two countries towards more progress and a broader future that reflects those aspirations and achieves the common interests of the two countries. The two sides also discussed the latest developments in the regional and international arenas, most notably the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and the dangerous escalation in Gaza Strip.

The two ministers also discussed ways to enhance cooperation between the two sides, including support joint international efforts and stop the ongoing war in Gaza, in addition to guaranteeing that the spread of violence does not increase, and to intensify diplomatic and political action to ensure the provision of safe crossings for the arrival of humanitarian and relief aid to the Palestinian people.

The two ministers underlined the need for joint work towards finding a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian issue, and to bring peace and stability to the region. Talks also focused on developments on the Iraqi scene, especially the repercussions related to the incorrect historical findings issued by the Iraqi Federal Supreme Court regarding Khor Abdullah port agreement, and the issue of completing Demarcating the Kuwaiti-Iraqi maritime borders beyond Mark No 162, as well as the necessity of ending the demarcation of the maritime borders between the



MOSCOW: Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his Russian Federation counterpart Sergei Lavrov address a joint press conference in Moscow on Friday. — KUNA photos



MOSCOW: Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs with Chairman of the Russian State Duma (parliament) Vyacheslav Volodin.

State of Kuwait and Iran.

Afterwards, talks between the two sides highlighted the Syrian crisis, international efforts, including efforts aimed at finding a political solution that would end the suffering of the Syrian people. The two also discussed the crisis in Ukraine and its repercussions at the regional and international arenas, including discussions on other regional and international topics of common interest. The two ministers reaffirmed the joint commitment to enhancing stability and security in the region. Later, a joint press conference was held, during which Sheikh Salem thanked his Russian counterpart for the invitation to visit Moscow, noting that bilateral discussions were "fruitful and constructive" and addressed ways to develop "strong and historical" relations between the two countries.

Sheikh Salem added that Kuwait was the first Gulf country to establish relations with the Soviet Union in 1963, as the two countries celebrate this year the 60th anniversary of established diplomatic ties. Sheikh Salem said that he briefed the Russian Foreign Minister on his talks with Iraq regarding the importance of ending the demarcation of our maritime borders beyond the 162 Mark, noting that there was similar views regarding the importance of ending the demarcation of these borders and ways to achieve such goal.

The Kuwait minister stated that the discussions dealt with the regional situation, mainly the war in Gaza Strip, noting also on similar views on the importance of stopping it immediately and allowing humanitarian aid to enter the Strip. Sheikh Salem added

ed that what we are seeing in Gaza Strip is "heartbreaking," with the number of victims reaching over 9,000 Palestinians, almost 4,000 of them children, an average of 1,000 children per week, calling on the international community to bear responsibility and work to stop this war. He pointed out that the State of Kuwait was one of the first countries to rush to establish an air bridge to send relief and humanitarian aid to Gaza Strip, noting that "Kuwaiti planes took off from the first day, and today the 11th plane took off for Al-Arish Airport to deliver aid, which amounted to about 400 tons of medicine and aid supplies".

Sheikh Salem also noted that he discussed the war in Ukraine and expressed the position of the State of Kuwait, which called for stopping the war as soon as possible and resorting to dialogue and peaceful solutions. For his part, Lavrov said that discussions focused on regional developments, stressing the categorical rejection of the indiscriminate bombing of civilian neighborhoods in Gaza Strip, "hostage taking," and other violations of international and humanitarian law. Lavrov stressed the need to "take urgent measures to reach a ceasefire and open humanitarian corridors to prevent further casualties and provide assistance to the civilian population." Lavrov called for accelerating the creation of favorable conditions for the resumption of comprehensive talks between the Palestinians and the Zionist entity, and "once a ceasefire is reached, we must work to resume negotiations with the aim of establishing an independent Palestinian state in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy." Lavrov

"categorically" rejected talks of displacing Palestinians to Sinai Desert, as "the idea is completely inconsistent with the interests of the Palestinians and Egypt and contradicts peace efforts in the region."

He added that the discussions also addressed the situation in Syria in light of its return to Arab League, stressing the need to "support this positive step with specific actions in order to improve the situation on the ground," pointing to the joint emphasis on the necessity of reaching a comprehensive settlement in Syria on the basis of relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

The Russian Foreign Minister praised the "balanced" approach by Kuwait regarding the Ukrainian crisis, pointing out that his country "does not yet see any initiative from Ukraine to reach a just and true peace." The Russian Foreign Minister stated that the two sides discussed ways to develop bilateral relations in various fields, as "we emphasized the role played by the relevant joint committee in this field." He stated that the discussions also dealt with increasing tourism activity between Kuwait and Russia, pointing out that the number of Kuwaiti tourists coming to Moscow during the current year doubled thanks to the opening of an airline route between Moscow and Kuwait last February, in addition to facilitating Kuwaiti citizens obtaining a tourist visa to Russia.

Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs also met Friday with Chairman of the Russian State Duma (parliament) Vyacheslav Volodin as part of his official visit to the friendly Russian Federation. At the beginning of the meeting, Sheikh Salem conveyed the

greetings of the leadership, government and people of the State of Kuwait to the Russian leadership, government and people, and their best wishes for continued growth, prosperity and progress for Russia and its friendly people. The Minister expressed his deep pride in the progress and development of the historical relations and close friendship between the State of Kuwait and the friendly Russian Federation in all fields and in the strength of the close ties between the governments and peoples of the two friendly countries. For his part, the Speaker of the State Duma began his speech by offering his best regards to the leadership, government and people of the State of Kuwait.

He stressed the Russian Federation's keenness to take the friendly relations and bilateral cooperation to wider and more comprehensive horizons to serve the common interests and achieve the aspirations of the two friendly peoples. During the meeting, a number of regional and international issues of common concern were also discussed, most notably the developments in the occupied Palestinian territories and the Gaza Strip, and the political solutions proposed to end the humanitarian crisis suffered by the brotherly Palestinian people. Other developments in the region were also discussed. In this context, the Speaker of the Russian State Duma expressed his country's appreciation for the pioneering humanitarian efforts and endeavors undertaken by the State of Kuwait and its prominent role on the international stage to enhance stability and support diplomatic efforts to settle conflicts in the region by peaceful means. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait University's student organizations hosted a huge gathering with the theme "Get Your Keys Ready" serving as a symbol of Palestinians in the diaspora aspiring to liberate and return to their homeland, at the Irada Square on Friday. -- Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



'Palestinian cause is our cause too,' chant KU students

By Abdellatif Al-Sharaa

KUWAIT: Once again, Irada Square, located across from the National Assembly, served as the venue for a gathering in support of the people of Gaza, who have endured a month of relentless bombardment from air, land and sea. This onslaught has resulted in the tragic loss of lives, including the elderly and the young, mothers and infants. The explosives used in these attacks have unleashed destruction exceeding that of a nuclear bomb, two or three times over.

The event was organized by Kuwait University student organizations, with the theme "Get Your Keys Ready" serving as a symbol of Palestinians in the diaspora aspiring to liberate and return to their homeland.

One of the organizers expressed that this was a collective effort by students from different affiliations who believe that the Palestinian cause is a shared one. She noted that when political factions recognized the students' efforts, they decided to support and collaborate with them to send a powerful message to the world.

MP Hamad Al-Matar was present at the gathering. "This is a message from the Kuwaiti people, conveyed through our youth, who represent 70 percent of Kuwaiti society. This generation firmly believes that the Palestinian cause is the cause of our entire



Content Creator for Kuwait Times and Kuwait News Doha Al-Issa interviews MP Abdulaziz Al-Saqabi during the gathering.

nation," he said. He also mentioned that Kuwaiti students collaborated with peers from nine other countries to organize similar events with the same theme. Matar emphasized the significance of this campaign, which originated from the youth, demonstrating their unwavering commitment to the Palestinian cause.

Dr Ali Al-Kandari, a faculty member at Kuwait University, said it is not unusual for Kuwaiti students to organize such events. He emphasized that people, organizations and individuals, all members of Kuwaiti society and residents of Kuwait, were participating in support of this just cause. He urged those who may not be well-informed about the issue to learn, as the Palestinian cause is a matter of humanity, and the Palestinian people deserve support and the opportunity to live in dignity.

Several speakers highlighted the history of the Palestinians who left their homes in 1948, believing it would be a temporary departure before their return. They held onto the keys to their homes as a symbol



Content Creator for Kuwait Times and Kuwait News Zainab Dashti during the gathering.

of their determination to one day reclaim their homeland. The keys now represent a story of oppression, suffering, forced displacement and cold-blooded killings. The keys tell the tales of fathers carrying their children's remains in bags and children who have lost their entire families.

Mansour Al-Madhahka expressed the honor of standing in solidarity with their brothers and sisters in Gaza. He questioned the Human Rights Committee established in 1946, asking whether Palestinians have rights and where that committee has been for all these years. He declared that as students, they can only stand there today but will persist in their campaign until the rightful rights are restored to the Palestinians.

Khawla Al-Ghalayeni, a Palestinian residing in Kuwait, carried a key, symbolizing her belief that the day of returning to her home in Palestine is near. She affirmed their determination to liberate their land, regardless of the time it takes.



Local

Solid Kuwait-Japan bilateral relations span various domains: Ambassador

Japanese Society in Kuwait holds beach cleaning campaign 'Operation Turtle'



Japanese Society in Kuwait pose for a group picture with Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Morino Yasunari and staff from Kuwait Environment Protection Society and Environment Public Authority. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Volunteers along with members of the Japanese Society during the beach cleaning campaign.



Volunteers cleaning the beach.



Volunteers wearing Palestinian keffiyeh and cleaning the beach.

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The Japanese Society in Kuwait organized a beach cleaning campaign "Operation Turtle" on Saturday at Shuwaikh Beach, in collaboration with the Kuwait Environment Protection Society, Environment Public Authority and the Japanese Embassy.

Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Morino Yasunari emphasized the deep-rooted Kuwaiti-Japanese relations and the strong bilateral cooperation in various areas, particularly environmental initiatives. He highlighted the clear commitment to this partnership, demonstrated by the annual participation in the Shuwaikh beach cleaning campaign. Notably, the engagement of young people in this initiative underscores the enduring commitment to environmental conservation, reflecting the shared values and cooperation between the two countries.

"The participation in this campaign has steadily increased, a testament to the growing environmental awareness within Kuwaiti society across all age groups, especially among the youth," the ambassador said. "This awareness campaign is dedicated to preserving Kuwait's coastal and marine environment, focusing on safeguarding marine life, waste reduc-



Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Morino Yasunari during the beach cleaning campaign.



tion and fostering a clean and healthy environment. It underscores the shared societal and global responsibility for environmental protection, making it a collective effort to ensure a sustainable and cleaner world for future generations," he added.

Jenan Behzad, General Secretary of Kuwait Environment Protection Society, noted the organization is one of the founders of the annual Shuwaikh beach clean-up campaign. She pointed out the number of Kuwaiti volunteers has been increasing year after year, spreading the message about the importance of preserving environmental resources to a wider audience.

Behzad stressed the need to protect the Kuwait Bay area and the southern coastal regions due to their significance in providing food for sea turtles. "The female turtle lays approximately 150 eggs every time, but even under natural conditions, only one or two out of 1,000 eggs survive," she said. She highlighted the challenges sea turtles face, including human in-



terference, predation by creatures like crabs and fish, habitat loss due to beachfront developments, entanglement in fishing nets and various forms of pollution in their marine and coastal habitats.

Behzad also mentioned the presence of four species of sea turtles around the shores of Kuwait, which are at risk of extinction: The green turtle, the loggerhead sea turtle, the leatherback turtle and the hawksbill turtle. She emphasized the critical role of a balanced marine environment in providing safe food sources for turtles and ensuring their survival.

Furthermore, she explained the importance of tracking sea turtles to protect them effectively. Sea turtles live and feed in one location and travel thousands of miles to reproduce and lay their eggs. The only way to track them in the open seas is by attaching a transmitter to their backs to monitor their movements and receive signals indicating their location, thereby helping to reduce the threats they face.

Engineer Maali Al-Oqab, Director of Public Rela-



A turtle seen at the Shuwaikh Beach.

tions at the Kuwaiti Society for Environmental Protection, added that their participation in this year's event was linked to expressing Kuwaiti support for the people in occupied Palestine, particularly the Gaza Strip, which is experiencing the ugliest manifestations of abuse and genocide.

In this context, the Friends of the Environment team decided to wear T-shirts featuring the turtle, the symbol of the event, decorated with the map of Palestine. They also wore the Palestinian keffiyeh as a symbol of solidarity and pride, conveying a humanitarian message that Kuwait stands in solidarity with and supports the people in the occupied Palestinian territories.

This campaign, initiated in 2000, aims to restore the Kuwaiti beach environment, allowing sea turtles to return, and raise awareness of the importance of environmental protection.

Normalizing violence destroys humanity

By Ghadeer Ghloum and Passant Hisham

KUWAIT: The noblest feeling that distinguishes humans from other creatures is their empathy towards others and their willingness to share in their joys and sorrows. Humans are fundamentally social beings. When they abandon this noble feeling, they have forsaken their desired humanity. This is what Dr Ali Al-Baghlani, specialist in therapy, said during an interview with Kuwait Times, which was conducted to highlight the impact the prevalence of exposure to violence has on individuals' mental health and the upbringing of children, which leads to normalizing violence in societies.

In this report, Dr Baghlani and Mona Salmeen, a parenting coach, share their insights on the consequences of excessive exposure to violence and parents' responsibility in ensuring a safe upbringing of their children.

Dr Baghlani emphasized that one of the worst things that can happen to a person is of scenes of violence and destruction to become familiar to them. Unfortunately, those who are accustomed to watching movies and series with a violent content may not care about the misfortunes and pains of others. They become desensitized to disasters and wars, viewing them superficially. This lack of responsibility towards what is happening leads them to believe that there are others who are responsible for providing assistance to the victims or the perpetrators.

Baghlani further added that a study conducted by the College of Humanities at the University of California examined the extent to which others feel a sense of responsibility to help the victim at the time of an inci-

dent. It was found that 67 percent of the study's sample population felt a diminished sense of responsibility, believing it was not their responsibility. Further analysis revealed that individuals who were visually or audibly exposed to violent events had their empathy towards the victims dulled, considering it normal and losing sensitivity towards violent scenes.

According to Dr Baghlani, psychologically, when a person becomes desensitized to these scenes, they may adopt aggressive behaviors in their interactions with others. They may become violent in their use of hurtful words towards individuals or become accustomed to arguments and physical confrontations when facing conflicts in their dealings with people. This results in an increase in incidents and crimes within societies. "We must not forget the psychological and physical harm and the feeling of oppression experienced by the victim due to not receiving support in the face of violence," he warned.

He then expressed that the noblest feeling that distinguishes humans from other creatures is their empathy towards others and their willingness to share in their joys and sorrows. Humans are fundamentally social beings. When they abandon this noble feeling, they have forsaken their desired humanity, he explained.

On her part, Salmeen suggests parents should encourage open and non-judgmental conversations with their children concerning their thoughts about violence and help them better understand its negative emotional and physical consequences. This can be achieved through using different narratives from books, movies or real-life events as opportunities for discussing how the child can critically assess the violent actions practiced in different situations, and how would the child have acted differently if placed in the same scenario.

"Parents can show their children how conflicts can be resolved through peaceful communication, compromise and understanding," Salmeen said. She then emphasized on the necessity of limiting children's exposure to media violence, but with respect for their



Dr Ali Al-Baghlani



Mona Salmeen

personal freedom and space. "The best approach is to engage children in the decision-making process and discuss with them the proper media choices and guidelines they should keep in mind before consuming any type of content," she noted.

As violence in the media can sometimes be inevitable, another solution is to provide alternative forms of entertainment for children, such as educational or creative activities, outdoor play and quality family time. Moreover, Salmeen explains that if violent behavior is witnessed, it should be approached wisely by the parents. "It begins with staying calm and approaching the situation with empathy, avoiding shaming or blaming, but rather engaging in a conversation to understand the child's perspective, asking them why they acted in that manner and what they hoped to achieve."

She concluded by asserting that it's best to consider this incident as an opportunity for growth and learning and reinforcing the family's values and expectations regarding non-violence. This comprehensive approach empowers parents to proactively protect their children from the negative impact of media violence, ensuring a safer and healthier environment for their upbringing.

CAN launches prostate cancer awareness campaign in Kuwait

KUWAIT: The National Cancer Awareness Campaign (CAN) launched the Kuwait Prostate Cancer Awareness Campaign under the slogan (Get Screened) coinciding with (November) International month for awareness of this disease. Dr Khaled Al-Saleh, Chairman of the Board of Directors of CAN, said in a press statement that the campaign is being held in partnership with the Urology Association and the Kuwaiti Oncology Association under the patronage of the Minister of Health, Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi. It aims to highlight the importance of early detection of the disease and recognizing the initial symptoms.

Especially since the prostate is the most common cancer in men over fifty years old. Al-Saleh added that the campaign also aims to urge the target group to perform periodic examinations and analyze tumor markers for prostate cancer with a blood test PSA, which, if elevated, can give an indication of the possible presence of this tumor. He stated that if the tumor is diagnosed early, treatment becomes guaranteed and the rate of recovery from it increases.

He pointed out that based on the statistics of the Kuwait Center for Cancer Control, prostate cancer ranks second in incidence rates among Kuwaitis, preceded by colorectal cancer. He indicated that the risk factors are a family history of this tumor and obesity. As for prevention, paying attention to a healthy lifestyle, both nutritional and physical is the best way to prevent all diseases, including cancerous diseases such as prostate cancer, in addition to maintaining body weight and conducting screening, especially for the target group.

He pointed out that the campaign was launched with a lecture to raise awareness of prostate cancer at the headquarters of the General Insurance Corporation. The social program was presented by a consultant urology surgeon specializing in masculinity and men's health and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwaiti Urological Association, Dr Dulaim Al-Hajri. — KUNA

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Head of Teachers Association calls for screen allowance

KUWAIT: The President of the Teachers Association, Hamad Al-Houli, called for the approval of the screen allowance for members of the educational staff after the issuance of the decision of the Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Dr Adel Al-Mana, on October 17 regarding the list of policies and controls of distance education. The decision included activating the use of available distance education tools represented in the use of Microsoft Office.

Al-Houli indicated that the association sent a letter to Minister Dr Al-Mana that included all legal opinions confirming the eligibility of the screen allowance for the members of the educational staff addressed in the ministry's decision and asked him to coordinate and address the Civil Service Bureau to approve and disburse the allowance in the coming weeks.

"The ministerial decision issued in this regard and the policies and controls of distance education included in it confirmed what the educational body is exposed directly to automated and electronic systems throughout official working hours to complete their work and provide the data required by the nature of their work and the health risks that will result from the rays released by these screens," he explained.

It is worth noting that the Teachers' Association demanded the need to quickly pay the screen allowance to the members of the educational staff assigned to work on the team's program and educational portals during the COVID-19 crisis in accordance with the regulations stipulated in this regard.

Al-Houli described it as surprising and unjustified, especially with the presence of all legal opinions from the Ministry of Education, Fatwa and Legislation in the Council of Ministers that members of the educational staff working on screens are entitled to pay the screen allowance under the decision of the Civil Service Council regarding granting Kuwaiti employees working on screens in government agencies.

The association called on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and the National Assembly Issa Al-Kandari to consider this file urgently and pay it all the attention and care by demanding a quick response by the Civil Service Bureau.

Kuwait's 12th relief plane leaves for Gaza with 2 ambulances onboard

KRCS chief calls for end to Zionist bombardments of Gaza

KUWAIT: Kuwait's 12th relief planeload departed on Saturday morning on its way to Al-Arish Airport in Egypt. The plane is carrying onboard two ambulances, taking total of ambulances previously delivered to 12, six of which are designated for intensive care.

This was organized by Kuwait Society for Relief in cooperation with 22 other societies as part of a wider campaign directing humanitarian aid to Gaza. Kuwait Society for Relief Vice President and Campaign Supervisor, Omar Al-Thuwaini stated to KUNA that the coordination and cooperation between state bodies and charity societies expedited the process and facilitated the swift delivery of aid to Palestinians in Gaza Strip. Al-Thuwaini further explained that needed assessment is made by designated bodies within Palestine, and added that this is the society's fifth planeload carrying 15 tons of foodstuff and 55 tons of medical necessities.

The Relief Society works in coordination with Egyptian Red Crescent Society and its Palestinian counterpart, as well as certified Palestinian societies, mentioned Al-Thuwaini. Chief of the Relief and Projects Department at the Society, Mahmoud Al-Musbah, told KUNA that since the early hours of Zionist entity's aggression on Gaza, the Society rushed to coordinate efforts and deliver humanitarian aid to the Palestinians.

Kuwaiti humanitarian air bridge, consisting of relief planeloads carrying urgent supplies and medical necessities to Gaza Strip through Al-Arish area in the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt, was launched on October 23. Overseeing the initiative are Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense, the Air Force, Health Ministry, and contributing to it are Kuwait Red Crescent Society, Kuwait Relief Society and other humanitarian establishments.

Zionist occupation has been committing atrocious crimes and launching violent attacks on Gaza Strip since October 7, killing thousands and injuring tens of thousands.

Meanwhile, the second batch of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) has arrived in the Gaza Strip as part of Kuwait's recently launched air bridge carrying humanitarian and relief aid to Gazans. The Gulf country's second batch contains medicine and medical supplies, Chief of KRCS Voluntary Teams Ahmad Abu Daya said in a statement to KUNA.



KUWAIT: Kuwait's 12th relief planeload departed on Saturday morning on its way to Al-Arish Airport in Egypt. — KUNA photos



An ambulance being taken into a plane.



A Kuwait Air Force flight taking off to Al-Arish.

Meanwhile, Secretary General of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Maha Al-Barjas called on the world to end the ongoing war and the Zionist entity's massacres of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. In a joint news conference on signing a cooperation protocol with Egyptian Red Crescent Society, Al-Barjas warned of an imminent humanitarian disaster in the Strip due to the Zionist occupation's blockade. She noted that most hospitals in the besieged Strip are running out of fuel, and that surgical operations are performed without anesthesia. She pointed out that Gaza population needs more medicines and medical supplies than food, explaining that bakeries in the Strip will also stop working due to the lack of fuel.

Al-Barjas appealed to international organizations to oblige the oc-

cupying power to let fuel enter Gaza in order to operate hospitals and bakeries to avoid a major humanitarian disaster. Al-Barjas called on all countries over the world to stop the heinous crimes committed by the Zionist occupation forces against the people of Gaza, noting that the Zionist entity violated the international law and the international humanitarian law. She said the protocol is a continuation of cooperation between Egypt and Kuwait represented in their Red Crescent societies to face urgent humanitarian needs and difficult conditions of the Gazans.

Meanwhile, Egypt's Minister of Social Solidarity Nevin Al-Qabaj said Kuwait has a key role during different crises, including the earthquake of Turkey and Syria, and Libya's floods as well as what is going

on in Gaza. The protocol is to extend cooperation bridges between Egypt and Kuwait with the aim of entering relief humanitarian aid to Palestinians in Gaza, she said.

She said that the Egyptian Red Crescent Society is in constant cooperation with the Palestine Red Crescent Society to provide all relief humanitarian aid arrived at Al-Arish from all countries to deliver it to the Gazans through Rafah border crossing. For his part, Kuwait's Ambassador to Egypt and Permanent Delegate to the Arab League Ghanim Al-Ghanim expressed Kuwait's full readiness to provide aid to the Gazans, referring to the Kuwaiti relief air bridge to help them. He thanked Egypt's authorities for facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid to the residents of Gaza. He pointed to the strong and deep-rooted ties between the two countries, pointing to Kuwait's appreciation to Egypt, under the wise leadership of the leaderships of the two countries. — KUNA



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NBK offers premium banking customers top-notch services

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) always seeks to solidify its leadership in the banking sector, by offering customers top-notch services that meet their needs and live up to their various expectations and lifestyles. In this context, the bank announced enhancing the range of services and offers provided to Premium Banking, including Privilege Banking and Thahabi Customers, to make them more inclusive and better than ever.

Aiming to enhance customers' banking experience and achieve the highest satisfaction level, the bank has developed 5 main pillars including: Exclusivity, Investment, Advantages, Freebies and Lifestyle Offers for day-to-day luxuries. NBK offers Privilege Banking Customers an exclusive array of services that has been strengthened to ensure a quality customer experience. These services include: a Dedicated Global Relationship Manager taking care of all their local and global banking needs, as well as a wide range of preferential services and financial products, Premium Services Lounges and Premium Concierge Service.

The bank also gives its customers the chance to discover investment products such as Islamic KD Ijara Fund, Watani KD Money Market Fund, Mutual Funds, SmartWealth by NBK Capital, Watani Brokerage and GCC bonds. Furthermore, Privilege Customers can avail the advantages of Family Banking Services, Global Banking, NBK Home Banking and Multicurrency cash delivery in Kuwait.

Lastly, one of the strongest additions to the Privilege banking package is the new travel experience where customers can benefit from the following services: Fast Track check in, Extra Luggage, Free Limousine, Exclusive Hotel Offers, Free Luggage Delivery, Discounted umrah Packages, Visa Assistance and a discount on Samsonite products. Every Privilege customer can travel with ease when utilizing the new services available. In addition to Privilege Banking NBK has also enhanced the Thahabi package. Adding a range of superior benefits to Thahabi Customers that include adding a new advantage called Gym of choice to support a healthy lifestyle along with investment products such as, SmartWealth by NBK Capital and Watani Brokerage to support in creating the life customers want.

Thahabi Customers may also enjoy a Personal Banking Officer taking care of all customers' banking and investment needs, Premium Services Lounges where they can enjoy the comfort of premium services lounges, and access to Premium Concierge Services for customers convenience locally and abroad.

NBK is the only bank in Kuwait that provides customers with this wide range of superior benefits and offers to satisfy their preferences. In addition, it is al-



Hisham Al-Nusif

ways striving to add even more exclusive offers all year round, to deliver a rewarding and comprehensive banking experience.

Speaking on these offers, Hisham Al-Nusif, Deputy GM - Consumer Banking Group at NBK said: "NBK always strives to provide superior exclusive offers and benefits to Privilege Banking Customers, so as to enrich their banking experience, reflecting our dedication to offer them top-notch and highly luxurious banking services."

"We are well aware of our customers' preferences, as we keep constant communication with them through different channels, reflecting our keenness to maximize their benefit from the exceptional services, offers and rewards carefully designed to meet their needs and even exceed their expectations," he added. "NBK leverages its long-standing partnerships with leading institutions across many sectors to offer its customers top-notch offers, benefits and discounts," he noted.

In addition to the services mentioned above NBK also provides Premium Banking Customers with Family Banking package, Premium Banking Teller Services giving them priority in making their transactions in a quick and easy way, in addition to card home delivery service, priority status when contacting NBK Call Center. It is worth mentioning that over the past years, NBK was able to maintain top-notch Privilege Banking services, and is always striving to offer customers a more innovative banking experience.

Stay Special Worldwide
With Premium Services





Battling public mood, Turkey quietly assimilates Syrians

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RAFAH: Palestinian workers, who were detained in the Zionist entity following the Oct 7 attacks, cross back into the besieged Gaza Strip at the Karem Abu Salem commercial border post on Nov 3, 2023. — AFP photos

Zionist occupation expels Gazan workers after weeks of torture

‘Every minute, we prayed to die and be done with it’

RAFAH: They arrived at the border crossing with the Gaza Strip in a constant stream, many of them exhausted and still bearing the scars of time spent in a Zionist jail. Some had raw wrists from being handcuffed and still had prison numbers tied round their ankles.

On Friday, the Zionist occupation began to forcibly repatriate to the besieged and battered Palestinian territory thousands of Gazans who had been working in the Zionist entity. They were some of the 18,500 Gaza Palestinians who had visas to work in the Zionist entity, but whose right to do so was rescinded three days after the attack of Oct 7.

On that day, hundreds of men from Hamas and other armed groups streamed across the border and attacked, in addition to army bases, communities where Zionist settlers lived. At least 1,400 people have been killed in the attacks and more than 240 hostages were taken captive by Hamas, according to Zionist officials. In response, the Zionist entity has waged a “war” on Gaza, pledging to eradicate Hamas, who are based in the besieged enclave.

Since then, Zionist forces have relentlessly bombarded the Gaza Strip, killing 9,227 people, mostly civilians, according to the Gaza health ministry. The Zionist occupation has also tightened its blockade on the coastal strip, blocking access to drinking water, electricity and food. The occupation had also ramped up its raids on Palestinian communities in the occupied West Bank, killing at least 133 people and detaining 1,800 in mass arrests.

On Friday, some of the Palestinian workers being sent back to Gaza said they did not know if their families were alive or if their houses still stand.

‘They tortured us’

“For 25 days we’ve been in prison and today they brought us here,” Nidal Abed told AFP. “We had no idea what was happening in Gaza, or what the situation is.” At the border post of Karem Abu Salem — called Kerem Shalom on the Zionist side — the returnees stood in line. None carried belongings other than the clothes they wore.

Yasser Mostafa said he only had time to pull on a cardigan when he was detained during the opening days of the war. “The police came to where we were sleeping and took us,” he said, his face drawn. “They put us in a camp that wouldn’t even be good enough for animals,” he said, alleging that “they tortured us with electricity and set dogs on us”.

Further down the line, some men held out their hands to show open wounds, their ankles still bearing blue plastic bands stamped with numbers. One read “061962”, another “062030”. A man held out his wrists that still bore traces of cuts and bruising from restraints.

Ramadan al-Issawi said he had spent “23 days in Ofer”, a Zionist prison in the occupied West Bank. “I was in a detention center with hundreds of other prisoners,” he told AFP in a shaking voice. “We told ourselves that we could die at any moment.”

Shahid. In 2020 Biden carried battlegrounds Michigan, Virginia, Georgia and Arizona — but losing Muslim voters in those states could cut short the president’s White House tenure.

Disappointment

Somali-American Hadia Barre told AFP that Muslims in the United States have “been marginalized in American politics since 9/11 — and this discriminatory support to (the Zionist entity) is just going to further isolate and distance Muslim voters.”

She said she’s voted Democrat for 30 years but had been starting to turn away from the party based on its position on transgender issues. Biden’s “blind support” for the Zionist occupation was her tipping point. “I will neither vote for Democrats nor Republicans,” the 52-year-old said.

At the nearby Dar Al-Hijrah — one of northern Virginia’s main mosques completed in 1991 by developer Mohamed Hadid, father of models Gigi and Bella — Imam Naeem Baig said the community pinned its hopes on Biden after the pain of the Trump years. “When it comes to the issues of racial justice and economic justice, you feel Democrats have much more to offer,” he said, adding that Donald Trump, who imposed travel bans on several Muslim countries, made no effort to hide his hostility.

An exit poll conducted by the Council on American-Islamic Relations after the 2020 vote found 69 percent of Muslims voted for Biden — against just 17 percent for Trump. But the horrific news and images coming from Gaza had cast a sense of depression and trauma, Baig said. “As of the moment, I will not vote for President Biden,” he said, adding he now found his previous support “very embarrassing.”

Calls for ceasefire

Khalid Mekki voiced similar regret. Born in a Gaza refugee camp, he sees it as his duty to speak up for his people — including the family members he can’t reach because of Zionist communication blackouts. “We love this country, it’s our country,” said



One of the Palestinian workers is assisted after he collapsed upon arriving at the Rafah border crossing with Egypt after crossing into the Gaza Strip from occupied Palestine.



Palestinian workers show the number tags they were assigned while in Zionist custody, as they arrive near the Rafah border crossing with Egypt.

‘A horror movie’

“They gave us just enough to eat and drink to survive, but we knew nothing about what was going on outside,” Issawi said. “We’re destroyed psychologically — we don’t know if our families are alive or dead.” The pain on his face was visible, his forehead dripping with sweat. “If we had at least been here during the war, we could have died with our children,” he added.

An emaciated-looking Sabri Fayeze, who was heading for the center of devastated Gaza to join

relatives he last saw weeks ago, said he felt as if he was emerging from a horror movie. “It was a horror film that never ended and replayed incessantly — intelligence services, interrogation, dogs set on us, the machine guns ... We’re just workers, and were only trying to make a living,” he said, waving his hands.

“Every minute, we prayed to die and be done with it.” Behind Fayeze, more expelled workers kept on coming. In front of them, a few men sitting on a horse-drawn cart edged further into Gaza towards the sound of explosions. — AFP

Muslim anguish over Gaza holds electoral risks for Biden

FALLS CHURCH: Hairdresser Linda Shawish cuts to the chase when asked about President Joe Biden’s decision to unequivocally back the Zionist bombing and ground invasion of Gaza. “They’re standing for genocide,” the 45-year-old Palestinian American who previously voted for Democrats told AFP outside the popular Halalco grocery in Falls Church, Virginia. “I definitely won’t be voting Democratic, and if Trump is the Republican candidate, I probably won’t vote at all.”

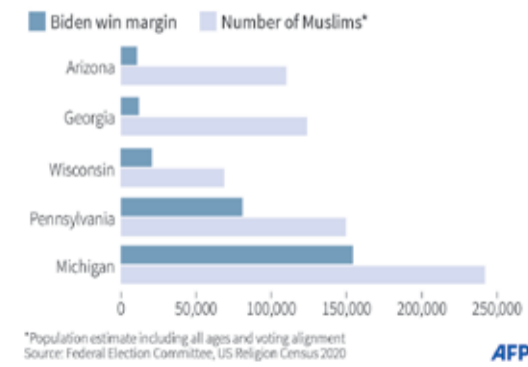
With a year left until the 2024 presidential election, Arab and Muslim American support for Biden threatens to plummet over his Middle East policy — a factor that could even swing certain states. Some voters interviewed by AFP said the Zionist entity had a right to respond after the Oct 7 Hamas attack, which sparked the latest escalation in the decades-long occupation of Palestine.

But all half-dozen who agreed to be on the record, and several more who did not for fear of professional repercussions, agreed that the United States had failed to exercise its leverage over its ally the Zionist entity to curtail Palestinian civilian deaths. “Something has fundamentally broken in the hearts of many Muslim and Arab American Democrats,” Waleed Shahid, a Democratic strategist and former spokesman for Senator Bernie Sanders told AFP. “They don’t see the president treating Palestinian lives and (Zionist) lives equally.”

While Muslims account for a small fraction of the US population — 4.5 million people, or 1.3 percent, according to the unofficial US Religious Census — the election “will be decided by a couple of hundred thousand votes in a handful of states,” said

How Muslim voters could shape Biden’s chances

In five key states the number of Muslim residents is greater than Biden’s margin of victory in 2020



the 52-year-old businessman, who runs the Bawadi Mediterranean Grill in an area of Falls Church famous for its Arab-owned restaurants, bakeries and hookah bars. But “we cannot have blood on our hands — I don’t want it to be in my name.”

Several interviewees said the situation was exacerbated by what they called Biden’s insensitivity. The US president took five days to call the family of the six-year-old Palestinian American boy fatally stabbed in a hate crime, for example, and he has publicly questioned the death toll provided by Gaza’s health ministry, which historically has proven accurate.

The White House has attempted to acknowledge these concerns, promising to release its first anti-Islamophobia strategy. Biden, who prides himself on his empathy, has started speaking more emotively about Palestinian losses. But for Mahdi Bray, a 72-year-old Black Muslim who said his solidarity with Palestinians stems from his experience under segregation in the US South, “actions speak louder than words.” Biden could yet win him back, he said — if the president joins global calls for a ceasefire. — AFP

Thousands march in Berlin in solidarity with Palestinians

BERLIN: Thousands took to the streets of Berlin on Saturday in solidarity with Palestinians amid ongoing bombardments by the Zionist entity after the deadly Hamas attack on occupied territory on Oct 7. “We estimate the number of demonstrators at around 3,500, but more are arriving,” a police spokeswoman told AFP.

The atmosphere was calm at the start of the rally, and many protesters came with their families and children. “Save Gaza”, “Stop genocide” and “Ceasefire” were emblazoned on marchers’ placards, according to AFP journalists. The participants, many of whom wore the keffiyeh, a symbol of Palestinian identity, gathered on the famous Alexanderplatz in central Berlin, shouting “Free Palestine”. Many held Palestinian flags.

The demonstration was called by several associations supporting the Palestinians. The organizers had said they expected around 2,000 participants, but the police had estimated there could be at least 10,000 and deployed some 1,400 officers to oversee the march, which is due to end at around 1800 GMT.

Police had said they feared tensions at the demonstration following the ban on activities in Germany linked to Hamas and the Samidoun association, whose members are accused of celebrating the attack on the Zionist entity. The ban was made official on Thursday.

According to Reuters, the group, which identifies as a Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network, posted photos on Instagram of pro-Palestinian activists distributing sweets in Berlin in celebration of the Hamas attack. The post appears to have since been deleted. Interior Minister Nancy Faeser has been criticised by the conservative opposition for delaying the implementation of the ban announced a fortnight ago by Chancellor Olaf Scholz. — Agencies

International

Schools shut as toxic smog engulfs India's capital

1.67 million people died of air pollution in 2019, including some 17,500 in Delhi: Study

NEW DELHI: Schools were shut across India's capital on Friday as a noxious grey smog engulfed the megacity and made life a misery for its 30 million inhabitants. Smoke from farmers burning crop stubble, vehicle exhaust and factory emissions combine every winter to blanket Delhi in a choking haze.

The public health crisis has persisted for decades and researchers have blamed the smog for hundreds of thousands of premature deaths across India. Levels of the most dangerous PM2.5 particles — so tiny they can enter the bloodstream — were on Friday almost 35 times the daily maximum recommended by the World Health Organization, according to monitoring firm IQAir. "In light of the rising pollution levels, all govt and private primary schools in Delhi will remain closed for the next 2 days," chief minister Arvind Kejriwal wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

Delhi, one of the largest urban areas on the planet, is also regularly ranked as one of the world's most polluted cities. Visible smog is a burden for residents through much of the year, but the problem peaks at the start of winter around the Hindu festival of Diwali. The holy day coincides with the weeks when tens of thousands of farmers across north India set fire to their fields to clear crop stubble from recently harvested rice paddies. That practice is one of the key drivers of Delhi's annual smog problem, worsening the impact of vehicle and industrial emissions.

It persists despite efforts to persuade farmers to use different clearing methods and threats of punitive action for those who defy burning bans. Eye-stinging and lung-burning smog peaks from

October to February when colder air traps pollution, with residents advised to wear face masks outside at all times. "For the next two months it is going to be worst period," Delhi resident Pradeep Dund told AFP. "We cannot even breathe properly."

'Not ideal'

Authorities regularly announce different plans to reduce pollution, for example by halting construction work, but to little effect. India is hosting the Cricket World Cup and organizers have banned fireworks at matches in Mumbai and Delhi to avoid compounding hazardous air pollution levels.

Bangladesh are scheduled to play Sri Lanka in Delhi on Monday but cancelled a scheduled Friday training session because of the haze, with little likelihood of the air clearing for their match. "Some of us developed coughing, so there's a risk factor," Bangladesh team director Khaled Mahmud said, according to Indian daily Business Standard. "We don't want to get sick. We don't know if things will improve."

India captain Rohit Sharma told reporters Wednesday that the situation was "not ideal" for the tournament. "Everyone knows that," he said. "Looking at our future generation ... it's quite important that they get to live without any fear."

A Lancet study in 2020 attributed 1.67 million deaths to air pollution in India during the previous year, including almost 17,500 in the capital. And the average city resident could die nearly 12 years earlier than expected due to air pollution, according to an August report by the University of



NEW DELHI: People walk along the Kartavya Path near India Gate amid heavy smog conditions on Nov 3, 2023. — AFP

Chicago's Energy Policy Institute.

India is heavily reliant on polluting coal for energy generation. Its per capita coal emissions have risen 29 percent in the past seven years and it has shied away from policies to phase down the dirty

fossil fuel. The smog is also a major public health issue in neighboring Pakistan, where authorities in the city of Lahore ordered schoolchildren to wear masks during lessons from Thursday to help mitigate health problems. — AFP

Guinean ex-dictator Camara recaptured, in jail: Army, lawyer

CONAKRY: Guinea's ex-dictator Moussa Dadis Camara was recaptured and returned to prison on Saturday, hours after an apparent jailbreak led by a heavily armed commando, the army and his lawyer said. At least two other former officials on trial alongside Camara over a 2009 massacre during his presidency were taken in the earlier operation that sparked heavy gunfire in the capital Conakry, a minister and lawyers said.

"Captain Moussa Dadis Camara has been found safe and sound and taken back to prison," an army spokesperson told AFP, without specifying the circumstances of the capture. One of Camara's lawyers, Jo-camey Haba, told AFP his client was back behind bars.

Justice Minister Alphonse Charles Wright said earlier that at around 0500 GMT "heavily armed men" burst into the prison and "managed to leave with four (prisoners) ... notably Captain Moussa Dadis Camara". He said the borders had been closed. It was unclear whether Camara had escaped of his own free will.

The army described the operation as an attempt to "sabotage" government reforms and swore its "unwavering commitment" to the current military-led authorities. A judicial source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the masked and heavily armed soldiers who arrived at Conakry's central prison declared they "had come to free" Camara.

Inside, the group headed towards his cell, ap-



Moussa Dadis Camara

pearing to already know its location, the source said. Haba told AFP he believed his client had been "kidnapped" and his life was "in danger". "He has confidence in the justice of his country, which is why he would never try to escape," he added, referring to the ongoing trial against Camara. Wright also said Colonel Moussa Tiegboro Camara — another of the men taken from prison — had since been "recaptured". Tiegboro Camara's lawyer said he had escaped from what he described as his "captors".

Several Guinean news sites quickly reported that Saturday's events were not another putsch, but that a heavily armed commando had attacked the central prison. The sound of gunfire could be heard before dawn in Kaloum — a central district that houses the presidency, several top government and administrative offices, the military headquarters and the main prison.

One witness, speaking on condition of anonymity, said there had been gunfire in the central district. "The

city center has been sealed since dawn, we can neither enter, nor leave," a shopkeeper added, also speaking on condition of anonymity. "I wanted to go to the port area where I work but was prevented from leaving (Kaloum), where armored vehicles have been deployed."

An airport source said no flights had taken off from Conakry's international airport on Saturday morning as air traffic staff could not get to the airport from Kaloum, where they often spend the night. Guinea, a West African country of about 14 million people, has been led by a junta since Doumbouya stormed the presidential palace with soldiers and overthrew civilian president Alpha Conde in September 2021.

'Compass' of justice

Dadis Camara was detained since going on trial in September 2022. He and about 10 other former military and government officials are accused over a 2009 massacre carried out by security forces loyal to the then-junta leader. The killing of 156 people and the rape of at least 109 women started at a political rally in a Conakry stadium on September 28, 2009 and continued in the days that followed, according to a UN-mandated inquiry.

Camara — who himself came to power in a coup in December 2008 — and his co-defendants are charged with murder, sexual violence, torture, abduction and kidnapping. They face life in prison if convicted. The trial is unprecedented in a country ruled for decades by authoritarian regimes, where people had become used to the impunity of the security forces, according to the international commission of inquiry into the massacre. It opened in September last year at the urging of Doumbouya, who has promised to rebuild the Guinean state and make justice his "compass". — AFP

Floods kill over 20, displace thousands in Ethiopia

NAIROBI: More than 20 people have died and over 12,000 others have been forced out of their homes in Ethiopia's Somali region due to flash flooding triggered by torrential rains, the regional government said Saturday. Bridges and roads have been destroyed by the downpour, making it difficult to reach affected households, the Somali Regional State Communication Bureau said in a statement, with damage to livestock, crops and property also reported. "More than 20 people have died in the flood so far ... more than 12,000 families have been displaced," the statement said. "Rising rainfall and forecasts show that the risk of flooding remains high."

The UN's humanitarian agency, OCHA, said last month that eastern Africa would likely encounter heavier than normal rains over the October-December period because of the El Nino phenomenon. El Nino is a naturally occurring pattern associated with increased heat worldwide, as well as drought in some parts of the world and heavy rains elsewhere.

Since the start of the October-December monsoon in Somalia, "floods due to heavy rains have affected at least 405,652 people, with 14 deaths", OCHA said in a situation report released on Saturday. "At least 47,100 people have relocated to higher grounds to avoid the risk of flooding," the agency said, adding that the downpour had cut off access to markets and farmland in some areas. — AFP

US envoy faces Arab anger...

Continued from Page 1

The Zionist entity says it has struck 12,000 targets across the Palestinian territory since October 7, one of the fiercest bombing campaigns in recent memory. The army on Saturday sent text messages to Gazans saying the territory's main north-south road would be open for three hours in the afternoon so people can evacuate. A key focus of Blinken's visit to the Zionist entity on Friday was to convince Netanyahu to enact "humanitarian pauses".

Netanyahu said later, however, that he would not agree to a "temporary truce" with Hamas until the Islamist group releases more than 240 Zionist and foreign captives it abducted during its Oct 7 attack.

In Gaza City, a Zionist strike on Friday hit an ambulance convoy near the territory's largest hospital Al-Shifa, killing 15 people, according to the Palestinian Red Crescent and the health ministry. An AFP journalist saw multiple bodies beside the blood-splattered Pal-

estinian Red Crescent vehicle. The Red Crescent said a convoy of five vehicles had been destined for the Rafah border crossing with Egypt, when they were struck multiple times. One vehicle had been transporting a 35-year-old woman with shrapnel wounds.

A senior White House official said Hamas had tried to use a US-brokered deal opening the Egyptian border crossing to get its cadres out. Hamas provided a list of wounded Palestinians for evacuation with one-third of the names those of Hamas members and fighters, the official said. "That was just unacceptable to Egypt, to us, to (the Zionist entity)," the official added. Egypt's health ministry said just 17 wounded Palestinians were evacuated for treatment in Egyptian hospitals Friday instead of the 28 originally planned because of the "events" at Al-Shifa.

Blinken began the day in Amman by holding talks with Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani of Qatar, a mediator in the conflict. He also had meetings scheduled with the foreign ministers of Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The talks come amid mounting Arab anger over the civilian death toll from war, and increasing fears that the conflict could spread. — AFP

At least 157 dead in Nepal earthquake

JAJARKOT, Nepal: At least 157 people were killed in an overnight earthquake that struck a remote pocket of Nepal, officials said Saturday, as security forces rushed to assist with rescue efforts. The force of the 5.6-magnitude tremor jolted households awake and flattened mud houses in communities across isolated western districts of the Himalayan republic late Friday. "There was a very big noise when the houses came down. It felt like a big explosion," Shiva Prasad Sharma, 65, told AFP from outside the destroyed remnants of his home in Jajarkot, the district hit worst by the quake. "I thought we were going to die," he added. "No one has anything left. There are no houses left to stay in."

Locals frantically dug through rubble in the dark to pull survivors from the wreckage of collapsed homes and buildings, as others crouched outside for safety. The quake was felt as far away as India's capital New Delhi, nearly 500 km from the epicenter. "The toll from the quake has reached 157 — 105 in Jajarkot and 52 in Rukum," national

police spokesman Kuber Kathayat told AFP. Another 199 were injured in the quake, he added.

Home ministry spokesman Narayan Prasad Bhattarai said the toll was unlikely to significantly increase. "We are now in touch with all areas," he told AFP. "It is possible some bodies might still be found under the rubble." Security forces were deployed on foot and in helicopters to assist with search and rescue operations. "The remoteness of the districts makes it difficult for information to get through," Karnali Province police spokesman Gopal Chandra Bhattarai told AFP. "Some roads had been blocked by damage, but we are trying to reach the area through alternate routes."

Dozens of survivors with fractures and head injuries were raced for treatment to a hospital in Nepalgunj, a small city near the Indian border. "It came when we were sleeping," Kamala Oli, a woman cradling her infant child at a hospital treating survivors, told AFP. "There were three of us in the house. Only two of us lived," she added, without giving further details.

Nepali Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal arrived at the site of the quake on Saturday after expressing his "deep sorrow over the human and physical damage". "The government is serious about providing relief to victims and treating the injured," he said. Neighboring India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was "deeply saddened" by the loss of lives. "India stands in solidarity with the people of Nepal and is ready to extend all possible assistance," he added. — AFP

Turkey recalls envoy, 'writes...'

Continued from Page 1

The Zionist entity had earlier withdrawn all diplomats from Turkey and other regional countries as a security precaution. The Zionist foreign ministry said last weekend it was "re-evaluating" relations with Ankara because of Turkey's increasingly heated rhetoric about the Zionist-Hamas war. Erdogan said Saturday that Turkey could not afford to entirely break off diplomatic contacts between the sides. "Completely severing ties is not possible, especially in international diplomacy," Erdogan said.

He said MIT intelligence agency chief Ibrahim Kalin was spearheading Turkey's efforts to try and mediate an end to the war. "Ibrahim Kalin is talking to the (Zionist) side. Of course, he is also negotiating with Palestine and Hamas," Erdogan said. But he said Netanyahu bore primary responsibility for the violence and had "lost the support of his own citizens". "What he needs to do is take a step back and stop this," Erdogan said.

The Turkish leader had taken a far more cautious tone in the first days of the war. The Zionist entity and Turkey had only last year agreed to reappoint ambassadors after a decade of all but frozen relations. They were also re-summing discussions on a US-backed natural gas pipeline project that could have formed the basis for much closer and more lasting cooperation in the coming years.

But Erdogan led a massive rally in Istanbul last weekend during which he accused the Zionist government of behaving like a "war criminal" and trying to "eradicate" Palestinians. Still more protests will greet Blinken on Sunday when the top US diplomat begins a two-day visit to Ankara marking the last leg of his Middle East tour. The IIHF humanitarian relief fund — a group whose attempts to organize a flotilla to Gaza in 2010 sparked Zionist raids that claimed 10 civilian lives — is organizing a protest march and car rally on a military base in southeastern Turkey housing US weapons and troops.

The IIHF convoy is expected to reach the Incirlik Air Base from Istanbul on Sunday. Blinken was meeting with Arab counterparts in the Jordanian capital Amman on Saturday after visiting the Zionist entity the day before. But he left the Zionist entity empty-handed after urging its leaders to do more to protect civilians in the Gaza Strip. — AFP

Hezbollah chief warns war could...

Continued from Page 1

US President Joe Biden has sent two aircraft carrier groups to the eastern Mediterranean. But a defiant Nasrallah told the United States that "your fleet in the Mediterranean does not scare us... we are ready to face the fleet you threaten us with". "You Americans know well that if there is war in the region, your fleet will be of no use, nor will air combat help. Your interests and your soldiers and your fleet will be the first to pay the price," he added.

In Washington, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Hezbollah "should not try to take advantage of the ongoing conflict". "This has the potential of becoming a bloodier war between (the Zionist entity) and Lebanon than 2006," she said. "The United States does not want to see this conflict expand into Lebanon."

Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned Hezbollah it would "pay an unimaginable price" for any misstep. The 2006 conflict between the Zionist entity and Hezbollah killed more than 1,200 people in Lebanon, mostly, and 160 in the Zionist entity, largely soldiers. The health ministry in Gaza says more than 9,200 people have died in

Zionist bombardments, mostly women and children.

Nasrallah saluted "heroic" Hamas, calling the Oct 7 attacks "100 percent Palestinian" and saying the plan was not disclosed to allies in advance. He praised attacks targeting US bases in the Middle East, after a string of assaults on facilities hosting US troops in Iraq and Syria. Hezbollah along with armed groups from Iraq, Syria and Yemen are part of a regional, Iran-led "axis of resistance" against the Zionist entity and the United States.

Nasrallah also warned the Zionist entity against attacking Lebanon, saying that "all options are open on our Lebanese front". The current situation at the Lebanon-Zionist border is linked "to the course and development of events in Gaza", Nasrallah said, claiming Hezbollah's actions had tied up "a large section" of the Zionist army that might otherwise have been fighting in the Palestinian territory.

He warned that the chance of open conflict was "realistic". "We say to the enemy that might think of attacking Lebanon or carrying out a pre-emptive operation, that this would be the greatest foolishness of its existence," he said. Maha Yahya of the Carnegie Middle East Center, said Nasrallah's speech was "the best middle ground that he could take". Ultimately "neither Iran nor Hezbollah are interested in getting into a conflict which would probably end up being a zero sum game", she said. — AFP

International



SANLIURFA: A woman knits a carpet at the Karakopru Carpet Production Centre in Sanliurfa, southeastern Turkey, on Oct 18, 2023. — AFP photos



A Syrian refugee attends a dental treatment on Oct 17, 2023.

Battling public mood, Turkey quietly assimilates Syrians

Syrians enrolling in EU-funded vocational, language classes, but refugee status an obstacle

SANLIURFA: Like millions of other Syrians fleeing war, Mahmud Abdi came to Turkey hoping to return once the bloodshed ebbed. Almost a decade later, the 30-year-old carpenter is looking to open his own workshop in the southeastern Turkish city of Sanliurfa, where a quarter of the two million inhabitants are Syrian. "I've learned to handle new machines," said Abdi, who fled the Islamic State's short-lived "caliphate" in Syria's Raqqa. "After my course, I'm going to work for a furniture maker."

Abdi's new ambitions pose a political problem for Turkey, which still views most of its nearly 3.5 million Syrians as "guests" receiving "temporary protection". Syrian refugees became a hot-button issue during this year's presidential election, held amid an economic crisis that fanned anti-migrant flames.

But with the European Union's help, Turkey is quietly setting up integration-through-work programs — even if few officials publicly admit that many Syrians are probably here to stay. "Employment plays a key role in ensuring harmony" between locals and the Syrians, said Metin Baydilli, mayor of Sanliurfa's Karakopru district.

That harmony was violently broken in the capital Ankara in 2021, when Turkish nationalists went on a rampage, attacking Syrian businesses and homes following the death of a teen in a street fight involving Syrians. Other, less violent incidents have become painfully common in recent years.

Against this backdrop, the EU stepped up financial support, hoping Turkey can continue accepting refugees who might otherwise end up in Europe. The sides signed a landmark deal in 2016, with Brussels releasing nearly 10 billion euros since 2011 for schools, healthcare, and training programs such as Abdi's furniture-making course.

Political problem

"The word 'integration' is not used by Turkish officials," Nikolaus Meyer-Landrut, the European Union's ambassador to Turkey, said during a visit to Sanliurfa last month. "But in reality, a lot is being done for integration, even if the prospects of a return are being kept alive for political reasons."

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan prided himself on Turkey becoming the welcoming home for millions fleeing hardship in places such as Syria. But polls show the overwhelming majority of Turks prefer to see the Syrians go back.

Heading into last May's vote, Erdogan announced plans to build hundreds of thousands of housing units for Turkey's migrants in areas of northern Syria under Ankara's indirect control. With the 27-nation EU divided over how to handle refugees and migrants, Turkey's continued willingness to house Syrians in return for financial support is particularly important for Brussels.

"It's going better than you might think" though integrating "such a large number of people into a struggling economy is bound to be difficult," the EU's Meyer-Landrut said. Sanliurfa's agricultural-based economy is struggling to cope with the new arrivals. The local unemployment rate is 15 per cent, well above the official national average of 9.2 per cent. The situation is quite different in neighboring industrial Gaziantep, where Syrians have become the driving force behind the labor-starved textile sector.

Dividing lines

"To offer employment to Syrian refugees, we need to increase investment in Sanliurfa," said Yunus Colak, who heads the local development agency. Integration is hampered by the legal status of the



School children perform traditional folk dances at the PIKTES School (Yavuz Selim Primary School) in Sanliurfa.

refugees. Only 17,557 Syrians have registered jobs in Sanliurfa, according to officials. The rest are employed illegally and often poorly paid, undercutting the local labor market. A 2021 report by Economic Policy Research Foundation showed 48 percent of Turkey's Syrians working illegally, and 41 percent being underpaid.

The picture looks brighter in Turkey's public schools, which now teach 800,000 Syrian children. Bunyamin Abdullah, 11, is learning Turkish in a specialized class supported by EU funding. "My mother doesn't speak Turkish. I help her when she

goes shopping," he says. The additional classes opened with European support are soothing the anger of parents who blame Syrian children for overcrowded schools.

But in the streets of Sanliurfa, invisible dividing lines run between the Syrians and the city's Turkish, Kurdish and Arab inhabitants. "There are neighborhoods nicknamed Raqqa or Damascus. In my grandson's school, out of 27 pupils, only three are Turkish, the rest are Syrians," said car salesman Mustafa Aslan. "Their culture is very different from ours. We don't want them here," he said. — AFP



KHARKIV: Ukrainian firefighters work to extinguish a fire following an overnight Russian drone strike in Kharkiv on Nov 3, 2023. — AFP

Ukraine's Zelensky denies war with Russia at 'stalemate'

KYIV: President Volodymyr Zelensky denied on Saturday that Ukraine's war with Russia had reached a "stalemate", pushing back at suggestions Western leaders were lobbying for peace talks. The sprawling frontline between the two warring sides has barely moved in almost a year, with one senior Ukrainian official warning this week that the conflict was deadlocked.

"Time has passed, people are tired ... But this is not a stalemate," Zelensky told a press conference in Kyiv with EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen. The Ukrainian leader also rejected the idea Western countries were putting pressure on Kyiv to enter negotiations with Russia, amid reports US and EU officials had discussed what such talks would entail. "No one among our partners is pressuring us to sit down with Russia, talk to it, and give it something," he said.

With the war now in its 20th month and Ukraine struggling to gain ground in its counteroffensive, Zelensky has routinely met Western leaders in a bid to stave off fatigue with the conflict. Zelensky said the ongoing escalation in the decades-long Zionist occupation of Palestine had also drawn attention away from Ukraine and said that this was "Russia's goal". "Of course, it's clear that the war in the Middle East,

this conflict, is taking away the focus," Zelensky said. "We have already been in very difficult situations when there was almost no focus on Ukraine," he said, but added: "I am absolutely sure we will overcome this challenge." Ukraine's backers, including the United States, have maintained they are ready to support Kyiv with military and financial support for as long as it takes to defeat Russia.

'Existential war'

Zelensky's comments came as EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen visited Kyiv to discuss Ukraine's progress toward joining the 27-member bloc. Kyiv received EU candidacy status several months after Russia invaded last year, but analysts have warned it faces a long and difficult path to membership. "You have reached many milestones," von der Leyen told Zelensky. "Reforming your justice system. Curbing the oligarchs grip. Tackling money laundering and much more," she said.

"We should never forget you are fighting an existential war, and at the same time you're deeply reforming your country," she added. She said she was "confident" Ukraine would progress with the accession process when these reforms were implemented.

The EU Commission has proposed an additional 50 billion euros (\$54 billion) in funding for Ukraine until 2027, von der Leyen said. Almost all EU member states back further long-term aid for Kyiv, with only Hungary and Slovakia holding out. The Commission now has until November 8 to submit a report on how much progress Ukraine and other EU hopefuls Moldova and Georgia have made ahead of a summit of the bloc in December. — AFP

15 civilians dead in Khartoum shelling, RSF claims gains

WAD MADANI: At least 15 civilians in Khartoum were killed on Saturday "when shells fell on their homes", a medical source said, as paramilitary fighters battling Sudan's army claimed gains in Darfur. The victims' bodies were taken to Al-Nau hospital in Omdurman, a district of greater Khartoum, the medical source told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Fighting since April between the forces of army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his former deputy Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, who commands the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), has raged in heavily populated areas. The struggle between the rival generals has crippled essential services in Sudan and razed entire neighborhoods of the capital and the vast western region of Darfur.

In nearly seven months of war, more than 10,400 people have been killed, according to a conservative estimate from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project. The United Nations says the violence has forced more than 6 million people to flee, both within and outside Sudan. Representatives of the warring sides are currently in the Saudi city of Jeddah for negotiations mediated by Saudi Arabia and the United States, but the fighting back home has raged unabated.

Darfur offensive

For weeks, the RSF has been advancing on army bases in Darfur, a region already scarred by decades of conflict and atrocities committed against civilians by armed groups including the RSF's predecessor, the Janjaweed militia. On Saturday, the paramilitary force announced it had "liberated" an army base in El Geneina, the capital of West Darfur state where a communications blackout has raised fears of fresh horrors.

According to Clementine Nkweta-Salami, the UN's most senior representative in the country, reports of "civilians being caught in the ongoing fighting" in Darfur recall "the events in El Geneina" in June, when rights groups and witnesses reported massacres, rampant sexual violence and mass graves.

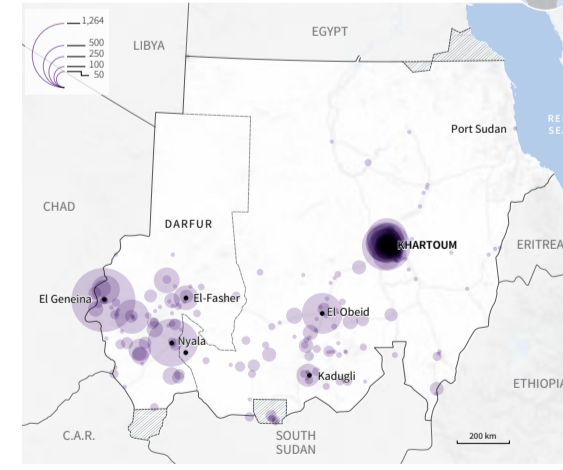
More than half a million people have fled the violence in Darfur to neighboring Chad, which is just 30 kilometers (18 miles) from El Geneina. The events in West Darfur and other reports of ethnically motivated killings by the RSF and allied militias have triggered a new investigation by the In-

ternational Criminal Court into alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity. The army base in El Geneina is the third the RSF has claimed to have captured in a week, after Zalingei, the capital of Central Darfur, and Nyala, the South Darfur state capital and the second largest city in Sudan.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken issued an unusually strong statement on Monday, warning against signs of an "imminent large-scale attack" in El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur state. The attack "would subject civilians, including hundreds of thousands of displaced persons — many of whom only recently fled to El Fasher from other areas — to extreme danger," Blinken said. Darfur is a region the size of France, and home to a quarter of Sudan's 48 million people.

Sudan: more than 9,000 killed in fighting, strikes and violence over six months

More than half of the people were killed in the Khartoum region, according to NGO Acted from April 15 to October 20, 2023



'Victory'

As Sudan's civilians face what UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths has called "one of the worst humanitarian nightmares in recent history", both sides have positioned themselves as peacemakers in the resumed negotiations in Saudi Arabia. US officials say the goals for now are limited to allowing humanitarian assistance into the country and pushing for a sustainable ceasefire.

In previous negotiations, every agreed truce was almost immediately violated by both sides, and both have also been accused of obstructing, attacking or looting aid. The RSF on Monday published a video of its commander, Daglo, who has kept mostly out of sight throughout the conflict, in which he blamed Burhan for the war and congratulated his forces for their "victory" in Darfur. Daglo said the RSF "has no problem with peace", but it will not agree to "a ceasefire that allows the army" to regroup. — AFP

Business

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2023

Zain Kuwait demonstrates its capabilities for 5G New Calling

Company participates in GSMA's New Calling Summit in Paris

KUWAIT: In an impressive leap forward reflecting its technology innovation in the MENA region, Zain Kuwait, has showcased its network's capabilities for the rollout of 5G New Calling (5GNC), an emerging 5G network capability that paves the way for a new era of voice and video calling. The company recently participated in the GSMA's New Calling Summit 2023 in Paris to demonstrate these capabilities and successful trial of the service, becoming the only operator from the region to be hosted by the industry body to showcase 5GNC to the global telecom community.

During the event, Zain showcased the readiness of its infrastructure for the commercial rollout of 5G NC in the near future. The telecom company has also collaborated with major industry leaders to publish a whitepaper that provides an overview of 5GNC and its use cases; the standardization progress to support it; proof of concepts and pre-commercial trials; and more. Zain is the only operator to represent the MENA region in this whitepaper, which can be viewed here.

5GNC enhances basic calls with all-new capabilities and works for both voice and video calls directly over the network without using data services. The advancement introduces ultra-HD, intelligent, and interactive calling features on the native call screen without the need for any additional or external apps.

Users can make voice or video calls using 5GNC and enjoy rich intelligence features not available in traditional calls, such as voice and video recognition, instant live translation in real-time during the call, inclusion of fun avatars and filters to video calls, and more.

5GNC reinvents phone calls, particularly for companies offering customer service hotlines. The service can be used to present visual options on the native call screen without the need for any external apps, giving customers the ease of



Zain demonstrated its capabilities and leadership in Paris.

- Zain first and only MENA operator hosted by GSMA to showcase its 5GNC roadmap.
- 5GNC brings ultra-HD, intelligent, and interactive capabilities to voice and video calls.

interacting with menus to solve their inquiries faster and more efficiently. 5GNC also opens up new opportunities for enterprises to interact with their customers by allowing them to complete business transactions through calls.

5GNC is a network capability that will leverage the IP Multimedia Subsystem (IMS), expanding mobile operator capabilities and stimulating groundbreaking innovations by opening up opportunities to developer communities to create and distribute new services and applications. Zain's early adoption of the technology is a testament to its innovative pedigree.

In 2019, Zain led the market as the first operator to launch 5G services commer-

cially, setting a precedent in the local and regional telecom industries. Since then, more successes have followed in adapting 5G technologies to overhaul the digital journeys of customers. Zain continues to invest in its 5G infrastructure heavily, achieving the highest speeds and best operational efficiency levels over its networks. The telecom firm seeks to meet the increasing demand for data, while exploring new ecosystems and revenue streams made possible by technology innovation, with the goal of serving the needs of consumers, businesses, and government agencies.

Recently, Zain was presented with the 'Outstanding 5G Business Development'



Company participated in a panel discussion joined by global telecom players.



award during SAMENA Council's Leadership & Excellence (LEAD) Awards ceremony in Dubai, UAE. The event recognized Zain's excellence in empowering and accelerating business development

using the most advanced 5G applications. Zain continues to lead the market with this revolutionary technology to enable sustainable growth for Kuwait's public and private sectors.

US hiring slows, dragged down by auto strike

WASHINGTON: Job growth in the United States cooled in October, according to government data released Friday, in part dragged down by an auto workers strike.

The world's biggest economy added 150,000 jobs last month, less than analysts expected and down from a revised 297,000 figure in September, the Labor Department said.

The unemployment rate edged up to 3.9 percent, the report added. President Joe Biden lauded the job creation numbers in a statement, adding that the share of working-age Americans with jobs is higher than pre-pandemic levels. "The unemployment rate has been below four percent for 21 months in a row, the longest stretch in more than 50 years," he said.

Overall the latest figures reflect a downward trend in job growth, even if amplified by the impact of striking workers. This is likely seen as good news for policymakers, given concerns that a too-hot labor market could contribute to elevated inflation.

The job market has been unexpectedly resilient over the past year, even as the central bank lifted interest rates rapidly to

combat inflation—a move that typically sees hiring cool and unemployment edge up. But robust job and wage growth has allowed consumers to continue spending even as inflation came down, buoying economic growth. This has lifted hopes that the United States can avoid a recession despite higher interest rates. Average hourly earnings in October rose 0.2 percent, inching down from the month before, Labor Department data showed. Wages were up 4.1 percent from a year ago, the lowest annual rise since June 2021.

"The hiring slowdown was broad-based," said EY senior economist Lydia Boussoir in a note, adding that services employment grew at a much slower pace. "Employment in manufacturing decreased by 35,000 in October, reflecting a decline of 33,000 in motor vehicles and parts that was largely due to strike activity," the Labor Department said. Last month, auto workers expanded a strike launched in mid-September.

The United Auto Workers union had launched the first simultaneous work stoppage at the "Big Three" automakers—General Motors, Stellantis and Ford—pushing for higher wages and other improvements.

At its height, the strike mobilized more than 45,000 workers. The impact from the movement reflects both striking workers and related layoffs at other firms in the supply chain, said economist Nancy Vandenhouten of Oxford Economics.

"The UAW has reached tentative contracts with all three car companies, but the agreements came too late in the month to be reflected in the October jobs report," she added in a recent note. Analysts say the hit from the strike is temporary. Outside of that, "we look for a resumed, broad-based slowing in job creation" led by the services sector, Nationwide chief economist Kathy Bostjancic told AFP.

"Moderating wage growth, along with slower demand for goods and services, easing rent inflation and reduced pricing power should lead to further disinflation," said EY economists. This argues in favor of the Federal Reserve holding the benchmark lending rate steady in the coming months.

Fed policymakers will likely leave the door open to further tightening, but several economists expect they are done raising rates for now. Boussoir anticipates "softer labor market conditions" ahead, with more hiring freezes and efforts to resize workforces, while wage growth continues to cool. The jobless rate is also expected to tick up, she said.

Meanwhile, activity in the US services sector slowed for a second consecutive month in October, according to survey data released Friday. The services index of the Institute for Supply Management (ISM) logged 51.8 percent last month, down from September's 53.6 percent reading. A figure above the 50-point mark signals growth in the sector, meaning that despite the slowdown, the services industry has grown for a 10th straight month. The cooling comes on the back of decreases in the business activity and employment indexes, said ISM survey chair Anthony Nieves in a statement.

He added that respondents' sentiment "is mixed, with some optimistic about the current steady and stable business conditions and others concerned about such economic factors as inflation, interest rates and geopolitical events." "Employment-related challenges are also prevalent, with comments about increasing labor costs, as well as shortages," he said.

This comes as the Federal Reserve has embarked on an aggressive campaign since early 2022 to lower inflation by lifting interest rates. Services sector activity has held up despite the higher rates, which lift borrowing costs for households and businesses. For now, 12 services industries reported growth in October, while five reported a decrease.—AFP

KQIC becomes member of Kuwait Insurance Federation

KUWAIT: Kuwait Qatar Insurance Company (KQIC) announced its membership to the Kuwait Insurance Federation (KIF), a strategic step aimed at enhancing KQIC's presence and influence in the insurance market in the State of Kuwait and in line with its relentless endeavor to consolidate its leadership in the sector and achieve the highest levels of quality and excellence.

On this occasion, the CEO of KQIC, Abdullah Abdullatif Al-Ahmad, noted the importance of the membership, pointing out that operating under the umbrella of KIF will offer effective channels of communication and joint work mechanisms that will exponentially enhance cooperation and coordination with other member insurance companies, will help resolve outstanding issues and achieve shared strategic goals.

Additionally, Al-Ahmad praised the efforts made by the KIF and its keenness in carrying out the mandate entrusted to it to develop the Kuwaiti insurance sector given the vital role it plays in the country's economy. KIF works in coordination with the Insurance Regulatory Unit in the State of Kuwait to improve the performance of insurance companies, strengthen their financial position and improve services, in addition to supporting its technical cadres by providing specialized training courses and workshops that provide them with the necessary skills.

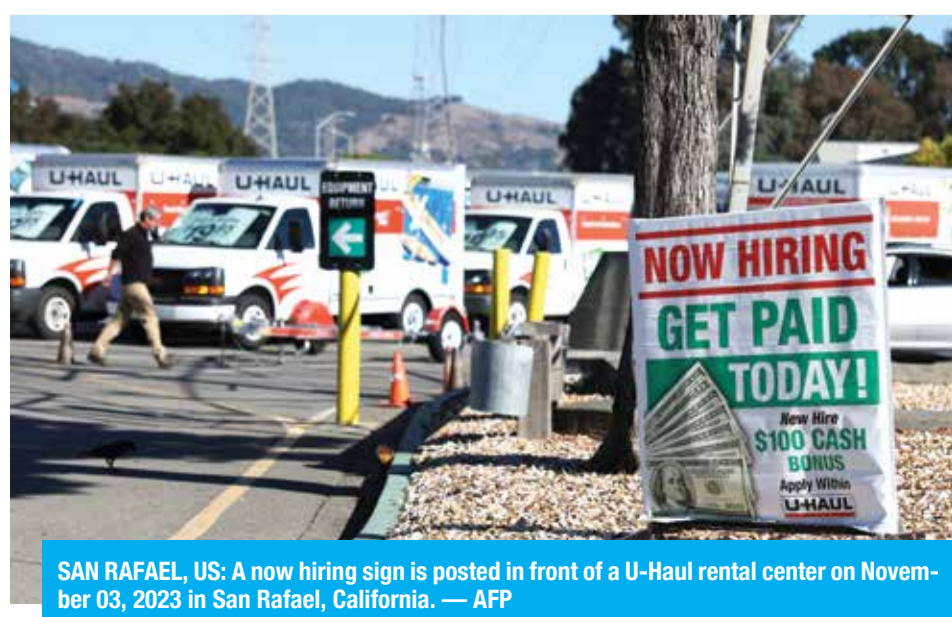
Al-Ahmad concluded his speech by reiterating KQIC's commitment to supporting all initiatives and activities carried out by the Federation in Kuwait. Within the same context, the Secretary General of the KIF, Adel Al-Rumaih, welcomed KQIC's membership to the Federation, highlighting the positive effect of unifying ranks and enhancing cooperation among members in order to achieve growth and development targets of the insurance industry in Kuwait. He also



Abdullah Abdullatif Al-Ahmad

expressed confidence that KQIC will contribute effectively to strengthening the role of the Federation and in helping it reach its desired goals.

KQIC was established in 2004 and is a subsidiary of Qatar Insurance Group. KQIC offers traditional insurance products and innovative retail solutions for home, travel and motor insurance to every segment of its customer base and acts as a conduit for insurance services across the GCC while helping to connect overseas insurance interests through its global network. Qatar Insurance Company was established in 1964 as the first national insurance company in the State of Qatar. Today, QIC is the market leader and the first digital insurance company in Qatar and a dominant insurer in the GCC and MENA regions. QIC is one of the largest insurance companies in the MENA region in terms of written premium and total assets and is listed on the Qatar Stock Exchange and has a market capitalization in excess of QAR 7 billion.



SAN RAFAEL, US: A now hiring sign is posted in front of a U-Haul rental center on November 03, 2023 in San Rafael, California. — AFP

Business

Gulf Bank wins two awards at HR management summit in Bahrain

KUWAIT: At the recent Middle East and North Africa Human Resources Management Summit 2023, hosted in the Kingdom of Bahrain, under the patronage of the Minister of Labor of Bahrain, Jameel bin Mohammed Ali Humaidan, Gulf Bank won two prestigious awards. The event featured the active participation of leading experts and professionals in the field of human resources, representing some of the region's most prominent companies and financial institutions.

Salma Al-Hajjaj: We are honored to receive recognition for both the "Best Training and Development" and "Excellence in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" awards

During the HR Awards ceremony honoring outstanding companies, Gulf Bank's General Manager of the Human Resources Department, Salma Al-Hajjaj, was presented with the prestigious "Best Training and Development" and "Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion" awards.

The MENA HR Management Summit Awards is a significant yearly gathering, uniting professionals and experts from various countries to acknowledge and celebrate excellence in HR practices.

During this event, Salma Al-Hajjaj conveyed her joy at receiving two prestigious awards in the Middle East and North Africa region. The "Best Training and Development" award signifies Gulf Bank's outstanding efforts in enhancing its employees'

skills, while winning the "Excellence in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" award underscores the bank's achievement in promoting sustainability principles within the workplace. She further stated, "It fills us with pride that Gulf Bank stands among the foremost banks dedicated to substantial investments in human capital, aiming to enhance the capabilities of its workforce. Our employees serve as the central pillar in achieving our strategic objectives. We empower them by offering the latest expertise and skills essential to keep abreast of the significant banking advancements occurring both locally and globally."

Al-Hajjaj emphasized the bank's commitment to offering essential training and development opportunities for employees, aligning with environmental, social, and governance standards. These initiatives are tailored to meet market demands and align with the specific job responsibilities within the bank. She highlighted that in 2022, 72 percent of the bank's employees participated in diverse training courses. "As part of Gulf Bank's sustainability strategy, our commitment lies in fostering a workplace that champions gender equality and ensures equal opportunities for every employee. We achieve this goal through training, mentoring, and leadership discovery programs, all designed to empower our workforce and propel their career growth," Al-Hajjaj stated.

She went on to emphasize that Gulf Bank is dedicated to upholding the principles of sustainability by ensuring unwavering commitment to gender equality. This commitment is evident in the equal job benefits provided to both male and female employees. She highlighted that Gulf Bank holds the distinction of being the first bank in Kuwait to implement equal job benefits for women and men.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti



MANAMA: Salma Al-Hajjaj receives the award.

Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking

transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience. Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining robust developments in sustainability at environmental, social and governance levels through diverse sustainability initiatives, strategically selected to benefit the Bank both internally and externally. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various parties to achieve it.



DHAKA: Bangladesh police (foreground) stand guard along a road during clashes with garment workers (top) protesting to demand the increase of their salaries, in Dhaka. — AFP

Bangladesh workers clash with police as factories reopen

DHAKA: Striking Bangladesh garment workers clashed with police on Saturday near the capital as factories reopened in defiance of a protest campaign demanding a near-tripling of wages. Bangladesh's 3,500 garment factories account for around 85 percent of the South Asian country's \$55 billion annual exports, supplying many of the world's top names in fashion including Levi's, Zara and H&M.

But conditions are dire for many of the sector's four million workers, the vast majority of whom are women whose monthly wages start at 8,300 taka (\$75). Police said some 600 businesses shuttered over the week had reopened in areas worst-hit by the strike, which saw some factories ransacked and set alight.

But clashes broke out in the industrial town of Ashulia, west of the capital Dhaka, after around 10,000 workers attempted to prevent their colleagues from returning to their shifts. "They hurled

stones and bricks at officers and factories and tried to block roads," Ashulia police chief Mohammad Sarwar Alam told AFP. "We dispersed them by firing tear gas," he said, adding that 1,500 security forces personnel had been deployed there and in nearby Savar to keep order.

A 35-year-old woman was critically injured when police fired rubber bullets and tear gas at hundreds of protesters at Sreepur, some 60 kilometers (40 miles) north of Dhaka, police inspector Ibrahim Khalil told AFP. Imran Khan, the woman's nephew, told AFP she had been struck by rubber bullets on the face three times.

Workers also returned to their shifts after a week of violent protests in Gazipur, an industrial neighborhood on Dhaka's northern outskirts. "Authorities have assured us they will hike our wages within one week. That's why we returned to the factories," garment worker Rokon Uzzaman told AFP.

"We don't have any savings. How long can we continue the protest if we can't feed our families?" he added. Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers Federation president Kalpona Akter told AFP Friday that the weeklong protests had disrupted production for some of the world's top fashion brands.

"They include Gap, Walmart, H&M, Zara, In-

got wrong, things we should have handled better" Goyder admitted, "things we should have fixed faster, and for that we apologize." Qantas was long seen as the "spirit of Australia"—the island nation's link to the rest of the world.

Although not state-run, it is seen as an integral part of the economy and vital to cohesion in a country where major cities are hundreds of kilometers (miles) apart. So far, Qantas' attempts to salvage its reputation have fallen flat. It has defended selling seats on cancelled flights, arguing that rather than buying tickets for specific flights, customers buy a "bundle of rights" and a promise that the airline will "do its best to get consumers where they want to be on time".

In September Australia's High Court ruled Qantas illegally sacked 1,700 ground staff during Covid-19 lockdowns. Despite vowing to "restore confidence" Goyder faced angry heckles from shareholders as he tried to shut down complaints from one angry investor. The Qantas chairman asked for the man's microphone to be cut off, prompting boos, jeers and cries of "shame on you" from other shareholders in the room. — AFP

ditex, Bestseller, Levi's, Marks and Spencer, Primark and Aldi," she said. A Primark spokesperson said the Dublin-headquartered fast-fashion retailer had not "experienced any disruptions to our supply chain".

"We remain in contact with our suppliers some of whom in turn have closed their factories temporarily," the spokesperson added. Garment workers say that a sharp increase in living costs has left them struggling to provide for their families. The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), which represents factory owners, has offered workers a 25 percent pay raise.

That is significantly short of the 23,000 taka (\$209) monthly wage that the protest campaign has called for. "The brands and retailers only care about smooth shipments and profit. But they don't care about the wellbeing of the workers at the bottom of the supply chain or the fact that many workers are half-starving," Akter told AFP. "We hope the brands will put pressure on Bangladesh manufacturers to make sure they pay the wage the workers are demanding." The protests have coincided with separate violent demonstrations by opposition parties demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina ahead of elections due in January. — AFP



SYDNEY: The Sydney central business district (CBD) can be seen behind Qantas Airways planes sitting at the domestic terminal of Sydney's Kingsford Smith international airport on November 3, 2023. — AFP

Turkish annual inflation rate holds near 61%

ISTANBUL: Turkey's annual inflation rate held steady near 61 percent last month, official data showed Friday, highlighting government efforts to ease a historic cost of living crisis. The rate inched down to 61.36 percent in October from 61.53 percent in September, the TUIK state statistics agency said. The pace of month-on-month increases also slowed to 3.43 percent from 4.75 percent.

Central bank chief Hafize Gaye Erkan said Thursday that the rate will likely peak between 70 and 75 percent next May. She expects inflation to reach 65 percent by the end of the year and drop to 36 percent by the end of 2024. Turkey is suffering the worst bout of inflation of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's two-decade rule. The official annual inflation rate peaked at 85 percent in October last year and climbed back up above 60 percent in September.

After winning a May election, Erdogan appointed a new team of market-friendly economists that was given the freedom to sharply hike its policy setting rate. Analysts blame Erdogan for provoking the crisis by forcing the nominally independent central bank to slash borrowing costs far below the rate at which prices were rising. Erdogan had been a longtime supporter of the unorthodox theory that the high interest rates cause—rather than cure—consumer price spikes. Erkan has lifted the bank's policy rate to 35 percent from 8.5 percent since the May vote. Most analysts expect her to raise rates to 40 percent or higher in the coming months. — AFP

US to lower barriers on imposing 'too big to fail' label on firms

WASHINGTON: US regulators voted Friday to undo rollbacks under the Trump administration that made it tougher to place certain financial companies under heightened supervision—if they posed stability risks.

The decision came at a meeting of the Financial Stability Oversight Council (FSOC), a body created in the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis. "Recent stresses in some financial sectors arising from the onset of the pandemic and the sudden failures of some regional banks underscore the continuing need to remain vigilant to threats," said Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, who chairs the council, on Friday. Other FSOC members include the chairs of the Federal Reserve and Securities and Exchange Commission. The latest move aims to "remove unwarranted hurdles" to designating nonbank financial companies, imposed by 2019 guidance, said the council. This means the companies would be subject to heightened government supervision.

Such firms that have been designated in the past include MetLife, Prudential Financial and General Electric Capital under the Obama administration. Earlier rules called for the FSOC to undergo steps like a cost-benefit analysis and assess a company's likelihood of "material financial distress," before considering the firm for designation. But such steps "unduly hamper" the council, said guidance released Friday.

They would also obstruct its ability to respond to financial stability risks in a timely manner, the council added. The latest guidance rolls back the definition of what constitutes a threat to US financial stability as well—which under the 2019 rules required "severe damage on the broader economy." "The Council has determined that this definition was overly restrictive," it said, adding that this clashed with its purpose of responding to emerging threats. Massachusetts Democratic Senator Elizabeth Warren urged in a letter Thursday for the FSOC to "fully exercise its designation authority." Nonbanks have expanded quickly and provide some 60 percent of all consumer and business credit, she said, warning of the risks non-bank mortgage lenders pose in particular. — AFP

Qantas investors block pay plan for top brass

MELBOURNE: Jeering Qantas shareholders voted down a pay package for the company's top brass Friday, as the outgoing chairman apologized for a public "loss of trust" in Australia's much-loved carrier. At a fractious annual meeting in Melbourne, 83 percent of shareholders voted against a package that would have gifted key executives millions of dollars in bonuses. The 102-year-old airline enjoyed a record profit last year. But it also enraged once-loyal Australians through astronomical ticket prices and allegedly selling seats for 8,000 already cancelled flights. This came after taking a multi-billion-dollar taxpayer bailout during the pandemic.

Chairman Richard Goyder, who is slated to retire next year, said the board had heard the "strong" message sent by shareholders. "There are things we

Business

ABK highlights strong performance and commitment to sustainability

Group holds analyst conference call, showcases impressive results

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) successfully held its analyst conference call, showcasing the Group's impressive results for the first nine months of 2023. The conference brought together key executives including Abdulla Al-Sumait, Acting Group Chief Executive Officer; Shiamak Soonawalla, Group Chief Finance Officer; and Abdulaziz Jawad, Chief Strategy Officer. The call was operated by Yaqoub Almulla, Senior Manager of Investor Relations.

The call provided a comprehensive overview of ABK's financial indicators, highlighting the significant progress made during the first nine months of the year. It also outlined future strategies aimed at bolstering the Group's competitive position in the banking sectors of the countries it operates in, namely Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Egypt.

Al-Sumait expressed his satisfaction with ABK's robust performance, accrediting this success to the unwavering commitment of employees in delivering value to both customers and shareholders. He further emphasized that the Group remains well above the Central Bank of Kuwait's minimum requirement of a 9.5 percent CET1 ratio and 13.5 percent Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR).

Additionally, Al-Sumait underscored the Group's continuous growth in its core markets, expressing confidence in maintaining exceptional performance for the remainder of the year. He specifically highlighted the significant progress made in digital transformation, which has streamlined operations and enhanced customer experiences. Aligned with its dedication to innovation, ABK remains focused on offering distinctive banking solutions and driving business growth through its strategic plans. The Group intends to inject further investments to generate long-term value for stakeholders. Al-Sumait acknowledged the Group's sustainable approach, with positive growth and profits evident in most key financial indicators. He also highlighted that ABK maintained positive ratios in terms of profitability, Return on Average Assets (ROAA), Return on Average Equity (ROAE), and witnessed improvements in asset quality ratios and coverage ratios.

Furthermore, Al-Sumait discussed the Group's strong commitment to social, environmental, institutional, and corporate governance responsibilities, demonstrated through its active participation in various societal, relief, and humanitarian initiatives both locally and abroad.

Financial stability

Regarding financial stability, Soonawalla an-

nounced that ABK achieved a net profit of KD 32.6 million, marking a 19 percent growth during the first nine months of the year. Earnings per share (EPS) also saw an 18 percent rise annually, reaching 13 fils. Meanwhile, Operating Income reached KD 136.8 million, with operating profits at KD 71.2 million.

He highlighted that the non-performing loan (NPL) ratio stabilized at 1.34 percent, with an NPL coverage of 420 percent. Additionally, the Group maintains excess provisions amounting to KD 216 million. He underscored the Group's commitment to a conservative approach in financial risk management and prudential provisioning.

Soonawalla noted ABK's consistent operational excellence, evidenced by a Net Interest margin of 2.1 percent and an Operating Profit to Average Assets ratio of 1.5 percent. These figures reflect the commendable performance and sustainable growth across ABK's various operations. He added that, during the quarter, ABK successfully completed the right issuance of KD 100 million and exercised the option to recall \$300 million of its AT1 bond in line with the market conditions resulting in a CET1 ratio of 12.4 percent. Total capital adequacy ratio (CAR) at the end of September 2023 was recorded as 14.7 percent.

Soonawalla stated, "Our KD 136.8 million operating income is divided into 49 percent for corporate banking services, 44 percent for retail banking services, and 7 percent for treasury operations. As for asset distribution, 59 percent is allocated to corporate banking services, 13 percent to retail banking services, and 28 percent to treasury operations."

He proceeded to highlight that the majority of income is derived from non-interest activities of core banking activities, ensuring stability. He also mentioned that the Group's operating expenses reflect its ongoing investments in core business initiatives, digital technologies, and process development. This strategic approach facilitates the delivery of top-tier services to customers, while enhancing resources to elevate ABK's operational efficiency.

Strongly positioned

Moreover, Soonawalla emphasized the Group's continuous efforts to strengthen its position among Kuwaiti banks, particularly through its broad geographic presence. This diversification serves as a strong competitive edge, offering a high degree of flexibility in terms of profitability. ABK's broad market presence also plays a pivotal role in increasing

revenues and facilitating the distribution of loans and the collection of deposits. He pointed out that ABK's international operations include the UAE and Egypt through ABK-Egypt. He emphasized that the Group has effectively diversified its funding sources and secured additional long-term loans from international markets, thereby enhancing stability in its financial operations.



Abdulla Al-Sumait



Shiamak Soonawalla



Abdulaziz Jawad

Operational improvements

Soonawalla also observed that ABK's performance during the first nine months of 2023 reflects continuous improvement in its core operating drivers, strong loan growth, decreased provisions and impairment losses, maintenance of a robust general budget, comfortable liquidity levels, thanks to a solid capital base. He conveyed his optimism about the potential for further enhancement in the overall operating environment, considering the upward trajectory of oil prices. Anticipations suggest that the Group will benefit from the increased interest rate, in light of the expectations of the Federal Reserve's interest rate hike later this year.

Important changes

Jawad discussed that the Group has implemented significant adjustments to its strategy, aligning with the challenges affecting the banking industry, to enhance its performance. He also highlighted the ongoing success of the ABK2X strategy across all operations, especially in terms of retail banking.

Furthermore, Jawad revealed the Group's focus on credit growth, utilizing sound risk management practices through corporate banking services, in line with its efforts to ensure steady and sustainable growth in its indicators and operations.

He underlined ABK's unwavering dedication to investments, aimed at delivering long-term value for shareholders. The Group's prudent approach, cautious risk management, and commitment to enhancing the quality of our balance sheet have contributed to its credit ratings of A2 from Moody's and A from Fitch.

Jawad mentioned that ABK recently witnessed a successful capital increase of KD 100 million, with

KD 50 million share capital and KD 50 million share premium to reach a total capital of KD 237.4 million. The transaction was oversubscribed by over 3.3 times achieved mainly from 95 percent of existing shareholders, demonstrating a high level of trust and support towards ABK.

Meanwhile, ABK continues to demonstrate strong performance in the UAE, achieving significant accomplishments. This includes participation in two syndications involving prominent and strategically important government-related entities (GRES) in the UAE, where ABK acted as the Senior Mandated Lead Arranger in one of these syndications.

Expected growth

Jawad also indicated that ABK expects to be upgraded to the Premier Market of the Boursa Kuwait. This advancement reflects its continuous adherence to the requirements of the Capital Markets Authority, enabling ABK to efficiently access capital markets, attain higher ratings, lower funding costs, and improve liquidity. Moreover, the move will garner increased attention from global investors, as well as local and foreign institutions. Jawad emphasized that environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles constitute a fundamental component in ABK's pursuit of adopting and implementing responsible banking practices. He also mentioned the imminent release of ABK's third annual sustainability report.

Additionally, he explained that ABK is in the final stages of developing its strategy for the next five years, which involves integrating ESG elements into its daily operations and long-term vision. Jawad also revealed that ABK is working on establishing a sustainable financing framework, paving the way for issuing its first green and sustainable bonds.

US seeks China collaboration, says Yellen

WASHINGTON: The United States seeks to work with China on global challenges from climate change to debt distress, but will not compromise on areas like national security, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said on Thursday.

Her remarks outlining Washington's approach to US-China ties come ahead of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meetings this month in San Francisco—where President Joe Biden is expected to meet Chinese leader Xi Jinping for the first time since they conferred in Bali last year.

"We know the US-China relationship is among the most consequential in the world," Yellen told an event in Washington. "We need to get it right." She said the United States is working to collaborate on international issues including climate change and debt difficulties in low-income countries.

But Washington will not compromise on protecting its national security interests and advancing human rights, Yellen added. She stressed that US national security actions would be "narrowly targeted," citing recent outbound investment restrictions that Washington insisted were not aimed at curbing China's growth, but at preserving national interests.

Another key aspect to the US approach is maintaining mutually beneficial ties, Yellen said, adding that this means "responding appropriately to China's unfair economic practices." Noting that all eyes are on a potential Biden-Xi meeting, Asia Society Policy Institute vice president Wendy Cutler told reporters after Yellen's speech that strained US-China ties will not be turned around overnight.

The expectation should be towards "modest steps

Philippines appoints fishing tycoon to top agriculture post

MANILA: Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos handed the post of agriculture secretary to a fishing tycoon on Friday, as the government struggles to rein in surging food prices. Francisco Laurel, president of the deep-sea fishing company Frabelle Fishing Corporation, understood "the problems that agriculture is facing", Marcos said after swearing in the new secretary.

Marcos made himself agriculture secretary after becoming president in June 2022 and has overseen a surge in prices for produce, including staples like onions and rice. He sparked criticism in September when he imposed a temporary price cap on rice, which some economists warned could distort the market and lead to shortages.



WASHINGTON: US Secretary of Treasury Janet Yellen leaves after speaking about the Biden's administration's economic approach toward the Indo-Pacific, ahead of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Finance Ministers' and APEC Economic Leaders meeting, in Washington, DC. — AFP

which over time could help build trust and maybe deliver some outcomes that are mutually beneficial," Cutler said. Yellen also made a case for deeper economic ties with the Asia-Pacific region, arguing that greater engagement boosts trade, jobs and security both at home and abroad. Her speech takes place as Secretary of State Antony Blinken is set to visit Japan, South Korea and India after his latest crisis trip to the Middle East—keeping a US focus on Asia. The Biden administration is committed to boosting trade and investment with countries in the Asia-Pacific region, said Yellen, with almost a quarter of US global exports already headed there. Making the case for

trade expansion, she said this boosts production at home and allows US businesses to expand operations and create more jobs.

Economic engagement is also key to bolstering US supply chain security, she said, citing the approach of "friendshoring," or diversifying US supply chains across allies and partners.

"We're starting to see the impacts in the data," Yellen added. "Across sectors from auto parts to electronics, the US is importing more from key partners like India and Vietnam, as well as from Mexico, and is less dependent on one single country, in this case, China," she said. — AFP



President Ferdinand Marcos Jr shakes the hand of businessman Francisco Tiu-Laurel following his appointment as Agriculture secretary, which was announced on Nov 3, 2023.



LAGOS: Nigeria's main labor union on Friday threatened to call a strike after its leader was beaten up at a rally. — AFP

Nigeria's main union threatens strike after leader attacked

LAGOS: Nigeria's main labor union on Friday threatened to call a strike after its leader was beaten up at a rally, sparking outcry in Africa's largest economy.

The Nigeria Labor Congress (NLC) claims authorities in southeastern Imo state arranged the attack to stifle protests over workers' rights. It said Joe Ajaero was badly hurt when police and a group of "thugs" assaulted the union leader, bundling him into a van and briefly detaining him. Police denied arresting Ajaero and claimed they took him into "protective custody" to shield him from a mob attack, while the state governor told Nigerian media the assault was an "ugly coincidence" and accused Ajaero of meddling in local politics.

The NLC and Nigeria's other main union movement the Trade Union Congress (TUC) have been in talks with the government over recent reforms that have seen fuel and food prices sharply increase.

In a joint statement on Friday they said they would "no longer guarantee industrial peace in Nigeria" from Wednesday next week if the government failed to meet its demands, which included the resignation of police officials. "We are worried that it has become criminal for workers in Nigeria to gather for a peaceful protest," they said. Recent strikes have had a mixed turnout. Last month the unions agreed to call off a planned strike in protest over rising living costs after the government offered a package of measures to cushion the impact of its economic reforms. The NLC, an umbrella group of trade unions, had planned a demonstration in the Imo state capital Owerri on Wednesday over "non-payment of salaries and pensions for 44 months and violation of other labor rights," spokesman Benson Upah told AFP.

But state police said the protest had been banned. The unions said "police personnel" attacked Ajaero after a crackdown on the demonstration. The union leader was taken to a police hospital and treated at the city's Federal Medical Centre, the NLC said. It has since shared pictures showing Ajaero with a bruised face and a neck brace. Leader of the opposition Labor Party Peter Obi condemned the attack, saying it "shows the level of lawlessness, impunity, criminality, and rascality that have engulfed our dear country". — AFP



Inductee US guitarist Tom Morello of "Rage Against The Machine" poses in the press room with a paper reading "cease fire" during the 38th Annual Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony.



Australian singer-songwriter Sia



Inductee US singer/songwriter Sheryl Crow

Tom Morello, Dave Matthews get political at Rock Hall party that inducts Missy Elliott

Missy Elliott and Willie Nelson were among the superstars inducted Friday into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, whose concert gala saw several artists including Tom Morello of Rage Against The Machine make political overtures to the humanitarian disaster unfolding in Gaza. The late pop icon George Michael, rock experimentalist Kate Bush, heartland rocker Sheryl Crow and R&B group

your conscience, not your orders." "If you're bummed out you didn't get to see Rage Against The Machine, then start your own band, and let's hear what you have to say." Morello's fiery speech preceded a showstopping closer of a performance from Elliott, the first woman rapper to enter the elite club, who was inducted by fellow rap superstar Queen Latifah. Wearing a glittering gold bucket hat

"But it's people like Willie Nelson who make me hopeful," he said of the anti-war advocate with waist-length pigtails. Elton John wore a bejeweled purple suit to perform "Tiny Dancer" inducting Bernie Taupin. John called his longtime friend and songwriting partner "without a doubt one of the finest lyric writers of all time," adding that the duo had just wrapped a new album. The concert gala at Brooklyn's Bar-

-- the 68-year-old credited with mixing the first known breakbeat and ushering in the birth of hip hop -- who broke down in tears in accepting the honor.

Rapper Big Boi inducted Kate Bush, who earlier Friday apologized for being unable to attend. Big Boi, who was one half of the duo Outkast, called Bush "without equal," also acknowledging the resurgence in popularity among Gen Z she's experienced with her 1985 hit "Running Up that Hill" hitting the charts once more.

"If you were to hear Kate's music for the first time, why wouldn't you think that she was a current artist?" the rapper said of the 65-year-old.

Jazmine Sullivan inducted funk queen Chaka Khan, who received a musical excellence award and performed a string of her songs with R&B artist H.E.R. and Sia. Along with Khan and Taupin, Al Kooper also received that honor.

Evolving image

The Cleveland-based Hall of Fame surveyed more than 1,000 musicians, historians and industry members to choose the entrants, who are eligible 25 years after their first commercial release.

For some time now the institution has defined "rock" less in terms of genre than of spirit. But the institution is a music industry pillar that, much like the Recording Academy that runs the Grammys, has been working to revamp its image -- long criticized as too masculine and too white.

The Hall of Fame's image problem resurfaced earlier this year, when Jann Wenner -- one of the Hall's board members who helped start the institution -- said neither women nor people of color could "articulate" on the level of "philosophers of rock" in an interview with The New York Times. The comments were widely eviscerated as racist and sexist, and Wenner was swiftly axed from the Hall's board of directors.

On Friday night Songwriter Taupin took direct aim at the comments, saying he was proud to be inducted in a class featuring "articulate women" and "outstanding, articulate Black artists."

"We're all in this together," he said to resounding applause.-AFP



(From left) Ricky Bell, Bobby Brown, Johnny Gill, Ralph Tresvant, Michael Bivins, and Ronnie DeVoe of US R&B group New Edition pose in the press room during the 38th Annual Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony at Barclays Center in the Brooklyn borough of New York City.— AFP photos

The Spinners rounded out the 2023 class of inductees.

Morello, 59, did not directly comment on the Zionist's ongoing bombing campaign of Gaza but he did pose for photographers backstage holding a piece of paper scrawled with the words "CEASEFIRE!"

"The world is changed by average, ordinary, everyday people... who are willing to stand for a country and a planet that is more humane, peaceful and just," he said in accepting the award on behalf of Rage, which is as beloved for its music as its socialist, revolutionary political leanings.

"If you've got a boss, join a union," he said. "If you're an anarchist, throw a brick. If you're a soldier or a cop, follow

and matching sweatsuit, a tearful Elliott noted this year's 50th anniversary of hip hop, saying that "this is deeper than me just being up here." "I'm just honored to be in the room with you all," the "Lose Control" and "Get Ur Freak On" artist said, thanking her fellow inductees.

'Hallowed ranks'

While inducting country great Nelson, Matthews made the night's other reference to raging battles between the Zionist entity and Hamas. In decrying the world's ills including homelessness and unfettered capitalism, the artist said that "we live in a world where bombs are dropped on children and it's called collateral damage."

clays Center had kicked off with Crow belting tracks including "If It Makes You Happy" alongside Olivia Rodrigo, before Stevie Nicks and Peter Dinklage also joined in the party.

Michael, who died in 2016 at age 53, was inducted by his other half from the hit duo Wham! Andrew Ridgeley told the audience his musical partner "would have been delighted and flattered over his inclusion into these hallowed ranks."

'Expands your mind'

DJ Kool Herc and Link Wray were inducted as "influences" and the late creator of "Soul Train," Don Cornelius, received a non-performer honor.

LL Cool J inducted DJ Kool Herc



US singer Chaka Khan



Jamaican-US rapper Peza



US singer/songwriter Carrie Underwood



Namibian model Behati Prinsloo and US musician Adam Levine



US singer and musician Brittany Howard (left) and Anna-Maria Babcock



US rapper LL Cool J



US rapper Common



US singer John Edwards (left) and US vocalist Henry Fambrough of The Spinners



US rappers Chuck D (right) and Flavor Flav



British lyricist and visual artist Bernie Taupin (center) and wife Heather Kidd (left).



British singer-songwriter and record producer Andrew Ridgeley

Lifestyle



A visitor plays a video-game on the stand of the Franco-German public service channel Arte during the "Paris Games Week" video-game fair.



Visitors play with a Nintendo Switch during the "Paris Games Week" video-game fair.



Visitors play video-games on the stand of the Franco-German public service channel Arte during the "Paris Games Week" video-game fair.

Franco-German TV channel finds niche in highbrow video games

French-German TV channel Arte is best known for covering cultural events and producing sophisticated dramas and documentaries, but over the past decade it has also been building a reputation in an entirely different arena: video games.

As with its TV programming, the publicly funded channel's video games reflect its focus on culture and liberal causes -- from an adaptation of a story by French author Boris Vian to an adventure game where the main character is a Syrian refugee.

"It's a way of showing our editorial line to an audience which plays video games but doesn't necessarily watch TV or consume documentaries," said Arte's digital projects chief Adrien Larouzee. Arte has been in the gaming business for a decade, carving out a niche in "human scale" titles.

"We don't work on blockbusters," Larouzee told AFP on the sidelines of

Paris Games Week, France's biggest video game trade show, where it has a stall alongside giants of the industry like Sony, Nintendo and Ubisoft.

Larouzee said Arte was far happier with the "audacity" and "innovation" that comes from working with smaller, independent studios. "We have the luxury of not having to think solely in terms of market share or commercial success," he said.

"We look for projects that are most compatible with our editorial strategy and those that we are able to support financially, editorially and humanely." The channel, funded by TV licences levied in France and Germany, is finding an audience.

'Masterful'

Arte has 17 co-productions with independent studios under its belt, its games being lauded at specialist festivals and praised by users.

It all started in 2013 with "Type:Rider", a platform and puzzle game where the player bounces through landscapes strewn with references to scripts from prehistoric cave paintings to pixel art.

Straight-up literary games have included "Californium", where the player is plunged into the psychedelic inner world of the famously troubled sci-fi author Philip K. Dick as he struggles with a flagging career.

And the literary theme continued with this year's "To Hell With the Ugly", a highly stylised adventure game set in a noirish Los Angeles, adapted from a Vian novel. The game has already won awards and praise from critics, with specialist site Xboxygen highlighting its "singular artistic direction" and "masterful gameplay". And its games do not shy away from political issues -- 2017's "Bury Me, My Love" depicts a Syrian woman's journey to Europe through messages to her husband.



A visitor plays the "Mortal Kombat" video-game during the "Paris Games Week" fair.

Metaverse future

Arte has long been an innovator with new technologies. It was an early adopter of video-on-demand and its social media channels boast more than 18 million subscribers.

The channel has an overall digital budget of between 10 million and

15 million euros a year. Marianne Levy-Leblond, head of Arte's digital production unit, said investments in individual video games ranged from 100,000 to 300,000 euros.

With that relatively small outlay, the channel's executives are determined to keep exploring the possibilities technology can offer. "Obviously we're paying a lot of attention to the metaverse," said Levy-Leblond.

As an example how virtual reality (VR) feeds into the channel's output, the channel is producing "Gloomy Eyes - The Game", an adaptation of an animation that won Best VR Film at the Anney Festival in 2019.

Levy-Leblond said the channel already had a strong track record with projects using immersive technologies and planned to push further into that space in coming years.-AFP



A visitor uses a Nintendo "GameCube" controller during the "Paris Games Week".



A crest of the French Gendarmerie during the "Paris Games Week" video-game fair in Paris.



A visitor plays a video-game on the French Gendarmerie stand during the "Paris Games Week".



People dressed as Spiderman pose during the "Paris Games Week" fair in Paris.

Not just pea soup: Restaurant award sparks pride in Dutch grub

Best known abroad for its herring, deep-fried croquettes, and sickly-sweet stroopwafels, it's fair to say the Netherlands has not historically been world-renowned for its cuisine. But for the first time, a Michelin-starred restaurant in Amsterdam has been voted the world's best on TripAdvisor, further proof the food scene in the country is on the rise, according to its head chef.

With the exception of Irish oysters and Japanese wagyu beef, everything on the menu at the Bougainville restaurant is local Dutch produce, chef Tim Golsteijn told AFP in his bustling kitchen just off Amsterdam's main square.

"Dutch gastronomy has really been



growing in the past 10 years, also because Amsterdam is becoming more and more of a big international city," said the 36-year-old, who was born and raised in the capital and describes himself as "100 percent Dutchie". "You can't compare it to London or New York or Tokyo but we are getting there," he told AFP, as his sous chefs chopped, sliced and stirred ready for another busy dinner service.

In 1958, there were only eight Michelin-starred restaurants in the whole country. But now the Netherlands has forced its way into the world's top 10, with 123 restaurants boasting a coveted star.

Golsteijn uses North Sea fish, local lobster and Dutch lamb, but also draws on culinary inspiration from around the

world -- reflecting the Dutch people's history as seafarers and colonisers.

"From ages ago, we were travellers... we came back with spices, with coffee, with chocolate. We took that into our food culture," he said. But he is also taking down-to-earth Dutch staples and elevating them to Michelin-star level. For example, the restaurant serves kibbeling, a humble, deep-fried fish bite snack found in beach cafes around the country, but with sea bass instead of the usual cod belly.

'Heavy dishes'

Dutch food has an undeserved reputation, insists Isabelle Nelis, who runs culinary tours around Amsterdam. "Most people think about heavy dishes like pea soup, or the dishes that we do in winter with the mashed potato, cabbage, sausage, but there is so much more," she told AFP. It's not just food. Land reclaimed from the sea in the Netherlands contains excellent minerals for wine-producing grapes and there is even a burgeoning champagne industry, said Nelis.

The food scene has changed greatly over the years and is now "alive and buzzing", she said, helped by the cosmopolitan nature of melting-pot Amsterdam. Restaurants are serving some 180 different types of cuisine in Amsterdam, she said. "You can eat in every nationality" in the world.

Eric Toner, the owner of the Bougainville, said the quality of the Dutch food scene had changed beyond recognition in recent decades. "When I was young, decades ago, it was maybe one or two restaurants with a star in Amsterdam. Maybe six or 10 in the whole of the Netherlands. Now we have 24 or 26 in Amsterdam alone," he said.

As a child growing up in the Netherlands, "we ate a lot of meatballs, potatoes, vegetables and a lot of gravy over it. That was a normal dinner." But the next generation has much more refined tastes, helped by a greater choice of cuisines from around the world, he said.

"We have gone from a normal small country when everyone eats a big potato pan on the table... to an international food culture," he said. The award made headlines around the Netherlands but both Toner and head chef Golsteijn acknowledge that the TripAdvisor award, based on customer reviews rather than professional critics, does not catapult their restaurant to the highest echelons of global gastronomy.-AFP

YouTube takes aim at teens bingeing on body image videos

YouTube on Thursday said it tweaked its recommendation system in the United States to prevent teens from bingeing on videos idealizing certain body types. The move comes about a week after dozens of US states accused Facebook and Instagram owner Meta of profiting "from children's pain," damaging their mental health and misleading people about the safety of its platforms. YouTube's video recommendation engine has been targeted over time by critics who contend it can lead young viewers to dark or disturbing content.

Google-run YouTube has responded by ramping up safety measures and parental controls on the globally popular platform. Working with an advisory committee, YouTube identified "categories of content that may be innocuous as a single video, but could be problematic for some teens if viewed in repetition." YouTube director of youth and kids product James Beser said in a blog post Thursday. Categories noted included "content that compares physical features and idealizes some types over others, idealizes specific fitness levels or body weights, or displays social aggression in the form of non-contact fights and intimidation."

YouTube now limits repeated recommendations of such videos to teens in the United States and will extend the change to other countries over the coming year, according to Beser.

"Teens are more likely than adults to form negative beliefs about themselves when seeing repeated messages about ideal standards in content they consume online," Beser said. "These insights led us to develop additional safe-

guards for content recommendations for teens, while still allowing them to explore the topics they love." YouTube community guidelines already ban content involving eating disorders, hate speech, and harassment.

"A higher frequency of content that idealizes unhealthy standards or behaviors can emphasize potentially problematic messages - and those messages can impact how some teens see themselves," Youth and Family Advisory Committee member Allison Briscoe-Smith, a clinician, said in the blog post. "Guardrails can help teens maintain healthy patterns as they naturally compare themselves to others and size up how they want to show up in the world."

YouTube use has been growing, as has the amount of revenue taken in from advertising on the platform, according to earnings reports by Google-parent Alphabet. US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy earlier this year urged action to make sure social media environments are not hurting young users.

"We are in the middle of a national youth mental health crisis, and I am concerned that social media is an important driver of that crisis -- one that we must urgently address," Murthy said in an issued advisory. A few states have passed laws barring social media from allowing minors without parental permission. Meta last week said it was "disappointed" by the suit filed against it and that the states should be working with the array of social media companies to create age-appropriate industry standards.-AFP



An exterior view of the YouTube Space in Los Angeles, California—AFP

Apollo astronaut Thomas K. Mattingly dies aged 87

NASA astronaut who was removed from the ill-fated Apollo 13 mission but helped bring its crew back home safely thanks to his problem-solving efforts from ground control has died at the age of 87. Thomas K. "TK" Mattingly passed away on October 31, the space agency said in a statement Thursday.



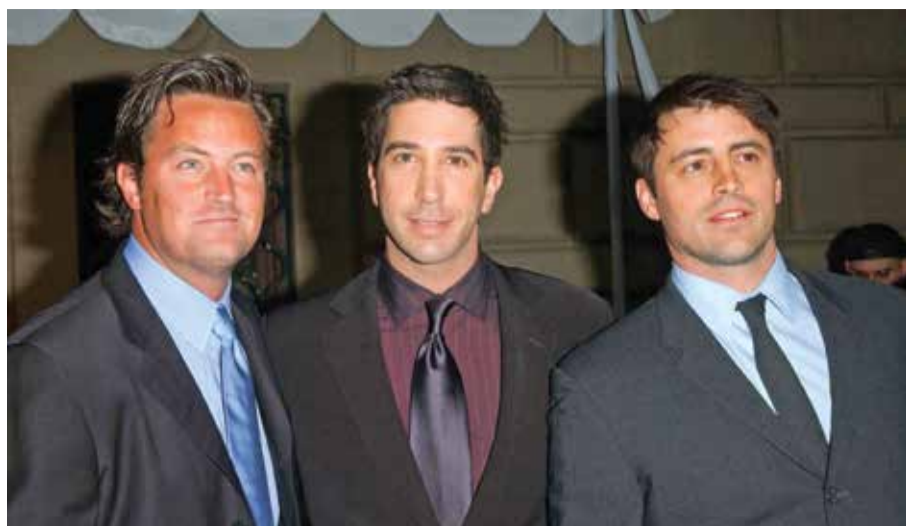
This undated handout picture from NASA shows astronaut Thomas K. "TK" Mattingly.—AFP

His most dramatic role came when he was assigned as command module pilot for the Apollo 13 flight but was grounded 72 hours prior to launch due to exposure to rubella, NASA Administrator Bill Nelson said.

After an explosion crippled the spacecraft on its way to the Moon, Mattingly, who did not in fact get sick, went to Mission Control and devised procedures to conserve power so the vehicle could successfully re-enter the atmosphere, ensuring astronauts James Lovell, Jack Swigert, and Fred Haise survived. The mission was dramatized in the 1995 film "Apollo 13" in which Mattingly was played by Gary Sinise.

Mattingly began his career as a US Navy pilot before being selected to the astronaut class of 1966. He later took on the role of command module pilot on the Apollo 16 mission and was the spacecraft commander in two Space Shuttle missions.—AFP

Lifestyle



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



(From left to right) Matthew Perry, Lisa Kudrow, Jennifer Aniston, and David Schwimmer pose with their award at the 26th People's Choice Awards in Pasadena, CA, on Jan 9, 2000.

'Friends' star Matthew Perry laid to rest in Los Angeles

American actor Matthew Perry of the hit sitcom "Friends" was laid to rest at a Los Angeles cemetery during a private funeral attended by family and co-stars on Friday, US showbiz media reported. The 54-year-old, known for his role as Chandler Bing in "Friends," which aired from 1994-2004, was found dead six days ago.

"The service was held at Forest

Lawn Memorial Park in Los Angeles near Warner Bros. Studios," People reported, citing an unidentified source. It said the funeral service lasted around two hours.

Forest Lawn Memorial Park, a cemetery in the Hollywood Hills popular with celebrities, did not respond to AFP's request for confirmation. Several other US media outlets, including celebrity news

website TMZ, also reported that Perry was laid to rest at a "low key" funeral attended by castmates Jennifer Aniston, Courteney Cox, David Schwimmer, Matt LeBlanc and Lisa Kudrow.

Perry's mother, father and stepfather also attended, according to the media reports. The cause of Perry's death is not yet known. An initial post-mortem examination was inconclusive and the

results of toxicology tests have not yet been released.

TMZ cited sources saying that no illicit drugs were found at his home, although several medications were discovered including anti-depressants and anxiety medication. Perry had battled addiction and serious health problems for years. — AFP



Actor Matthew Perry arrives at the Los Angeles premiere of 17 Again at the Grauman's Chinese Theater in Hollywood.

Blackpink star Lisa removed from Chinese social media after cabaret show

K-pop singer Lisa of megastar girl group Blackpink has been banned from China's Weibo social media platform, sparking speculation among fans Friday that the censorship was tied to a burlesque performance she gave in Paris.

Lisa, whose full name is Lalisa Manobal, disappeared from Weibo this week, with her personal page replaced by an error message saying her account was "not viewable due to being reported for violating laws (and) regulations". Also banned from posting was Hong Kong actress Angelababy, whose real name is Angela Yeung, due to "violations of relevant laws and regulations", a message on her official Weibo account says.



K-pop singer Lisa

The platform gave no further explanation for the bans. Lisa's management agency YG Entertainment told AFP that it had no official statement to offer. But Weibo users and Chinese entertainment sites speculated that the two had been censored after reports in late September that Angelababy had attended a burlesque show by Lisa at the Parisian cabaret Crazy Horse. Lisa "set the Crazy Horse Paris stage alight on September 28, 29 and 30, 2023 with five exclusive performances that left an indelible impression on both the audience and her fans all over the world", the venue's website said.

Lisa posted photos of herself in cabaret attire on her official Instagram in October, quipping, "Such an amazing experience at (Crazy Horse)... Call me whenever you need someone to fill a spot." Chinese censors are quick to block content considered politically sensitive or going against the ruling Communist Party's socially conservative values, with stars targeted in the past for tattoos and "effeminate" fashion. The blocking of the two stars comes after President Xi Jinping called on women to help in "promoting traditional Chinese virtues and sound family values".

Weibo users complained that censorship had gone overboard, sharing a screenshot of a state media report from 2012 -- the year Xi came to power -- that praised the Crazy Horse cabaret for highlighting Parisian fashion designers. "There's nothing to say at all about this, if this issue came up in the 2000s, who would care, let alone block you?" one Weibo user wrote.

"Now the level of social tolerance in our country is lower than low," they complained. But others were supportive of the blocking, condemning Lisa's performance as inappropriate for its revealing outfits. — AFP



Duane Davis appears in Clark County District Court to plead not guilty at an arraignment at the Regional Justice Center on November 02, 2023 in Las Vegas, Nevada. —AFP

Suspect in rapper Tupac Shakur killing denies murder

A former gang member who had long boasted of his involvement in the murder of rap legend Tupac Shakur a quarter of a century ago pleaded not guilty in a US court on Thursday.

Duane "Keefe D" Davis, 60, was charged in September over the killing, despite not being the man wielding the weapon in the gang feud in Las Vegas.

The 60-year-old Davis, a former member of Compton's South Side Crips gang, has long acknowledged his involvement in the slaying, boasting he was the "on-site commander" in the effort to kill Shakur and Death Row Records boss Marion "Suge" Knight in revenge for an assault on his nephew.

But at a court hearing in Las Vegas he denied the charge of murder with a deadly weapon with the intent to promote, further or assist a criminal gang.

"Not guilty," Davis told District Judge Tierra Jones when she asked for his plea. Under Nevada law, anyone who aids or abets a murder can be charged with the killing, in the same way that a getaway driver can be charged with bank robbery even if he never entered the bank.

Prosecutors said Thursday they would not be seeking the death penalty if Davis is convicted.

"We talked about it, and I determined that it's not a case in which we should seek the death penalty," the Las Vegas Review-Journal reported Clark

County District Attorney Steve Wolfson as saying after the hearing.

Shakur, the best-selling hip-hop artist behind hits such as "California Love," "Changes," and "Dear Mama," was a major star in the world of rap when he was gunned down on September 7, 1996. He was just 25.

He was signed to Death Row Records, an outfit associated at the time with Los Angeles street gang Mob Piru, which had a long-standing beef with the South Side Compton Crips.

Shortly after Davis was arrested, prosecutors said that what happened on the night of the killing had been largely understood for many years, but they had not had sufficient admissible evidence to advance the case.

That began to change when Davis, reportedly the only person in the car that night still alive, published an autobiography and spoke about the crime for a TV show.

Wolfson said statements Davis had made in the past would be considered at the trial. He added that he was aware that the case was attracting global attention, but it would not change how it was handled. "The fact that the world is watching really doesn't matter," he said, according to the Review-Journal.

"What we care about is presenting the evidence to a jury, so that the jury can make the ultimate decision." —AFP



Host Russell Brand speaks onstage during MusiCares Person of the Year honoring Aerosmith at West Hall at Los Angeles Convention Center in Los Angeles, California. —AFP

British comedian and actor Russell Brand has been accused by an unnamed actress of sexually assaulting her during the filming of the film "Arthur" in 2010 in New York, according to court documents revealed Friday. The complaint filed before the New York State Supreme Court follows accusations by several women, and investigations in September and October by media and police in Britain, for rape, sexual assault and psychological violence.

Brand has rejected the previous allegations, saying his relationships had always been "consensual." Those incidents had allegedly occurred between 2006 and 2013. The New York complaint was filed by an anonymous

In US capital, selfies with asteroid hinting at Earth's origins

In a hushed room of a museum in Washington, cameras and cell phones focus on a tiny piece of rock, no larger than a piece of gravel.

The fragment might seem insignificant, but it is a sample taken from the asteroid Benu, which scientists are studying in the hope of discovering if asteroids actually brought the building blocks of life -- carbon and water -- to Earth. Exhibited to the public on Friday for the first time at the Smithsonian in the US capital, the tiny stone is just visible inside its small capsule.

"This asteroid, now we know, has water crystals and carbon, two of the elements that produce ultimately life," said NASA boss Bill Nelson, a few minutes before the curtain rose on the dedication ceremony.

The new space venture is "part of our quest to understand, to try to understand, who we are, what we are, where we are, in the vastness of this cosmos," Nelson told journalists and space enthusiasts eager to whip out their cameras to snap an image of the rock fragment.

'Indescribable'

Other museum visitors then come in and they too reach for their phones for a selfie with the little black rock. Jenn Mann came from neighboring Virginia to take her grandson to "finally" see a piece of asteroid on Earth. "I was afraid it was just a speck of dust, but it's actually much bigger than I thought," laughed the 64-year-old systems analyst.

"I was 10 years old when man first walked out on the Moon, and I think everyone in my generation is just really keen on all of that because you wouldn't remember all the excitement that was going on during that time," she said, before taking a photo for her daughter.

NASA's Osiris-Rex mission took the sample in 2020 from Benu, an 4.5 billion-year-old asteroid 500 meters (1,640

feet) in diameter, which was more than 300 million kilometers (186 million miles) from Earth at the time.

The capsule containing the precious cargo returned successfully to Earth in September, landing in the American desert. Since then, analysis has been underway at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston.

Even though she worked with the scientific team on the project, Nayli Castro, like the other visitors, was seeing a fragment of the sample with her own eyes for the first time.

"It's indescribable, I can't wait to bring my family and my friends to look at it," said the 36-year-old mission operations manager, proudly wearing the NASA logo on her t-shirt. "To actually look at this sample was super exciting cause it was so much work to get this sample back," she said, smiling.

'Dreamed of for 20 years'

Tim McCoy, meteorite curator at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, described the discovery as a "milestone." "Our planet has features that we haven't found on any other planet in the solar system or outside the solar system: we have continents, we have oceans, we have life," he told journalists.

"This is something I dreamed of for 20 years and today it comes to reality, but it's really just the first step," he said.

Even the operation to actually open the sample capsule is not complete. Due to the abundance of material found outside the collection mechanism itself, the main sample itself has not yet been opened. The material already recovered was entrusted to a rapid analysis team, in order to obtain a first idea of the composition of Benu. —AFP



A sample of Asteroid Benu on public display for the first time at the Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC.

Russell Brand accused of sexual assault on set of 'Arthur' in 2010

British comedian and actor Russell Brand has been accused by an unnamed actress of sexually assaulting her during the filming of the film "Arthur" in 2010 in New York, according to court documents revealed Friday.

The complaint filed before the New York State Supreme Court follows accusations by several women, and investigations in September and October by media and police in Britain, for rape, sexual assault and psychological violence.

Brand has rejected the previous allegations, saying his relationships had always been "consensual." Those incidents had allegedly occurred between 2006 and 2013. The New York complaint was filed by an anonymous

"Jane Doe" and alleges that on July 7, 2010, "I was working on the set of the movie 'Arthur' when the lead actor Russell Brand sexually assaulted me."

She said that Brand had appeared intoxicated, "smelled of alcohol, and was carrying a bottle of vodka on set."

"He then exposed his p***s to me on set and in full view of the cast and crew," she said. The complaint alleged that later the same day, Brand followed the actress into a bathroom "and assaulted me, as a member of the production crew guarded the door from outside."

The complaint also targets Warner Bros. Pictures, Warner Bros. Discovery, MBST Entertainment, Bender-Spink, and Langley Park Pictures.

The actress said that as a result of the assault, "I suffered and continue to suffer extreme embarrassment, shame, and fear."

She said that she had been booked for three days of work on the set, but that after the assault on the first day, she was not called back "and was only paid for one day of work." "I still maintain my career as an actor, and I am terrified of being blacklisted in the industry," she added. She said she also feared retaliation from Brand's millions of fans, followers and subscribers to his social networks, in which the 48-year-old has become an anti-establishment celebrity in recent years. — AFP

Sports

High-tech helmet holds promise for deaf American football players

Coaches send in the play calls from the sidelines via a tablet

WASHINGTON: Coach Chuck Goldstein often finds himself jumping up and down on the sidelines of the field — trying, in vain, to get his players' attention. That's because all but one of the players on the Gallaudet University American football team, in Washington, are all deaf or hard of hearing. "If our player is not looking at us, they're not gonna know what we're telling them," Goldstein tells AFP.

That's what makes the helmet Goldstein is holding in his hands so revolutionary: it is equipped with an augmented-reality eyepiece that can display play calls to the team on the field. "We communicate fast, just like any other team in the country, but the difference is our players, they don't hear whistles," sometimes leading to penalties, Goldstein says. "It's never ever a level playing field." But now, the possibilities are "endless".

Sign of the times

Gallaudet was founded in 1864, and to this day is one of the country's premier schools for the deaf. Its football team also holds a vaunted place in American football history. They're credited with

inventing the sport's iconic huddle, in an 1894 game against another deaf team to prevent them from figuring out their plays — a distinct possibility when communicating openly in ASL (American Sign Language).

The experimental helmets might just be the university's next communications contribution to the sport. Developed by telecoms giant AT&T, they mostly look like classic football helmets: hard shell exterior, grilled face mask, and the bison mascot logo on the side. Plus the clear, plastic lens hanging over one eye.

Coaches send in the play calls from the sidelines via a tablet. "It allows deaf and hard of hearing athletes to see play calls as quickly as their opponents can hear them," says Andrew Bennett, assistant vice president of mass market 5G products at AT&T. There's also a special alert system. "If I need to get the attention of the quarterback, I have a red button. And it's like an exclamation point," says Goldstein. "It just flashes up" on the lens.

The display system eases the burden for players who, without being able to hear their coaches yelling at them, would otherwise have to look at the sidelines. It also places them closer to practices employed by the National Football League, which has long allowed for radio communication in helmets from coaches — yet to be implemented in college football.

Trial and error

The helmet came together after multiple back-and-forths between the Gallaudet players and AT&T, recalls quarterback Brandon Washington. "The first time I used the helmet, I really didn't like it because it was really big in the back," he says. "An early version had a bulky, heavy battery, which was modified based on players' suggestions," said Bennett. The lens took careful attention too. Glass could have shattered on impact, so plastic is used.

The biggest question now is just how far the helmets will be allowed to go: the governing body of college athletics, the NCAA, only authorized its use for a single game, played earlier this season. During that game, the new tech worked well, coach Goldstein says: "It was effortless, it was smooth." Gallaudet's team is



WASHINGTON: Brandon Washington, junior quarterback at Gallaudet University, wears a 5G-connected football helmet designed for deaf and hard of hearing players, at Hotchkiss Field on Oct 26, 2023. — AFP

now campaigning to have the authorization extended to cover all of next season. The university plans to meet with the NCAA in the near future. But Goldstein

is already looking ahead — and not just for deaf or hard of hearing players. "What if the NFL or other leagues adopted this technology?" — AFP

Djokovic beats Rune to reach ninth Paris Masters semifinal

PARIS: Novak Djokovic edged out Holger Rune on Friday to avenge his defeat in last year's Paris Masters final and reach the last four, while Stefanos Tsitsipas set up a meeting with Grigor Dimitrov. World number one Djokovic missed a match point in the second set but eventually claimed a 7-5, 6-7 (3/7), 6-4 win over Denmark's Rune in the quarterfinals after more than two-and-a-half-hour hours on court at Bercy Arena.

The Serbian star is playing in his first ATP Tour event since lifting a record 24th Grand Slam title in New York in September. Djokovic, the record six-time Paris champion, will face Andrey Rublev for a place in the final after the Russian defeated Alex de Minaur 4-6, 6-3, 6-1. "It was quite a similar match to last year's final, it was anybody's game in every set," Djokovic said. "I played an awful tie-break in the second set, probably the worst one this year. But again credit to him for staying mentally tough and playing solid. "We have similar games. Move well, defend well and all-round players."

The 36-year-old claimed his second career victory against Rune, who is now working with Djokovic's former coach Boris Becker, after suffering two

successive defeats by the world number seven. "It was strange seeing Boris in the opposing box," added Djokovic. "I wish Holger and him all the best."

Djokovic snatched an opening set which was largely dominated by serve with a break in the 12th game. He saw a match point come and go on the Rune serve when leading 5-4 in the second set, before the 20-year-old went on to produce a series of brilliant points in a tie-break to force a decider.

But Djokovic was clinical in the third set and a single break in the third game was enough to take him through. Djokovic has now won 16 successive matches since losing to Carlos Alcaraz in the Wimbledon final. He has won all eight of his previous Paris Masters semifinals.

Tsitsipas powers through

Tsitsipas powered his way into the semis with a dominant 6-3, 6-4 victory over Karen Khachanov. It was the 300th win of his career and gave the Greek, ranked sixth in the world, a semifinal match-up with Dimitrov who overcame Hubert Hurkacz 6-1, 4-6, 6-4. Tsitsipas, who also reached the last four a year ago when he lost to Djokovic, has



PARIS: Serbia's Novak Djokovic reacts after winning a game against Denmark's Holger Rune at the Accor Arena on Nov 3, 2023. — AFP

progressed to the same stage without dropping a set. "It's working well. I feel like I can mix up play," said Tsitsipas.

Tsitsipas has already qualified for the end-of-season ATP Finals as one of the year's top eight players but defeat for Hurkacz against Dimitrov ruled the Pole out of contention. The last two places for the event in Turin later this month will be taken by Alexander Zverev and Rune.

In the last few weeks, the 32-year-old Dimitrov has reached the semifinals in Chengdu, a quarterfinal in Bei-

jing and the semi-finals of the Masters event in Shanghai. His path to the last four in Paris included a shock defeat of world number three Daniil Medvedev in the second round. "My body is feeling well for now, that's the most important thing," said Dimitrov. "My head is good. If I'm able to play like that on a consistent basis throughout every game, I put myself in a position to do better." Dimitrov last reached the semifinals in Paris in 2019 when he lost to Djokovic. — AFP



CANCUN: Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka greets the audience after defeating Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina on Nov 3, 2023. — AFP

Sabalenka downs Rybakina to reach WTA Finals semis

CANCUN, Mexico: World number one Aryna Sabalenka defeated Elena Rybakina 6-2, 3-6, 6-3 in a rain-disrupted group match on Friday to book a semi-final clash with Iga Swiatek at the WTA Finals. The Belarusian, who finished second in her group behind unbeaten American Jessica Pegula, kept her bid for the year-end number one ranking on track with a victory that took two days to complete.

She had won the first set but was trailing in the second when play was halted Thursday night after multiple rain delays. Some 16 hours later, she and Rybakina returned to the outdoor hardcourts in Cancun, where fourth-ranked Rybakina of Kazakhstan calmly served out the second set to level the match in a matter of minutes.

Australian Open champion Sabalenka dug deep to halt Rybakina's momentum in the opening game of the third set, surviving nine deuces and two break points to hold serve. She used a pair of ferocious forehands to break Rybakina in the fourth game. World number two Swiatek then downed sixth-seeded Ons Jabeur 6-1, 6-2 in just 67 minutes to finish top of her group with a perfect 3-0 record.

US Open champion Coco Gauff closed out group play with a 5-7, 7-6 (7/4), 6-3 victory over Wimbledon winner Marketa Vondrousova and advanced to the semifinals — her place secured after Swiatek's win. Gauff will face fellow American Pegula in the semi-finals, but it's the clash between Sabalenka and Swiatek that will be in the spotlight. If Sabalenka wins, she will finish the year ranked number one in the world, but if Swiatek triumphs she could regain the top spot if she goes on to win the title.

It's a rematch of last year's semi-final in Fort Worth, Texas, where Sabalenka won 6-2, 2-6, 6-1. The two have split their two meetings this season, both on clay. Swiatek, the reigning French Open champion won the Stuttgart final, while Sabalenka took Madrid. The clash between Gauff and Pegula will be the first all-American semi-final at the elite season-ending event since the round-robin format was reintroduced in 2003.

Blustery winds and intermittent rain again challenged players on Friday. Gauff shook off multiple rain delays, using an aggressive approach to claim the second-set tiebreaker and continuing to attack in the third. "Obviously, in the wind, it's tough to be as aggressive as you want, because the bounces are weird and the ball was moving," Gauff said. "So I'm glad I made that adjustment and didn't get too frustrated when I missed. You pay the price for hopefully a good reward." — AFP



Special Olympics organizes family health gathering

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait Special Olympics organized a family health gathering at Nisf Essa Al-Asfour Library in Qadisiya. This event marks the inaugural activity in the Special Olympics' health program for the 2023-2024 season. The gathering witnessed a strong turnout of athletes and their parents, with the presence of key figures, including National Director of Kuwait Special Olympics Ribab Buresli, Secretary of Kuwait Tomouh Sport Club Sadeeqa Al-Ansari and Club Director Huda Al-Khalidi.

Ghazi Al-Juraiwi wins showjumping championship

KUWAIT: Kuwait riding club rider Ghazi Al-Juraiwi won the third edition of Kuwait Riding Center Showjumping Championship on Friday. Juraiwi won first place in the fifth heat at a height of 130cm in 65.50 seconds without faults. He also won third place in 67.21

seconds. Ahmad Al-Ansari won second place and Fawaz Al-Subaie stood fourth, followed by Shaker Al-Kazmi and Fawaz Al-Rashid. Madhi Al-Khamis won the fourth place at a height of 120 cm, while Shamlan Al-Roumi won the third heat at a height of 110 cm.



Women's stars set for showdown at New York Marathon

NEW YORK: Defending champion Sharon Lokedi, Boston Marathon champion Hellen Obiri and former world record-holder Brigid Kosgei will compete in a spectacular women's field set for Sunday's 52nd New York City Marathon. More than 50,000 runners are expected over the 26.2-mile showdown winding through the New York streets but the women's contenders might just steal the show.

Lokedi won her marathon debut last year in New York in 2hrs 23mins 23secs but missed the Boston Marathon last April due to an injury. "I'm returning with a different mindset, hungry to defend my title and race against the fastest women in the world," Lokedi said. Obiri was sixth at New York last year in her debut at the distance but won her second marathon start last April at Boston in 2:21:38. She's a two-time world champion and a two-time Olympic runner-up at 5,000 meters and promises to be a bigger threat after sorting a better race strategy. "I'm coming to New York this year with more confidence and in search of a title," Obiri said. Kosgei, a two-time champion at the Chicago and London marathons, also won last year's Tokyo Marathon after a runner-up effort at the Tokyo Olympics.

She set a world record of 2:14:04 in her 2019 Chicago triumph, a mark that stood until Ethiopia's Tigist Assefa won the Berlin Marathon this past September in 2:11:53. The Kenyan trio of Obiri, Lokedi and Kosgei is joined by half marathon world record-holder Letesenbet Gidey of Ethiopia and possibly Tokyo Olympic champion and 2021 New York winner Peres Jepchirchir, a former half marathon world record-holder. — AFP

Sports

Impressive Las Palmas stun La Liga lead-chasing Atletico

Simeone's side outplayed by ninth-placed hosts

GRAN CANARIA, Spain: Atletico Madrid spurned a chance to rise to the top of La Liga as they fell to a surprise 2-1 defeat by Las Palmas on Friday. Diego Simeone's side would have levelled leaders Real Madrid and Girona on points with a victory, but were outplayed by the hosts, provisionally ninth and enjoying their first season in the top flight since 2018. Kirian Rodriguez and Benito Ramirez struck in the second half for the Canary Islanders to secure Garcia Pimienta's side a famous victory, with Alvaro Morata pulling one back late on.

Atletico had racked up six consecutive league victories before falling short at Estadio de Gran Canaria. "Las Palmas had a great game and it was hard for us," Atletico goalkeeper Jan Oblak told Movistar. "They did not let us play, they made it hard for us to bring the ball out, they were very good. We were not perfect (so) in the end you lose, every game in this league is difficult if things don't go how they should, you can lose against any team."

The goalkeeper said he was sure his team would stay in the title fight and end up "happy" in May. "La Liga is long, it doesn't matter if you go top or not, because there are a lot of games to go," he added. "You have to be well, strong, lift your head up and keep improving and winning games. I'm sure when the season ends we will be happy."

The first half was a tight affair, with Las Palmas as mean at the back as they have been throughout this season — only Madrid and Atletico have conceded fewer goals. The best opening of the first half fell to Rodrigo Riquelme, Atletico's most dangerous player throughout. Antoine Griezmann threaded a pass in

behind for the Spanish midfielder, but Alvaro Valles was equal to his shot.

Low drive

Las Palmas took the lead through Kirian's low drive from outside the box after 51 minutes. Atletico complained the ball had gone out in the build-up, but the hosts kept it in, with Javier Munoz cleverly stepping over Munir El-Haddadi's pass to allow Kirian to strike. Riquelme came close soon after, drilling a low effort against the post, and goalkeeper Valles breathed a sigh of relief as the ball bounced off his head on the rebound but did not drop over the line.

Simeone made the interesting choice to take off Griezmann after an hour, throwing on Angel Correa in his stead. "We wanted to put on fresh players and try to see if we could respond and turn the game around," Simeone told Movistar. However Las Palmas doubled their advantage with 15 minutes remaining when Ramirez smashed a low effort past Jan Oblak at the near post. Morata set up an exciting finale when he tucked away Riquelme's inviting cross, pulling level on seven La Liga goals with team-mate Griezmann, behind only Real Madrid's Jude Bellingham. Morata might have levelled but flashed a shot against the crossbar with Valles out of position after saving well from Pablo Barrios' fierce effort.

"Promotion lets you play matches of this caliber, against teams and players like this, and I think Canarian players, when you work them up a bit, when they see that (the opponent) is better than them, this streak comes out and they want to compete," Kirian told Movistar. "Everybody is a hero, all the fans,



LAS PALMAS, Spain: Atletico Madrid's Argentinian forward Angel Correa is challenged by Las Palmas' Spanish defenders Sergi Cardona and Mika Marmol at the Gran Canaria stadium on Nov 3, 2023. — AFP

look at the atmosphere, look at the desire we had for a match like this, we showed the team can compete."

Atletico host Celtic on Tuesday in the Champions League and Simeone will demand far more from his

side than this largely flat offering. "The opponent played well and deserved to win," added Simeone. "This time it couldn't be and (we have) to prepare well for Tuesday's game." — AFP



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's French forward #10 Ousmane Dembele fights for the ball with Montpellier's French defender Theo Sainte-Luce at The Parc des Princes Stadium on Nov 3, 2023. — AFP

Dembele shines as PSG climb top of Ligue 1

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain beat Montpellier 3-0 to climb provisionally top of France's Ligue 1 on Friday, with Ousmane Dembele providing much of the ammunition. Luis Enrique's new-look PSG seem to be clicking into gear with Lee Kang-in, Warren Zaire-Emery and Vitinha bagging the goals in a dominant win. Reigning champions PSG moved two points clear of Nice at the top.

"What I see is positive, the objective is to continue to be effective in each match and improve," said coach Luis Enrique. "I undoubtedly saw at the Parc des Princes this evening one of the most beautiful PSG performances (since the start of the season)." Lee's left-foot shot into the top corner on 10 minutes opened the tally and sparked joy after Kylian Mbappe set him up with a clever dummy. "He is very likeable for any supporter," Luis Enrique said of South Korean international Lee. "He is young, makes an effort in attack and defence, makes very good decisions and is hungry to play."

Nepal, Oman qualify for T20 World Cup

PARIS: Nepal rocked the United Arab Emirates on Friday with an eight-wicket win at Mulpani Cricket Ground which stamped their ticket to next year's T20 World Cup in the West Indies and the United States. Oman also booked their place with a 10-wicket win over Bahrain in the Asia qualifier semi-finals. They will face Nepal in Sunday's qualifier final.

Nepal, whose only previous appearance at the finals was in Bangladesh in 2014, restricted UAE to 134-9 with Kushal Malla returning outstanding figures of 3-11 from just three overs. Nepal knocked off

Mbappe was largely kept quiet by some robust defending ahead of PSG's visit to AC Milan in the Champions League in midweek. Just before the hour mark, Zaire-Emery made it 2-0 after a back-heel from Dembele left the 17-year-old in space on the edge of the six-yard box for a nerveless finish. Substitute Vitinha scored with almost his first touch, slamming home from the edge of the area as goalkeeper Benjamin Lecomte dived the right way marginally too late.

Dembele himself came close on 26 minutes and Mbappe, who scored his 250th and 251st goals for the club last week, was wasteful from an ensuing corner. Mbappe nodded one in late on but walked away laughing sheepishly because he was so far off-side. Having started their European campaign with a 2-0 home win against Borussia Dortmund, PSG lost at Newcastle but top Group F with six points ahead of their trip to Milan in the Champions League after beating the Italians last week.

On Saturday all eyes were on Marseille's match against Lille, a week after the Lyon bus was pelted with heavy objects by OM fans, one of which left Lyon coach Fabio Grosso with a serious facial injury that caused the game to be called off. Nice can climb back on top of the league when they host Rennes Sunday with third-placed Monaco hosting Brest the same evening. — AFP

the runs with 17 balls to spare thanks to an unbeaten 68-run partnership for the third wicket between Aasif Sheikh, who top-scored with 64 not out from 51 balls, and captain, Rohit Paudel who made 34.

The 2024 edition, the first to be expanded to 20 teams, will be Oman's third World Cup. Their last appearance came in 2021 when they co-hosted alongside the UAE in the stead of a COVID-hit India. Aqib Ilyas took 4-10 as Oman in Kirtipur as restricted Bahrain to 109 for nine in their 20 overs.

Openers Kashyap Prajapati (57 off 44 balls) and Pratik Athavale (50 off 42) then blasted Oman to victory with 34 balls to spare. Eighteen teams have now secured their places for the main event. The last two places will be decided at the Africa qualifier in Namibia on Nov 20-30. — AFP

'Sack them all': Outcry in Lanka after humiliation

COLOMBO: Anger over Sri Lanka's miserable World Cup campaign has erupted after a humiliating 302-run thrashing by hosts India, with the island nation's sports minister demanding the cricket board's resignation. Sri Lanka were dismissed for 55 while chasing 358 in Mumbai on Thursday, the fourth-lowest total at a World Cup tournament. Sports minister Roshan Fernando, who has long been at loggerheads with the board and previously accused it of being "traitorous and corrupt", upped the stakes by telling officials and selectors to quit.

"Sri Lanka Cricket officials have no moral or ethical right to remain in office," the minister said in a statement issued on Friday night. "They should vol-

untarily resign." Local newspapers echoed Fernando's dismay with mass daily Lankadeepa on Saturday writing that explanations were needed from coaching staff over the "heart-wrenching defeat". "SACK THEM ALL," screamed the front-page headline of the Daily Mirror, in reference to the board.

There was no immediate formal comment from Sri Lanka Cricket, but board officials said it had sought an explanation from coaching staff over the crushing defeat. Sri Lanka has not won the Cricket World Cup since its sole victory in 1996, with Fernando blaming the board for the "deterioration" of standards since then.

Another cabinet minister, Prasanna Ranatunga, told parliament in August that Sri Lanka's win turned out to be a "curse" in disguise that fostered a culture of corruption spanning decades. "The World Cup victory was the biggest curse for our cricket," said Ranatunga, the younger brother of Arjuna Ranatunga, who skipped Sri Lanka to victory that year. "Money started flowing to the cricket board after 1996 and with that came those who wanted to steal." — AFP

Fierceness roars to Breeders' Cup Juvenile victory

ARCADIA, California: Fierceness defied expectations to win the \$2 million Breeders' Cup Juvenile on Friday, stamping himself an early Kentucky Derby favorite as the \$31 million thoroughbred extravaganza got underway at Santa Anita Park. Trained by Todd Pletcher and ridden by John Velazquez, the 16-1 shot stalked front-running General Partner until the far turn, when he edged into the lead ahead of the Bob Baffert-trained Muth.

From there, it was Fierceness's race as he pulled away to win by six and a half lengths ahead of Muth with Pletcher's Locked in third. Pletcher notched a 15th Breeders' Cup victory and his fourth in the Juvenile. He won the race last year with Forte, who arrived at the Kentucky Derby last May on a five-race winning streak but was scratched hours before the Run for the Roses with a bruised hoof.

The performance vindicated owner Mike Repole's decision to target the Breeders' Cup in the wake of a disappointing seventh-placed finish in the Champagne Stakes. "Not everyone would do that," Pletcher said. "We talked about it, we covered every base after the Champagne. The horse trained well all summer. He was a monster since his debut. "We took a shot today and it worked out ... he showed what he's all about."

There were wins for two European raiders and for two fillies sired by 2018 Triple Crown winner Justify on the day billed as "Future Stars Friday" and featuring five races for 2-year-olds. It was a curtain-raiser for nine more races on Saturday, including the \$6 million Classic and a star-studded \$4 million Turf.

Rollercoaster day

Irish trainer Aidan O'Brien nabbed a sixth Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf victory as 3-2 Unquestionable,



ARCADIA, California: Jockey John Velazquez reacts as he rides Fierceness to victory during the Breeders' Cup Juvenile (Grade 1) at Santa Anita Park on Nov 3, 2023. — AFP

ridden by Ryan Moore, rallied from fifth on the backstretch, slipping past Air Recruit and My Boy Prince in the final straight and holding off stablemate Mountain Bear for the win. It was a more than satisfying end to a rollercoaster day that started with O'Brien's pre-race favorite River Tiber among more than a dozen runners scratched in the morning after veterinary exams.

Connections of many of those ruled out disagreed but had no recourse amid stringent new measures aimed at reducing equine injuries and deaths that have shadowed the sport in the United States and included two horse deaths at Santa Anita this week. "When a day starts badly it usually spirals out of control," O'Brien said. "It was a great ride from Ryan."

Moore, who had been scheduled to ride River Tiber but replaced Frankie Dettori on Unquestionable, added: "We thought a lot of him and River Tiber coming here and we expected to get a one-two—just with different horses." Big Evs, trained by Michael Appleby and ridden by Tom Marquand, led a European one-two-three in the five-furlong, \$1 million Juvenile Turf Sprint. — AFP

Classifieds

Clinics & Hospitals

Clinics

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

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

Hospitals

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

Announcement

Easa Husain Al-Yousifi & Sons for General Trading & Contracting Co. would like to attract the attention of its customers who have given their devices for repair at the Al-Yousifi Service Center located in Ardiya Industrial Area until 2023/9/30, and did not yet come and collect their devices till this date, to urgently contact Al-Yousifi Service Center on 1809809 in order to collect their devices within a period of only 2 weeks from the date of this Ad. The company will not be responsible under any matter in the future for these devices after the mentioned grace period is over.



Al-Yousifi Service Center
1809809

Fernandes rescues Man Utd

Man City hit Bournemouth for six, go on top

three minutes later. Manuel Akanji was credited with City's third when Doku's shot hit the Swiss defender and flew past Andrei Radu in the Bournemouth goal. Haaland was not moving freely for the closing stages of the first half and the Norwegian striker did not reappear for the second period. His replacement Phil Foden got the

performance when Luis Sinisterra pulled a goal back for Bournemouth. But they still struck twice more as Silva scooped home his second of the game with an audacious finish before Nathan Ake crashed in a diving header.

Maupay breaks drought

Brentford edged the game of the day as the Bees came from behind to beat West Ham 3-2. Neal Maupay ended a 45-game goal drought to put Brentford in front early on, but West Ham hit back to lead through Mohammed Kudus and Jarrod Bowen.

Konstantinos Mavropanos' own goal brought Thomas Frank's men level once more before Nathan Collins' towering header won the game 20 minutes from time.

Sheffield United secured their first win back in the Premier League in dramatic fashion as Oliver Norwood's 100th minute penalty beat Wolves 2-1. All three goals came in the final 18 minutes. Cameron Archer fired the Blades in front before Jean-Ricner Bellegarde looked to have snatched a point for Wolves. Victory is not enough to lift Sheffield United off the bottom of the table, but they move level on points with Burnley and within two points of safety.

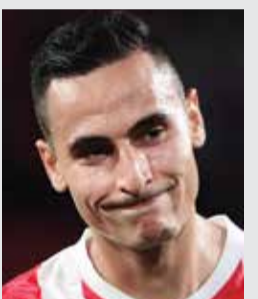
Burnley became the first Premier League side to ever lose their first six home games of the season as Crystal Palace

won 2-0 at

Turf Moor thanks to goals from Jeffrey Schlupp and Tyrick Mitchell. Everton were denied a third consecutive win for the first time since September 2021 as Ashley Young's late own goal rescued a 1-1 draw for Brighton at Goodison Park. Third-placed Arsenal can move level with City at the top of the table should the Gunners win later away at Newcastle. Tottenham, who began the weekend on top, are not in action until Monday when they host Chelsea. — AFP

Mainz sack Ghazi as Germany opens probe into posts

MUNICH: Bundesliga club Mainz sacked footballer Anwar El Ghazi on Friday, hours after German prosecutors opened an investigation over his social media posts on the Zionist-Hamas war. Mainz tweeted they were "ending the contractual relationship with Anwar El Ghazi and terminated the player with immediate effect". Mainz also clarified in a statement that they were "taking this action in response to the player's statements and posts on social media".



Anwar El Ghazi

Earlier on Friday, German prosecutors said the Dutch footballer is suspected of "disturbing public peace by condoning criminal acts in conjunction with incitement to hatred" through his message on Instagram. Ghazi had shared several posts on social media early in the conflict, including one that carried the phrase "from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" — a slogan interpreted by some as a call for the destruction of the Zionist entity, while others say it appeals for equality for Zionists and Palestinians. Ghazi was suspended by Mainz on Oct 17 over the post but the club later said the player could return after he "explicitly distanced himself" from the statements. But Ghazi on Wednesday took to social media again to say "I do not regret or have any remorse for my position. Any other statements, comments or apologies to the contrary attributed to me are not factually correct and have not been made or authorized by me." — AFP



Bruno Fernandes

fourth for Pep Guardiola's men courtesy of another Doku assist 25 minutes from time. City were made to pay for a sloppy second-half

MANCHESTER: Manchester United eased the pressure on manager Erik ten Hag as Bruno Fernandes' stoppage time winner beat Fulham 1-0 on Saturday, while Manchester City went top of the Premier League by thrashing Bournemouth 6-1. Ten Hag's future at Old Trafford had come into question over the past week after consecutive 3-0 home defeats to City and Newcastle.

United were again far from spectacular at Craven Cottage but got three points thanks to captain Fernandes. The Portuguese midfielder has been a target of stinging criticism in recent weeks for not enough leadership on the field, but he produced a rare moment of quality when his side needed it. Fernandes' 91st minute shot from the edge of the area had just too much power for Bernd Leno as it squirmed into the bottom corner. "He showed every time as a captain he is an example," said Ten Hag. "You see today how he is working, how he is pressing and in the end he scored the goal."

Doku stars for City

City, by contrast, cruised to their three points but victory came at a cost for Pep Guardiola's men as Erling Haaland was substituted at half-time due to injury. Jeremy Doku was the star of the show for the English champions as the Belgian winger opened the scoring and played a major role in four more goals. Bournemouth held out for 30 minutes at the Etihad, but the floodgates opened once Doku prodded into the far corner after exchanging a one-two with Rodri. Doku then teed up Bernardo Silva to slot home



BENGALURU: Pakistan's captain Babar Azam and Fakhar Zaman run between the wickets in the match against New Zealand at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Nov 4, 2023. — AFP

Zaman keeps Pak alive as Australia knock out England

BENGALURU: Swashbuckling opener Fakhar Zaman cracked a blistering century to save Pakistan from World Cup elimination in a rain-affected and dramatic 21-run victory over New Zealand at Bengaluru on Saturday. The 33-year-old left-hander smashed 11 sixes and eight boundaries in his unbeaten 81-ball 126 as rain forced a premature end to the match with Pakistan 200-1 after 25.3 overs, chasing a revised DLS target of 342 in 41 overs. "We know that every game is do or die for us," said Zaman.

Rachin Ravindra hit his third century of the tournament while Kane Williamson scored 95 to help New Zealand pile up 401-6 in their 50 overs. Set a mammoth 402-run target initially, Zaman lifted Pakistan to 160-1 after 21.3 overs before a 90-minute stoppage due to rain led to a revised target for Pakistan. After the resumption, Zaman kept up the tempo, hitting three sixes off spinner Ish Sodhi's 25th over as Pakistan went past the 200-mark.

Pakistan had needed to overhaul the original target of 402 in 35.3 overs if they were to get beyond New Zealand's better net run-rate which could prove crucial in the battle for semifinal spots. However, Abdullah Shafique fell for four in the second over. Zaman and skipper Babar Azam (66) added 194 for the unbroken second-wicket stand. Zaman took the attack to the New Zealand bowl-

ers, smashing four sixes and as many boundaries in his 39-ball fifty. He completed his 11th ODI hundred, and first in a World Cup, with a six and a single off Mitchell Santner. His century came off 63 balls with nine sixes and six boundaries. Pakistan now have eight points from as many games with their last match against England in Kolkata on Nov 11. They not only need to win that but also hope New Zealand lose to Sri Lanka on Nov 9 in Bengaluru or the match is hit by rain. As a consequence of Pakistan's win, South Africa became the second team alongside India to make the semifinals.

Meanwhile, spinner Adam Zampa starred with bat and ball as Australia knocked defending champions England out of the World Cup with a 33-run win on Saturday. Chasing 287 for victory in Ahmedabad, England folded for 253 in 48.1 overs despite a valiant 64 from Ben Stokes to slump to their sixth defeat in seven matches and stay bottom of the 10-team table. Five-time champions Australia edged closer to securing a semifinal berth alongside India and South Africa with their fifth straight win.

Zampa returned figures of 3-21 with his leg-spin to puncture England's hopes that were raised by a couple of partnerships including a 63-run fifth-wicket stand between Stokes and Moeen Ali, who hit 42. Zampa, who had earlier hit 29 with the bat, dismissed Stokes when the English star mistimed a paddle to be caught at short fine-leg and departed with a shake of his head.

Wickets kept tumbling with Liam Livingstone and Moeen falling in quick succession for a familiar England tale in this tournament where they have also lost to Afghanistan and Sri Lanka. Zampa, who leads the World Cup bowling chart with 19 wickets, also took a superb outfield catch to help dismiss David Willey. — AFP

Warriors edge Thunder in dramatic style

LOS ANGELES: Golden State star Stephen Curry drained the winning layup with two-tenths of a second remaining Friday as the Warriors opened the NBA's new in-season tournament with a dramatic 141-139 victory over the Oklahoma City Thunder. In a game featuring 23 lead changes, it was tied at 139-139 when Curry drove to the basket and rose to bank in a shot. But teammate Draymond Green, whose hand was near the rim, was called for offensive goaltending — only for the call to be overturned to allow the Warriors to celebrate the win.

Curry finished with a game-high 30 points, connecting on five of 10 three-pointers and nine of 15 overall. Green scored 15 points with five rebounds and Chris Paul handed out 13 assists. Lu Dort scored 29 points and Chet Holmgren added 24 for Oklahoma City, who were without leading scorer Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, sidelined by a knee injury.

Even without him, the Thunder weren't about to go quietly. The Warriors led by two at halftime, but Dort scored 11 points early in the third to put Oklahoma City up by five before the Warriors battled back, knotting the score at 106-106 heading into the fourth. "They took it to us the whole game," said Warriors coach Steve Kerr, who admitted he feared the worst when officials reviewed the interference call on Green.

From court-side, Kerr said, Curry's shot looked good. "When I saw the replay on the scoreboard, it looked like Draymond touched the rim," Kerr said. "And I guess it's just a determination of did it affect the shot. "I was sort of expecting them to overturn (Curry's basket), but obviously they allowed it and we escaped." It was among the most dramatic moments on the first night of the new Cup-style tournament that commissioner Adam Silver hopes will fire players' competitive instincts and give added interest to games early in the season.

The 30 clubs were drawn into six groups of five, and each team will play a total of four tournament games this month to decide six group winners and two wildcard qualifiers for the quarterfinals. All games in the new tournament count in the regular season standings except for the final on December 9 in Las Vegas. Reigning NBA champions Denver took the opportunity to hand the Dallas Mavericks their first defeat of the season, 125-114.

Two-time NBA Most Valuable Player Nikola Jokic scored 33 points on 14-of-16 shooting, adding 14 rebounds and nine assists as the Nuggets bounced back from their lone defeat so far this season. Denver scored 20 second-chance points, dominating in



OKLAHOMA CITY: Stephen Curry of the Golden State Warriors grabs a rebound against Oklahoma City Thunder on Nov 3, 2023 at Paycom Arena. — AFP

the paint to deny a Mavs team led by 34 points from Luka Doncic. Kyrie Irving, back after missing two games, scored 22 for Dallas.

The first win of the new competition went to the Indiana Pacers, who were fueled by 27 points from Myles Turner in a 121-116 victory over the Cleveland Cavaliers. Tyrese Haliburton added 18 points and 13 assists for the Pacers, who led by as many as 18 but had to claw back after the Cavs, led by 38 points and nine assists from Donovan Mitchell, grabbed a four-point lead midway through the fourth quarter.

Bucks hold off Knicks

It was close in Chicago, where Dorian Finney-Smith scored 21 points and Mikal Bridges added 20 for the Brooklyn Nets in a 109-107 victory over the Bulls. In Portland, the Trail Blazers edged the Memphis Grizzlies 115-113 in overtime. Bridges' dunk with 1:13 remaining gave the Nets a 108-104 lead. Zach Lavine answered with a floater but then missed two shots, and with the Nets up 109-107, LaVine was off-target again as time expired. "We've got a lot of grit — and we want to win," Bridges said of the Nets' determined fourth-quarter effort.

In Milwaukee, Damian Lillard scored 15 of his 30 points in the fourth quarter, draining the go-ahead three-pointer with 1:03 to play as the Bucks held off the New York Knicks 110-105. Milwaukee withstood 45 points from Jalen Brunson, whose three-pointer with 1:10 remaining put the Knicks up for the first time since the second quarter, 103-101. — AFP