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GAZA MARTYRS TOP 10,000

Kuwait blasts Zionist brutality • Jordan airdrops aid into Gaza



GAZA: The death toll in Gaza now exceeds 10,000 after nearly one month of Zionist bombardment, the health ministry said Monday as the offensive against the Palestinian militant group showed signs of intensifying. Determined to destroy Hamas whose Oct 7 attack left 1,400 dead in the Zionist entity and saw over 240 hostages taken, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed no letup despite mounting international calls for a ceasefire.

The Kuwaiti foreign ministry on Sunday voiced emphatic condemnation of remarks made by a Zionist occupation minister regarding dropping a nuclear bomb on the Gaza Strip. Undoubtedly, these remarks prove that the Zionist occupation and its aggression on the Palestinian people and civilians have reached a serious stage, and its arrogance has reached unprecedented brutality, the ministry said in a press release. It echoed Kuwait's appeal to the international community and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to halt genocides against the Palestinian people.

Hundreds of overnight strikes pushed the death toll to 10,022, mostly women and children, a spokesman for the Gaza health ministry told a press conference on Monday afternoon. Two pediatric

hospitals and Gaza's only psychiatric hospital were hit, the ministry said, after the director of another hospital, the Deir al-Balah in central Gaza, reported he had counted 58 dead.

"These are massacres! They destroyed three houses over the heads of their inhabitants — women and children," one resident, Mahmud Meshmesh, told AFP. "We have already taken 40 bodies out of the rubble," he said as crowds prayed around corpses wrapped in white shrouds.

Jordan's air force airdropped vital medical supplies to a field hospital in the besieged Gaza Strip, King Abdullah II said early Monday. "Our fearless air force personnel air-dropped at midnight urgent medical aid to the Jordanian field hospital in Gaza," he said on X, formerly Twitter. "This is our duty to aid our brothers and sisters injured in the war on Gaza," he said, adding: "We will always be there for our Palestinian brethren."

Ground forces with tanks have flooded the northern half of the Gaza Strip and tightened an encirclement of Gaza City, effectively splitting the territory in two, even as hundreds of thousands of civilians remained in the north despite Zionist evacuation orders.

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GAZA: Palestinians recover the body of a child from the rubble of a building in Khan Yunis on Nov 6, 2023. — AFP

Boycotts of major pro-Zionist brands sweeping Mideast

MANAMA: In a convenience store in Bahrain, 14-year-old Jana Abdullah carries a tablet as she shops, checking a list of Western brands to avoid as the Zionist entity pounds Gaza in its campaign to destroy Hamas. Jana and her 10-year-old brother, Ali, used to eat at a US fast food chain nearly daily, but they are among many across the Middle East now boycotting products they believe support the Zionist entity.

With the campaign spreading on social media including TikTok, children as well as their parents are shunning major Western brands. "We have started to boycott all products that support (the Zionist entity) in solidarity with the Palestinians," Jana tells AFP. "We do not want our money to contribute to more fighting," she added, searching for local replacements.

Across the region, Arabs angered by the Zionist attacks have turned against brands associated with the Zionist entity's allies, notably the United States. The boycott has been accompanied by calls for Arab states to cut ties with the Zionist entity, while pro-Palestinian rallies have taken place weekly in major capitals. Turkey and Jordan have recalled ambassadors to the Zionist entity, Saudi Arabia announced a pause in normalization talks and Bahrain's parliament said trade ties had been halted, although there was no government confirmation.

Led by tech-savvy youth, the boycott campaign includes browser extensions, dedicated websites and smartphone apps that identify proscribed products. One Google Chrome extension, PalestinePact, blurs items advertised online if they are included in the list.

Continued on Page 6

Gaza's Kuwait Hospital still operational

GAZA: The Kuwait Specialized Hospital in the Gaza Strip continues to operate despite the brutal Zionist occupation's bombardment and threats to annihilate the facility, said an official on Monday. Medical staff keeps on receiving daily hundreds of patients and scores of wounded due the vicious Zionist onslaught on the Gaza Strip, said Director of the hospital Dr Suhaib Al-Hamss.

He affirmed the Zionist regime had crossed all red lines and international

al laws, but despite the dire situation, the hospital continues to serve the around 350,000 residents of Rafah city. With the number of displaced coming from the north rising, there are currently around a million people in the area, he noted.

The emergency room of the hospital received 500 cases suffering from respiratory and skin diseases, fever and stomach problems directly related to the inhumane Zionist military assault, he revealed, adding that major operations were suspended and all efforts were now directed towards the ER and other departments. He affirmed that a batch of medical supplies was delivered from the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) in the last few days, in addition to Kuwaiti charities and generous donors. — KUNA



GAZA: Palestinian patients receive treatment at Kuwait Hospital in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip. — KUNA

South Africa recalls all envoys from Zionist entity

JOHANNESBURG: The South African government said on Monday it would recall all its diplomats from the Zionist entity to signal its concern over the situation in Gaza. Pretoria also said the position of the Zionist ambassador to the country

was becoming "more and more untenable", accusing the diplomat of having made "disparaging remarks" about people criticizing the Zionist entity.

"The South African government has decided to withdraw all its diplomats in Tel Aviv for consultation," Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, a minister in the president's office, told a press briefing without providing further details. Pretoria has long been a vocal supporter of the Palestinian cause, with the ruling African National Congress (ANC) often linking it to its own struggle against apartheid.

Foreign Minister Naledi Pandor said the recall of the diplomats was "normal practice", adding the envoys would give a "full briefing" to the government, which will then decide whether it can be of assistance or if a "continued relationship is actually able to be sustained". "We are... extremely concerned at the continued killing of children and innocent civilians in the Palestinian territories and we believe the nature of response by (the Zionist entity) has become one of collective punishment," Pandor told a press conference on Monday, as she hosted her Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba. "We felt it important that we do signal the concern of South Africa while continuing to call for a comprehensive cessation (of hostilities)."

Earlier, Ntshavheni accused Zionist ambassador Eliav Belotsercovsky, of making derogatory comments about South Africans, including members of government, "who are speaking against the holocaust being committed by the (Zionist) government".

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Zionists arrest Palestinian activist Ahed Tamimi

JERUSALEM: The Zionist army said Monday it had arrested the prominent 22-year-old Palestinian activist Ahed Tamimi during a raid in the occupied West Bank. "Ahed Tamimi was arrested on suspicion of inciting violence and terrorist activities in the town of Nabi Salih" near the city of Ramallah, an army spokesman told AFP. "Tamimi was transferred to (Zionist) security forces for further questioning."

The activist was arrested during a Zionist army raid "aimed at apprehending individuals suspected of being involved in terrorist activities and incitement to hatred" in the north of the West Bank, the spokesman added. When AFP inquired about the reasons for her arrest, a security source forwarded an Instagram post, which has circulated widely on social media and is attributed to the young activist.

The activist's mother, Nariman Al-Tamimi, denied she wrote the post. "There are dozens of (online) pages in Ahed's name with her photo, with which she has no connection," Tamimi told AFP. She added that her husband, Bassem Al-Tamimi, was arrested on Oct 20 and since then there was no news about his whereabouts.

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Ahed Tamimi



Local

Kuwait reaffirms its commitment to protect environment during war

KEPS, KOC hold event to create awareness on environmental protection, dangers of landmines



KUWAIT: (Left) A view of the exhibition held during the anniversary of the International Day for the Prevention of the Use of the Environment in Wars and Military Conflicts. (Right) Officials at the event. — KUNA

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Under the patronage of Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, Kuwait Environment Protection Society (KEPS), in cooperation with the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), held an event on the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict, under the slogan "Mines and Their Effects on the Environment".

In his opening address, Assistant Foreign Minister for International Organization Affairs Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah, representing the minister of foreign affairs, expressed appreciation for the efforts of KEPS and KOC in organizing this event, which underscores their societal responsibility in promoting environmental protection at the national level. He stated that this annual event serves as a reminder of the international community's commitment to safeguarding the environment, a vital foundation for peace, sustainable development, and heightened awareness of environmental preservation.

Furthermore, Jarallah emphasized Kuwait's dedication to addressing environmental challenges and its role in protecting the environment both nationally and internationally. He noted the pivotal role played by Kuwait in submitting General Assembly Resolution No. 56/4 in 2001, demonstrating the importance of the environment to his country and its commitment to highlighting the serious consequences

of armed conflicts on the environment.

"Kuwait has previously suffered from the use of the environment as a tool of war after the burning of oil wells ignited by the forces of the former Iraqi regime before their withdrawal from Kuwaiti territory in 1991, which caused one of the worst man-made environmental disasters in the 20th century. Therefore, it is unfortunate to see the continued use of the environment as a tool of war in armed conflicts, which calls for the need to find deterrent solutions to ensure the protection and preservation of the environment in armed conflicts," he added.

Jarallah indicated that Palestine is witnessing grave violations committed by the Zionist army in the Gaza Strip, especially those that constitute a violation of international resolutions and international humanitarian law, such as targeting the lives of thousands of defenseless civilians, including children and women, as well as the destruction of the environment and all aspects of life. This exposes Gaza to a serious humanitarian and environmental catastrophe.

He pointed out that Kuwait believes that protecting the environment is a responsibility that falls on everyone, in times of conflict and war as well as in times of peace. He stressed the importance of seriously considering strengthening international efforts towards activating the principle of accountability for crimes committed against the environment as a result of wars and conflicts.

He concluded by mentioning that Ku-

wait is looking forward to active participation in the 28th Conference of the Parties on Climate Change in Dubai at the end of this month, hoping that the conference will contribute to strengthening international cooperation on the issue of environment and climate.

KEPS Chairperson Wejdan Al-Oqab expressed her solidarity with Gaza and the Palestinian people, condemning the violent attacks they are subjected to and denouncing the excessive force used against them.

"Children, women and men in Gaza must be able to live in peace and security, and we support their right to live in dignity and freedom in their independent state. The international community must work hard to stop the violence. The event today is consistent with the course of events that our Arab region is currently witnessing, with what the occupied Palestinian territories are exposed to, especially the afflicted Gaza Strip, which faces the horrors of genocide, oppression, displacement and other inhuman crimes. There is no doubt that the aggression against the Gaza Strip is a genocide that is getting worse day after day," she added.

From an environmental perspective, Oqab stated that what is happening in Gaza is considered environmental genocide and a disaster that has risen to the top of the list of threats to life because it threatens human lives now and in the long term, affecting the capabilities of future generations in Palestine.

"Here is the Zionist occupation army



Assistant Kuwaiti Foreign Minister for International Organization Affairs Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah



Wejdan Al-Oqab

consuming huge quantities of massive bombs and other tools of their criminal war. They cause direct harm to human lives, wildlife, and biodiversity alike, and according to preliminary estimates, the collateral damage of these brutal crimes could kill up to 90 percent of animals in the area. Therefore, the Zionists must be charged with ecocide by international courts. These crimes include attacks on industrial facilities that pollute groundwater supplies and airways, and the deliberate bombing of wildlife refuges and other ecosystems," Oqab mentioned.

"When we talk about mines in Kuwait, the work teams responsible for clearing the country of mines faced many difficulties and problems, both technical and logistical while carrying out its risky missions. According to expert estimates, the total number of mines removed from Kuwaiti territory is approximately 1.65

million, including more than a million anti-personnel mines, representing 65 percent of the total number of removed mines. History records that the highest number of mines planted per square kilometer was monitored in Kuwait, reaching 92 mines/km²," she added.

The KEPS chairperson pointed out that there are at least 100 million mines in the world today, and mines are an extremely lethal weapon that is destructive to the environment and a menace to humans. They are also inexpensive, as a mine costs between \$3 and \$30, while its replacement equipment and weapons require many times this cost. She called on Arab countries to commemorate this occasion annually to spread the culture of environmental protection and to conduct an assessment of the environmental impact of these wars on the Arab countries.



A group photo of the Kuwait Pavilion at the Qatar Hospitality Exhibition. — KUNA

10 foodstuff firms from Kuwait attend Qatar exhibition

DOHA: Deputy Director General of the Industrial Exports Sector at the Public Authority for Industry, Dr. Sanad Al-Ajmi, confirmed Monday that ten Kuwaiti foodstuff companies are participating in the eighth Qatar Hospitality Exhibition. The exhibition continues until next Wednesday in the Qatari capital Doha. Al-Ajmi added in a statement to KUNA after the opening of the Kuwaiti pavilion at the Qatar Hospitality Exhibition that the national companies participating in the Kuwaiti pavilion include the companies in the fields of nutrition, hospitality and packaging.

He explained that participation comes within the framework of supporting Kuwaiti companies, in addition to demonstrating and clarifying the quality of the national foodstuff industry to visitors and the importance of promoting them. This will also help expand the base of investors and those interested in national food products.

Al-Ajmi said that the exhibition also provides an appropriate opportunity for exhibitors in the markets to promote their food products and explore new markets, in addition to expanding their partner base in the region. Participating from Kuwait are: Ahlia Group Company for Food and Consumer Products, the Kuwaiti Company for Manufacturing Packaging Materials, the Food Industries Company, the Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company, the Aqwat Sweets and Pastries Factory Company, Yurkan Carpets, and Mujezat Al-Shifa General Trading Company, Al-Watan Sweets Company, Al-Seedawi Laboratories Company, and Al-Khat for the Production of Boxes. — KUNA

Bear responsibility for Gaza war: Kuwait urges world community

NEWYORK: Kuwait on Sunday reiterated its call for the international community to bear responsibility for the scale of atrocities committed on Palestinians due to Zionist entity's relentless bombardments in Gaza. This came during the Kuwait's UN permanent delegation's discourse, voiced by the diplomatic attache Shaye Abu Shaiba ahead of the 4th committee of the General Assembly.

Abu Shaiba assured that the Palestinian issue continues to be the major case that hurts the Arab and Islamic world, expressing regret that such a humanitarian catastrophe could trigger a serious migration crisis. These conditions will require full support of the UN in providing relief and aid for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA), stressing the need to grasp and adhere to the original and inalienable rights of Palestinian refugees to enable a return to their land in accordance with relevant international resolutions.

He also reiterated Kuwait's condemnation of the occupying Zionist entity forces' killing of 72 UNR-

WA humanitarian workers in Gaza in flagrant violation of Resolution No 2286 of the Security Council, aimed to protect humanitarian activists.

He pointed out that it is the international community's duty to safeguard all aid workers and prevent any threats on the UNRWA convoys. The diplomatic attache furthermore warned that Palestinians are facing a genocide by occupying forces while the world witnesses with impunity such strikes and raids resulting in the deaths of innocent people. Abu Shaiba opposed the continuation of such inhuman actions calling for the urgent need to remove any blockades structured to halt aid and food supplies from reaching the besieged. Kuwait's stance is firm with the Palestinian cause, he added, and the need to obtain their legitimate right for an independent state with Al-Quds as the capital under the frameworks of justice and comprehensive peace, as a strategic option in accordance with relevant international references and resolutions to better tackle the Arab peace initiative.

Meanwhile, the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Jassem Al-Budaiwi strongly condemned, on Sunday the dangerous remarks made by a Zionist entity's occupation force minister regarding dropping a nuclear bomb on Gaza. In a statement issued by GCC's General Secretariat, Al-Budaiwi said that the dangerous remarks are



NEW YORK: Diplomatic attache Shaye Abu Shaiba speaks at the UN. — KUNA

a blatant call for genocide. Al-Budaiwi added that these statements confirm the extremism and brutality of the Zionist entity against the Palestinian people, its serious and continuing violations against people in Gaza Strip, and its disregard for the lives of innocent people. Al-Budaiwi called for the Zionist entity to be held accountable for this reckless threat, which confirms the Zionist entity's intention to continue attacks in violation of all international conventions, customs and laws. — KUNA

State Audit Bureau completes database on environment

KUWAIT: The Undersecretary of the State Audit Bureau, Yousef Al-Mazrouei, announced the completion of a database project for environmental reports related to sustainable development goals, with the aim of exchanging experience and knowledge between the regulatory bodies in the Arab Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions.

He said in a press statement Monday, following the ninth meeting of the Oversight Committee on Sustainable Development Goals, held in Kuwait with the participation of nine oversight bodies headed by the Supreme Council of Accounts in Morocco, that the meeting will discuss the committee's work plan for the year 2023 and the completed projects.

Senior Advisor to the Supreme Council of Accounts in Morocco and Chairman of the Sustainable Development Goals Oversight Committee, Aziz Idris, said in a similar statement that the meeting comes in the context of preparing for the organization's Exec-



KUWAIT: Participants in the ninth meeting of the Oversight Committee on Sustainable Development Goals. — KUNA

utive Council and the Development Goals Oversight Committee, which is one of the strategic committees. Idris added that the 2030 agenda for supreme audit bodies developed by the United Nations received the attention of the Arab Organization for Oversight and Accounting. He said the plan has important roles in terms of improving governance, oversight and transparency. He pointed to the slowdown in achieving the goals of the agenda due to the problem of financing sustainable development, noting that 15 percent of the goals and objectives are on the "right track,"

which is one of the United Nations' assessments at the international level in achieving the 2030 sustainable development goals.

Chief Auditor at the Audit Bureau, Dina Al-Saqabi, said in a statement that the Bureau participated in this meeting to present a project to create a database for environmental reports related to sustainable development goals. Al-Saqabi added that the Bureau reviewed a group of reports on desertification, climate and fresh water, explaining that each agency presents its project to exchange experience in this regard. — KUNA

Local

Zain offers private sector career opportunities to fresh graduates

Company participates in KCST's second career fair



Danah Al-Mulla and Prof Khalid Al-Begain recognize Zain's support.



Zain seeks to bolster national workforce in private sector.

KUWAIT: In an effort to contribute to providing career opportunities to fresh graduates and bolstering the national workforce in the private sector, Zain has participated in the second career fair of the Kuwait College of Science and Technology (KCST). The company's participation in this event came for the second year running.

The opening ceremony, held at the college's campus in Doha, was attended

by KCST Board of Trustees Vice Chairwoman Danah Al-Mulla, KCST President Prof Khalid Al-Begain and Zain's HR and Corporate Affairs teams. The event featured some of Kuwait's biggest companies and organizations, and was attended by students, fresh graduates and job seekers.

Zain is always eager to participate in career fairs all year round in line with its Human Resources strategy, which closely

focuses on supporting the education sector hand in hand with various universities, colleges and educational institutions in Kuwait (both public and private), with the aim of providing students and graduates with career opportunities in the private sector.

Through its booth, Zain introduced students and graduates to its leading experience in the telecom sector, as well as its internal policy and wonderful

workplace environment. The company also presented the available job vacancies, provided a detailed explanation of the nature of work at its various departments, and answered questions and inquiries from visitors.

This was the second career fair organized by the Kuwait College of Science and Technology, and featured tens of private-sector companies and government agencies. The event fo-

cused closely on careers in the fields of technology and engineering that are consistent with the academic degrees offered by KCST. The central themes of the career fair included advanced electronics, telecommunications, 5G technology, cybersecurity, data analysis, app development, computer engineering, cyber forensics, the internet of things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), computer science and more.

Kuwait's 14th relief plane for Gaza heads to Egypt

KUWAIT: The 14th plane within the Kuwaiti relief air bridge took off Monday, heading to the Egyptian city Al-Arish, carrying 10 tons of medical necessities, to be delivered to Gaza Strip. This initiative came from the Kuwait Relief Society, in coordination with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Social Affairs, in line with Kuwait's leadership.

The air bridge is being executed with the participation of many Kuwaiti official and private bodies and under the direct supervision of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defense, Health and the Air Force in the Kuwaiti Army, in cooperation with the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, the Kuwait Relief Society, Al-Salam Humanitarian Society, and Kuwaiti charities and humanitarian institutions. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Officials of Charity societies in charge of collecting and preparing aid pose for a group photo. — KUNA



Inauguration of the workshop titled "Made by My Hands".



"Made by My Hands" rehabilitation workshop focuses on producing a wide range of products and handicrafts created by the institution's employees.

Rehabilitation workshop 'Made by My Hands' held

KUWAIT: Deputy Director General of the Educational and Rehabilitation Services Sector and the official spokesman of the Public Authority for People with Disabilities Mubarak Al-Baddah confirmed on Monday that the involvement and integration of persons with disabilities in activities and events are among the priorities of the authority, as they organized the 6th rehabilitation workshop titled "Made by My Hands".

Baddah said after the rehabilitation workshops organized by the Integrated Care Foundation for People with Disabilities that various rehabilitation and training programs contributed to the psychological and social stability of persons with

disabilities. Furthermore, economic independence helps dispel misconceptions and boosts self-confidence.

"Increasing levels of interaction and community participation contribute to breaking the barrier of fear and misunderstanding associated with people with different disabilities, which in turn enhances their communication skills and improves their overall health," he added.

Director General of the Foundation Meshal Shaman emphasized the institution's commitment to developing the capabilities of its employees, recognizing them as valuable members of society. "The training and rehabilitation services provided by the institution, which encompasses over 439 students, aim to integrate and



involve people with disabilities and provide them with the skills needed for various crafts and professions, allowing them to overcome their disabilities, contribute productively and face the challenges of the workforce," he said.

Shaman also mentioned the

"Made by My Hands" rehabilitation workshops focus on producing a wide range of products and handicrafts, including accessories, gift boxes, ornaments, paintings, various drawings, bedspreads and other items created by the institution's employees.

Official: 373 insured Kuwaitis working in GCC countries

MUSCAT: Acting Director General of the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) Ahmad Al-Thunayan said on Monday there are 373 in-

sured Kuwaitis working in GCC member countries. Al-Thunayan made the remark to KUNA on the sidelines of the 22nd meeting of the heads of civil retirement and social security authorities held in Muscat, Oman.

He added that beneficiaries from the insurance protection extension system for GCC citizens working in Kuwait reached 15,412.

He pointed out that he had proposed during the meeting an awareness week named 'Gulf week for the insurance protection extension system'.

Al-Thunayan hailed the close ties of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and their keenness to enhance joint work and cooperation in the field of social care with the aim of developing and improving it to serve the citizens of the GCC countries.

The two-day meeting will review findings for the technical committee for civil retirement bodies in the GCC region during the three quarters of 2023, in addition to developing collection mechanisms. — KUNA

In my view

Chronic diseases in Arab countries



Dr. Khalid A Al-Saleh

Local@kuwaittimes.com

The 22nd Arab Medical Association Against Cancer (AMAAC) conference was held in Algeria in collaboration with the Algerian Society of Training and Research in Oncology (SAFRO). This conference took place from Nov 1-4 and was distinguished by the patronage of the Algerian president, as well as the presence of the president's advisor and three ministers. This indicated Algeria's commitment to the health of its citizens and its efforts to combat cancer with significant political support.

During the conference's opening, the presidential spokesman announced the allocation of a substantial budget for early cancer detection. This decision was made in response to an observed increase in cancer cases. Additionally, the formation of a national authority for this purpose was announced, and Dr Adda Bounedjar, President of SAFRO, was appointed to lead this authority.

It is undeniable that chronic diseases, with cancer being a prominent example, pose a significant threat to the development of our Arab countries. While these diseases also affect developed nations, they are better equipped to handle them due to their resources and infrastructure.

However, in Arab countries, the rapid rise in the occurrence of these diseases has not been met with sufficient support or specialized expertise to mitigate the risks to people's health. This situation results in both human and financial losses, highlighting the urgent need for addressing these issues in the development process.

Studies have shown that raising awareness and early cancer detection cost only 10 percent of what a country loses when dealing with advanced cases. Furthermore, the rate of cancer cases is increasing, especially in Arab countries. The World Health Organization anticipates a 60 percent increase in global cancer cases over the next two decades, with low and middle-income countries expected to experience an 81 percent rise due to limited resources allocated for combating cancer.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), as stated by its director Elisabeth Weiderpass, emphasizes that the drop in cancer-related deaths has been more significant in wealthy countries. This is primarily because these countries have implemented preventive programs, early diagnosis, tests and advanced treatments, resulting in a 20 percent reduction in death rates between 2000 and 2015, compared to a 5 percent reduction in low-income countries.

These facts underscore the importance of the political support that Algeria has provided by initiating early cancer detection efforts under the leadership of Dr Bounedjar. Such vibrant conferences, when guided by wise leadership, have the potential to turn their discussions into real actions that benefit human health, which is the primary goal of these scientific gatherings.

Kuwait seeks to unify strategies to enhance cybersecurity in Gulf

4th cybersecurity conference discusses challenges for a secure digital society

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: Under the patronage of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Affairs Saad Al-Barrak, along with several senior officials from the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, the Fourth Gulf Conference and Exhibition on Cybersecurity Challenges was inaugurated on Monday in collaboration with the Central Agency for Information Technology, affiliated to the Cabinet, and in participation with the Union of Kuwaiti Banks, Ministry of Interior, Kuwait Army and other entities.

Engineer Omar Al-Omar delivered his opening speech on behalf of the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority. "Our goal is to unify efforts for cybersecurity in Kuwait and Gulf Cooperation Council countries. We are witnessing cyberattacks that threaten national security, not only individuals and institutions. Therefore, it is necessary to harness all technological resources and prepare human resources to minimize cyberattacks that threaten the state's economy and security. As a result of technological advances, communication and information technology and the diversity of multiple programs, cyber infiltrations and electronic attacks have significantly increased, seeking to destroy the information environment, indicating the important role of cyber security and its impact on business and daily life," he said.

Maj Gen (Rtd) Mohammad Boarki, Chief of the National Cybersecurity Center of Kuwait, said: "Cybersecurity in our current era is considered one of the most important elements of national security in advanced and developing countries, especially after most productive and service sectors have transformed into digital ones. The concept of cybersecurity has become a fundamental requirement in the lives of peoples who use technology as a means to secure vital information infrastructure and technological systems managed by vital state facilities. Any threat to these facilities is a threat to national security. Therefore, we must protect computer networks and information systems. Thus, we are working to make Kuwait more secure in terms of cybersecurity, and it is necessary for all entities in Kuwait to participate in achieving greater insight, success and aspirations," he said.



Eng Omar Al-Omar



Mohammad Boarki



KUWAIT: Audience during the Fourth Gulf Conference and Exhibition on Cybersecurity Challenges.

News in Brief

Hajj registration extended until December 13

KUWAIT: The official spokesman of the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, Salman Murad Al-Kandari, announced that the ministry has decided to extend the central registration period for hajj in 2024 through the platform of the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs until 13/12/2023. He said the ministry is keen to receive requests from citizens wishing to perform hajj who have never done it before, which began on 1/10/2023, while providing them with all facilities. He stressed the ministry's keenness, under the instructions of the Minister of Information and Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, as well as the follow-up of the Undersecretary of the Ministry Dr. Bader Al-Mutairi, to facilitate the pilgrims and meet their needs and create an appropriate atmosphere for them to perform hajj.



Salman Murad Al-Kandari

New decision on Wafra residential area

KUWAIT: The Civil Service Council issued a decision to add the new residential area of Wafra to the first category of remote areas. Sources said that based on the proposal of the Civil Service Commission and the approval of the Civil Service Council, the Council's decision of 2012 on granting an incentive allowance to workers in remote areas was amended. The sources added that the new amendments included the new residential area of Wafra to be added to the first category areas of remote areas, provided that this decision will be effective from Nov 1, 2023.

Driver killed

KUWAIT: A vehicle collided with the base of a bridge column resulting in the death of the driver. The accident took place on the new Sabah Al-Ahmad Road.



KUWAIT: MoH officials and delegates attend the annual conference on AIDS and reproductive illnesses on Monday.

MoH: Kuwait ranks first regionally in achieving indices combating AIDS

KUWAIT: Kuwait took the first place on Arab and Middle Eastern levels in meeting the indices of combating acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) with 94 percent, as per United Nations report. Health Ministry Assistant Undersecretary and Chief of permanent national committee of AIDS, Dr Al-Munther Al-Hasawi, stated this upon inaugurating the annual conference on AIDS and reproductive illnesses on Monday.

He explained that Kuwait had achieved the 90/90/90 indicator meaning that 90 percent of infected people are aware of their infection, 90 percent of diagnosed people are receiving treatment and 90 percent of those receiving treatment have undetected viral load.

Since then, Dr Al-Hasawi went on, Kuwait had taken quick steady steps towards achieving the 95/95/95 objective by 2035. However, he expects the arrival at these results before then. Dr Al-Hasawi assured that these are not merely numbers on pages but are true objectives based on scientific research. He stated that if all countries managed to meet these objectives by 2030, number of infections and deaths would drop dramatically; a drop of 30 million new infections, seven million of which are children and 21 million deaths caused by the disease. This, he added, will carry clearly defined financial and economic effects into the world. Kuwait is now working towards achieving the fourth 90 indicator, the one designated for quality of life, mentioned Dr Al-Hasawi.

Director of Al-Jahra Health District and Director of Infectious Diseases Hospital Dr Jamal Al-Du-



Officials pose for a group photo on the sidelines of the conference.

aaj praised the efforts made to hold the conference, adding that medical teams are working hard in supporting citizens' health security in venereal diseases fields, notably AIDS.

He added that Kuwait is updated with the latest medical examinations in this specific field, noting that the fastest and most accurate diagnostic methods, which does not exceed 15 minutes is currently available. President of the Conference and Head of the Infectious Diseases Department Dr. Osama Al-Baksami stated that the medical sector stands with a new era vibrant with rapid discoveries and developments in treating and diagnosing AIDS and venereal diseases with modern technologies equipped with the latest scientific and medical methods. Al-Baksami added that the conference includes scientific session that highlights the latest developments in the field of AIDS and venereal diseases, as well as interactive dialogue sessions to spread awareness and to prevent the spread of such diseases. — KUNA

MoE to fine-tune distribution of teachers: Official

KUWAIT: Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education Anwar Al-Hamdan said Education Minister Dr Adel Al-Mane has been committed to addressing several key issues since taking office. Among his priorities is the improvement of the teacher distribution mechanism, ensuring the allocation of staff to all schools is equitable and based on merit, and enhancing the overall educational process.

The ministry has directed education zone directors to review the allocation of teachers to schools and prompt-

ly submit detailed reports on their actions in this regard. Furthermore, the ministry is set to implement an electronic system for teacher allocation, which will be linked with the teacher's registration program. This will provide clear data on teacher positions, allowing officials to rectify any discrepancies. In an effort to enhance the school environment, Hamdan said Mane has called for the development of an electronic system that facilitates communication between school administrations and the ministry. Additionally, a direct channel through the email system has been established, enabling schools to submit their requests and feedback directly to the minister's office.

Regarding curriculum development, Hamdan said Mane has formed a committee responsible for preparing the national framework for educational curriculum standards. This committee is headed by a faculty member from Kuwait University.



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French parliament mulls 'firm' immigration law

Ohio vote tests abortion question ahead of 2024 presidential race

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SDEROT: This photo shows flares dropped by Zionist forces above the Gaza Strip on Nov 5, 2023. – AFP photos

Sky above Gaza turns red in deadly night of strikes

Zionist occupation cut off communications in Gaza for third time since Oct 7

GAZA: The bodies arrived through the night at the morgue of a hospital in Deir al-Balah in the center of the Gaza Strip. By Monday morning, hospital director Iyad al-Jabri had counted 58 dead, saying "dozens of women and children" may still be buried under the rubble.

Overnight, the skies over the Palestinian coastal territory were streaked with flashes of yellow and plumes of red. The Zionist army said its land assault on Gaza had split the narrow territory in two and warned of "significant" strikes as part of its campaign to destroy Hamas in response to the militants' unprecedented October 7 attacks.

Since the attacks, around 1,400 people, mainly civilians, have been killed in the Zionist entity and more than 240 have been taken hostage, according to Zionist officials. In Gaza, Zionist strikes have killed more than 10,000 people, most of them women and children, the Gaza health ministry said in an updated toll issued on Monday. Intense Zionist bombardment has killed at least 292 Palestinians overnight from Sunday into Monday, the health ministry said Monday.

Mohammed Meshmesh, 54, said he had lost several members of his family in the Zionist strikes. "It's a ferocious campaign," Meshmesh told AFP. "The strikes have increased and the victims are women

and children, just civilians." "We weren't expecting this. Communications were cut," he said.

On Sunday night, for the third time since the start of the recent attack by the Zionist entity, which has been occupying Palestine for decades, Gaza's 2.4 million inhabitants spent the night cut off from the outside world and with no way to contact their friends and relatives.

'Earthquake'

Meshmesh, who recently left the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza, said he only heard about the death of his relatives at dawn. When the bombs were falling on the neighborhood of Al-Mashaala in Deir al-Balah, his cousin Mahmud Radwan Meshmesh likewise was unable to call an ambulance.

"We had to send someone in a car to take the first dead to the morgue and tell the ambulances so that they could come get the bodies," the 47-year-old said. "These are massacres! They destroyed three houses on top of the residents, women and children. There were more than 60 people in these homes and we have already pulled out 40 bodies from the debris." When the bombs fell on the buildings, "it was like an earthquake ... an absolutely enormous explosion", he said. Mohammed Abu Laila thought he would be away from harm in the center of the Gaza



DEIR EL-BALAH: A man walks between the bodies wrapped in shrouds of those killed in Zionist bombardment in Deir Balah in the central Gaza Strip, at the Shuhada Al-Aqsa hospital in the same city on Nov 6, 2023.

Strip. The 34-year-old Palestinian left with his family from their home in Al-Saftawi after the Zionist army called on 1.1 million Gazans in the north to move south as it began its offensive.

But around 11:00 pm on Sunday, in the Nuseirat

refugee camp where he had set up, "we felt a strike and we found ourselves under the rubble", Laila said. "We were 120 people in the house. Many were killed or injured," he said. "We have already said the prayer for the dead for around 50 people." – AFP

A month later, peace prospects in Palestine remote

JERUSALEM: One month after the Hamas attack on the Zionist entity, life has been upended for both Palestinians and Zionists as the Zionist army ramps up its attacks on the Gaza Strip. The Oct 7 attacks by Hamas militants, who infiltrated the Gaza-Zionist border and attacked Zionist communities and army bases, has deeply scarred the nation.

Gaza — a territory of 2.4 million people packed into one of the most densely populated areas on Earth — has been transformed into an apocalyptic battleground by air strikes and ground assaults after the Zionist entity vowed to eradicate Hamas. Al Quds, the most widely read Palestinian daily, said "Gaza has become a graveyard for thousands of innocent people". "It feels like we have to pinch ourselves to make sure that this is truly the new reality," the left-wing daily Haaretz wrote this week. "The change wrought by the war is total: in losses of life and in damage, in anxieties, in the country's agenda and in the total upending of old political conventions from every possible aspect."

'Powder keg'

Fears have mounted of a possible regional conflagration. Iran, an ally of both Hamas and Hezbollah in Lebanon, has warned the situation risks spiraling "out of control" in a Middle East transformed into a "powder keg". A Pentagon spokesman said the United States is "concerned about all elements of Iran's threat network increasing their attacks in a way that risks miscalculation or tipping the region into war".

US military advisers are in the Zionist entity and two American carrier groups have been deployed to the eastern Mediterranean. As tensions

increase, the Zionist army is on alert on its northern border with Lebanon too. Breaking a month of silence on Friday, Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah said "all options" were open for an escalation of the conflict on the Lebanese frontier with the Zionist entity, while at the same time blaming the United States for the war.

Pentagon spokesman Brigadier General Patrick Ryder said he did not think Hezbollah would escalate the fighting, telling the BBC "a broader regional conflict has been deterred". However, Avi Melamed, a Zionist specialist on Middle East relations warned: "Hezbollah could set fire to the region." "They have a military capacity ten times superior to the Hamas cell," he told AFP. "It could inflict grave damage on (the Zionist entity)."

'Radicalization'

For Gaza resident Omar Ashur, who was eight years old in 1948 when the Zionist entity was cre-

ated, "what's going on is dangerous". He fears the violence will provoke "a second Nakba", referring to the forced expulsion of about 760,000 Palestinians, according to United Nations figures, in 1948.

"Calls for a ceasefire are calls for (the Zionist entity) to surrender to Hamas," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said this week. Hamas spokesman Abu Obeida has vowed that "Gaza will be a cemetery and quagmire for the enemy".

According to Claude Klein, former dean at the law faculty of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, "the possibility of a peaceful settlement is very remote. I don't see anything positive on the horizon." "What happened on October 7 strengthened those in (the Zionist entity) who say there are no interlocutors for peace." For former Palestinian minister Ghassan Khatib, who teaches at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank, "radicalization has reinforced each side of the conflict and has led to a deep disbelief in a peaceful solution". – AFP



MAGHAZI REFUGEE CAMP: A woman carries a child as she walks amid the rubble following Zionist air strikes on a neighborhood in the al-Maghazi refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip on Nov 6, 2023. – AFP

Zionist forces kill 4 Palestinians in West Bank

RAMALLAH: Zionist forces killed four Palestinians in the occupied West Bank on Monday, the Palestinian health ministry reported. Three Palestinians were killed and a fourth injured by Zionist army fire in Tulkarem, in the northwest of the West Bank, a Palestinian territory occupied by the Zionists since 1967, the ministry said.

Witnesses in Tulkarem told AFP that the three men killed were armed and in a car when they were intercepted by undercover Zionist agents. The agents "shot at them in a street in the north of the city and the three men died", one of the witnesses said on condition of anonymity.

Eyewitnesses told Wafa, the Palestinian state media agency, that a Zionist special force stormed the city of Tulkarem in a private vehicle bearing a Palestinian registration plate and opened fire at a vehicle in which the four youths were, killing them and injuring a 14-year-old child who was crossing the road at the moment of the shooting.

It was later announced that the slain Palestinians are Jihad Maharaj Ibrahim Shehadeh, 22, Izz al-Din Raed Hussein Awad, 25, Qasim Muhammad Rajab, 20, and Moamen Saed Mahmoud Balawi, 20. The Ministry of Health reported the injured child's condition as stable. Earlier, the Palestinian health ministry said Zionist forces killed a young Palestinian man and seriously injured three others in the town of Halhul, in the south of the West Bank. More than 150 Palestinians have been killed by Zionist soldiers or settlers in the West Bank since the start of the Zionist war on Gaza on Oct 7, according to the ministry. — Agencies

International

Ohio vote tests abortion question ahead of 2024 presidential race

Swing state split over whether women should make own reproductive decisions

COLUMBUS: As the clock ticks down on a high-stakes vote in the US state of Ohio, activists are out in force urging voters to decide whether to explicitly enshrine the right to abortion in the state constitution. It is a fraught, emotional issue and passions run high for the Tuesday vote — partly because the decision may prove a bellwether of sentiment on the issue in national elections that are one year away.

Voters will choose whether to amend the mid-western state's constitution to promise the freedom to "make and carry out one's own reproductive decisions, including ... abortion," or to leave the document unchanged, allowing for a potential state ban.

Some Ohio residents have been voting in advance for weeks but activists on both sides of the issue are canvassing to the last minute. On a sunny morning, 27-year-old Summer McLain is about to knock on dozens of doors in Columbus, leaflets in hand. Determined and full of energy, she and her mother Lorie, 61, urge a vote of "yes" to the constitutional amendment to enshrine the right to abortion.

'Sick for whole week'

At her window, Idil Petrick, 33, sees the duo pass by. "What are you guys doing?" she asks curiously. The mother of five says she doesn't know about the ballot issue, but the subject of abortion is close to her heart. In the space of a few minutes, she promises to go and vote that very day. "Because women should have the right if they want to give birth or not," Petrick told AFP.

McLain carefully inputs details of the conversation on the mobile app dedicated to the door-to-door operation. The young woman explains that she became involved when the Supreme Court removed federal protection for abortion rights in the summer of 2022. "I was physically sick for a whole week," McLain says. Then came a sense of "rage," followed by a desire to act. That's how she recently helped gather the signatures needed to put a proposed amendment to the constitution before voters.

McLain epitomizes the visceral reactions that

the Supreme Court's shock decision provoked. She grew up in a rural, conservative region of Ohio, and the first time she voted, she gave her vote to Donald Trump. But it was the former Republican president, now running again to return to the White House in 2024, who appointed ultra-conservative justices to the Supreme Court who overturned the landmark 1973 Roe v Wade ruling that had guaranteed the right to abortion for five decades. In Ohio, the reversal of Roe vs Wade triggered a law that would halt all abortions after a heartbeat is detected in the womb, usually around six weeks of gestation — before many people even know they are pregnant.

The law is currently suspended as it winds its way through legal challenges, meaning that for now it is still possible to obtain an abortion in Ohio up to about 22 weeks of pregnancy. But the law sparked a national outcry for the short time it was allowed to remain in effect last year, when a 10-year-old rape survivor was forced to travel to neighboring Indiana for an abortion after being denied care at home.

McLain never thought it possible to "go back in time on those things," she laments, her voice choked with emotion. "I thought it was safe." Now she considers herself "very liberal, very Democratic" and her goal with the abortion ballot measure is to help "save Ohio."

Parental rights

The resolve is every bit as firm on the other side of the issue, especially since several votes held elsewhere in the country last year consistently reaffirmed abortion rights, even in conservative states. Hoping to break this trend, the Republican Party and the Catholic Church, among others, mobilized for a "no" vote, sounding the alarm against an "extreme" text.

Aaron Baer, president of the Center for Christian Virtue, a group campaigning for public policy that reflects "the truth of the Gospel," prepares to canvass in neighborhoods elsewhere in Columbus. The amendment would make Ohio "one of the most liberal states in the nation," he told AFP. But

Washington post poll showed. But age in general has been unfairly "weaponized" in US politics, says S Jay Olshansky, a longevity researcher at the University of Illinois at Chicago. "Ageing is not what it used to be," Olshansky told AFP.

'Wisdom'

"There are very large segments of the population that survive to their eighth decade perfectly capable of being president or doing whatever they like," added Olshansky. "To the contrary, accompanying chronological age is wisdom, knowledge, and experience." Nevertheless, Biden's age will come under even deeper scrutiny during a grueling election campaign.

Biden must convince people he is fit by hitting the campaign trail "at least five days each week" next year, the Brookings Institute said in a commentary. Biden's last medical in February described him as "vigorous" but his gait has become more shuffling and his voice often descends into a whisper.

Accidents such as tumbling off his bike have been broadcast worldwide, and he now uses the shorter stairs of the presidential plane to avoid further falls. His propensity for gaffes — from rambling answers about John Wayne films to saying he wanted to go to bed during a press conference — have also caused confusion. But Biden, who has suffered from a lifelong stutter, has increasingly been hitting back.

to the Zionist entity, Jordan, the occupied West Bank, Cyprus, Iraq and Turkey — called for "humanitarian pauses" while rejecting Arab countries' demands for a ceasefire. In Baghdad, Iraqi Prime Minister Mohamed Shia Al-Sudani met Blinken, the premier's office said. Blinken's visit — which came after a brief stop in Cyprus to discuss a possible maritime aid route to Gaza — was not announced in advance for security reasons. Since the start of the Zionist-Hamas war, a series of rocket and drone attacks have targeted military bases hosting US forces in Iraq.

During his meeting with Blinken, Sudani reiterated calls for a ceasefire in Gaza and pointed to "the urgency of containing the crisis and preventing its spread", a statement from his office said. On Sunday evening, thousands of supporters of influential Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr gathered in Baghdad's Tahrir Square, brandishing Iraqi and Palestinian flags. Some burned Zionist and US flags during the demonstration, which followed a call from Sadr's movement on X, formerly Twitter, to "protest peacefully" against Blinken's visit.

After meeting his Turkish counterpart Hakan Fidan in Ankara on Monday, Blinken said Washington was working "very aggressively" to dramatically expand aid reaching trapped civilians in Gaza, but he did not provide details before boarding a flight to Japan. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan himself was travelling across his country's remote northeast on Monday, apparently snubbing Blinken.

The war has exacerbated tensions in the West Bank, where more than 150 Palestinians have been killed in clashes with Zionist forces and settlers since it started, according to the Palestinian health ministry. Zionist forces killed four Palestinians in the occupied West Bank on Monday, the Palestinian health ministry reported. Three Palestinians were killed and a fourth injured by Zionist army fire in Tulkarem. Earlier, the Palestinian health ministry said Zionist forces killed a young Palestinian man and seriously injured three others in the town of Halhul.

In Zionist-annexed east Jerusalem, a 20-year-old female Zionist border police officer died after a knife-wielding Palestinian assailant stabbed her in front of a police station, the force said. "Border police forces neutralized the terrorist by shooting," a statement said. — Agencies



COLUMBUS: Pro-Choice canvasser Summer McLain, 27, and her mother Lorie McLain, 61, look at a map of a neighborhood before canvassing on Nov 5, 2023. — AFP

"this is Ohio, for goodness sake. This isn't California," he says, referring to the Pacific coastal state with a strong liberal streak.

Opponents of abortion say the amendment would allow minors to terminate their pregnancies without parents' consent, curbing what they call "parental rights." They also contend that it would enshrine the right to have an abortion "at any time during the pregnancy," as Republican Governor Mike DeWine asserted again on Sunday. Such claims are categorically denied by the opposing side, who denounce "misinformation."

He's joked several times recently about being 800 years old. And when he stumbled while climbing on-stage in Philadelphia recently he earned a laugh from the audience when he jokingly clutched the railings for several seconds. The Ukraine war and the Zionist aggression on Gaza have also allowed Biden to proclaim the benefits of someone with half a century of foreign policy experience.

'Superagers'

Meanwhile Trump, who has made grotesque impressions of Biden during recent rallies, has been slip-ups of his own. Trump warned in a speech in September that the United States was on the verge of "World War II" — shortly after he called Biden "cognitively impaired."

The Biden campaign recently sent out an email listing further Trump mix-ups, such as saying that Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban was the leader of Turkey. In any case, both Biden and Trump are likely to be "Superagers", a term coined by researchers for a small group of people who keep their faculties until later in life, says Olshansky.

Olshansky's research has also found that for US presidents "biological time seems to tick at a slower pace" than for other people, as they apparently thrive on the stress of the job. But a key Republican line of attack remains aimed at the person who is just a heartbeat away from the presidency, should the

"I have a lot of problems with the idea of somebody being able to take my daughter to go get an abortion without me ever knowing," Baer says, adding that he is upset by the possibility of allowing "abortion all the way up to the point of birth when the child can feel pain."

Amy Natoce, spokeswoman for the anti-abortion coalition Protect Women Ohio, considers it "imperative" that the amendment be defeated. The text was "intentionally written in a very broad way ... that ensures this amendment applies to minors, and it takes away parental consent," Natoce says. — AFP



WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden is seen at the White House on Nov 2, 2023. — AFP

worst happen: Vice President Kamala Harris.

Harris placed a trail as the first woman, Black person and person of South Asian descent to hold the vice president's office, but her approval ratings are as bad as her boss's at under 40 percent. A Yahoo/YouGov survey from May showed that only 35 percent of people believed Harris would be ready to step in as president.

In the end, American voters may decide that age is just a number. "I've never even considered the age thing," said Olivia Besgrove, a 23-year-old nurse from Missouri who leans to the Republicans. "I just would appreciate someone who does have their head on straight." — AFP

Is age really just a number for Biden in 2024?

WASHINGTON: Joe Biden has joked about it, ignored it and suggested it makes him wise. A year out from the US presidential election, the issue of his age just won't go away. The 80-year-old Democrat is already the oldest president in American history, and if he wins a second term next year he will be 86 when he leaves the White House.

A series of trips — most famously stumbling on the steps of Air Force One — and verbal slips have gone viral on social media and given Republicans fodder for attacks. Polls show that it's a major worry for US voters concerned about what would happen if their commander-in-chief became incapacitated, and that it is distracting from his efforts to sell his policies.

Worse still for Biden, voters don't seem to have the same concerns about Donald Trump, despite the fact the former president and Biden's likely Republican rival is aged 77. Seventy-four percent of people said Biden would be too old to serve a second term, compared to 50 percent for Trump, a recent ABC/

GAZA MARTYRS TOP 10,000...

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The Zionist entity's ally the United States sent its top diplomat Antony Blinken on a whirlwind Middle East tour that wrapped up on Monday in Turkey, where again his host pressed for a Zionist ceasefire, which Washington has declined to endorse.

The heads of major United Nations agencies issued a joint statement also calling for a ceasefire inside the territory of 2.4 million people where a Zionist siege has cut off most water, food and fuel supplies. "For almost a month, the world has been watching the unfolding situation in (the Zionist entity) and the Occupied Palestinian Territory in shock and horror at the spiraling numbers of lives lost and torn apart," said the statement. "We need an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. It's been 30 days. Enough is enough. This must stop now."

The Zionist army said on Monday it had pounded Gaza with "significant" new strikes on 450 targets, having earlier said it had already hit over 12,000. It also reported seizing a Hamas command post in central Gaza, where tanks were driving between the ruins of buildings. Zionist troops and Hamas fighters have engaged in fierce house-to-house combat in densely populated north Gaza, where the war has sent 1.5 million people fleeing to other parts of the territory.

Shortly before the latest barrage of strikes, Internet and telephone lines were cut, the army said. The Zionist entity has air-dropped leaflets and sent text messages ordering Palestinian civilians in northern Gaza to head south, but a US official said Saturday at least 350,000 civilians remained in the worst-hit areas.

The Rafah crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt reopened Monday to allow the evacuation of foreigners and dual nationals, the Hamas government said, ending a two-day closure prompted by a dispute over the passage of ambulances. Six ambulances carrying wounded Gazans also arrived in Egypt on Monday as the evacuations resumed, a border official said.

Blinken on his regional tour — which took him

Boycotts of major pro-Zionist brands...

Continued from Page 1

More traditional methods are also in use. Beside a four-lane highway in Kuwait, giant billboards show images of bloodstained children in bandages.

"Did you kill a Palestinian today?" the grim slogan asks, jabbing at consumers who are still using the targeted goods. According to Mishari Al-Ibrahim, a Kuwaiti activist, Western support for the Zionist entity's Gaza offensive "strengthened the spread of the boycott in Kuwait." "It created a mental image among Kuwaitis that the West's slogans and what it says about human rights do not apply to us."

The US fast food chain has found itself a prime target. Last month, the chain's Zionist franchise announced it had given thousands of free meals to the Zionist army, sparking uproar in the region. The US

fast food chain's franchisee in Kuwait, a separate entity, responded by pledging more than \$160,000 to relief efforts in Gaza, and said it "stands with Palestine" in a statement on social media.

The US fast food chain's franchisee in Qatar also pledged \$275,000 to relief efforts in Gaza, and stressed in a statement last month that it was separate to the Zionist branches. In a statement this month, the US fast food chain said it "is not funding or supporting any government involved in this conflict".

In Qatar, some Western outlets have been forced to close after their owners shared pro-Zionist content online. The Doha branches of Pura Vida Miami, a US cafe, and French pastry company Maitre Choux both shut in October. In Egypt, a home-grown soda brand long ignored by much of the population has come into vogue because of the boycott. Spiro Spathis, founded in 1920, said it recently received more than 15,000 applications in a hiring round prompted by the growing demand. — AFP

it's something that we should not tolerate."

Last month, Pandor denied she had expressed support for Hamas' Oct 7 attack in a phone call with the group's leader, which she said had focused instead on humanitarian aid. Numerous pro-Palestine protests have taken place across South Africa over the past month. President Cyril Ramaphosa is among several ANC officials who have participated sporting flags and keffiyeh scarves, in a show of solidarity with the Palestinians.

Home to the largest Jewish community in sub-Saharan Africa, the country has also seen several pro-Zionist demonstrations and initiatives, including the setting-up in Johannesburg of a Shabbat dinner table with empty chairs and photos of captives held by Hamas. — AFP

S Africa recalls all envoys from...

Continued from Page 1

The foreign ministry had been instructed "to convey the South African government displeasure with the ambassador" through diplomatic channels, she said.

"We felt it important that we should call the ambassador in," added Pandor. "There seems to be a strange practice among some ambassadors in South Africa, that they can just say what they like... I don't know if it's because it's an African country and they disrespect us but

Zionists arrest Palestinian...

Continued from Page 1

AFP was not immediately able to verify whether the Instagram account in question, which was blocked on Monday morning, actually belongs to Tamimi.

Tamimi became famous at age 14 when she was filmed biting a Zionist soldier to prevent him from arresting her brother who had his arm in a cast. She has become an icon of the Palestinian cause and a large portrait of her has been painted on the Zionist separation wall with the West Bank in Bethlehem near Jerusalem. She was arrested in 2017 and held for eight months for slapping two Zionist soldiers in the courtyard of her family home in the West Bank as she asked them to leave. — AFP

International

French parliament mulls 'firm' immigration law

Bill to ramp up expulsion of illegal migrants, regularize others in sectors with labor gaps

PARIS: The French Senate starts on Monday to debate a hugely controversial immigration bill that the government says will bolster security for legal migrants but that opponents see as new evidence of a lurch to the right by President Emmanuel Macron. Left-wingers reject the draft law's bid to expel more people and toughen conditions for irregular migrants, while conservatives' hackles have been raised by provisions to regularize the situation of undocumented workers in sectors with labor shortages.

It is the right flank that poses the biggest obstacle to Macron and his minority centrist government passing the legislation. Conservative MPs' votes will be needed to get the bill through the lower house of parliament, the National Assembly, while the right has a majority in the upper house, the Senate.

"This text is about firmness," Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said on Sunday, drawing on language meant to appeal to the conservative Republicans party. He vowed to "find a way to get (the bill) through parliament". But several attempts to get the Republicans on board over the past year have fallen flat and there is little sign that this time will be different.

"We can't have a bill that wants both to expel more people and regularize more people," Bruno Retailleau, the leader of the Senate conservatives, told AFP. He said any easing up of immigration law would be a "sign of weakness". Macron on Sunday proposed broadening constitutional rules governing the type of social issues like immigration that can be put to referendum. The bone thrown towards the right has so far had little visible effect on rhetoric around the immigration bill.

'Remove and integrate'

As elsewhere in Europe, right-wingers claim that France's asylum system mainly attracts people looking for better economic conditions. The number of people

seeking asylum reached over 137,000 last year, up 31.3 percent year-on-year and just shy of a 2019 record. Expulsions have also been stepped up, to almost 15,400 last year — 15 percent higher than in 2021. But Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne on Monday rebuffed claims that regularizing undocumented workers would create a "pull effect" and increase migration. Regularizations would benefit "people who've been on our territory for years, who are well integrated, who've been working for years", she told broadcaster France Inter.

The bill aims "to more quickly remove those who shouldn't be here and at the same time to better integrate those who should remain", Borne said. She nevertheless revealed continuing divisions within government when she opposed removing state medical aid for undocumented people, calling it "a question of public health". Interior Minister Darmanin has said he plans to "eliminate" the aid, replacing it only with cover for emergencies — calling it a step towards "a good compromise" with the Republicans. Such talk, along with plans for annual migration quotas set by parliament and restrictions on allowing people to rejoin their families already in France, has drawn opposition from aid groups and left-leaning politicians.

Around 150 people gathered outside the Senate building in Paris' touristic left bank district Monday to protest against the bill. If passed, it would "do nothing but criminalize us," said Aboubacar Dembele, a 31-year-old undocumented worker. "This bill generalizes suspicion, administrative harassment, insecurity and fear," said Camila Rios Armas, a member of two migrant aid groups, in a joint statement signed by dozens of charities including Amnesty International.

'Botched job'

Debate around immigration was stoked in France over the summer by mass arrivals in Italy and a visit by



PARIS: Demonstrators gather with placards which translate as 'le Pen dreamed of it - Darmanin does it' (left) and 'defending territorial rights is defending France' (right) as they protest during the debate on the government's immigration bill. - AFP

Pope Francis to the southern French port city Marseille, where he urged people to welcome migrants. Last month's killing of a teacher by a Russian migrant with apparent jihadist beliefs has further ramped up the pressure.

The government believes public opinion is on its side, with 87 percent in favor of changing immigration rules according to an Opinionway survey for daily Le Parisien. Large majorities were also in favor of the individual measures in the bill, according to the survey.

Meanwhile, the far-right National Rally (RN), formerly the National Front, of Marine Le Pen sees opportunity in its pet theme dominating political debate ahead of next year's European Parliament elections and in the long climb to the 2027 presidential election, when Macron cannot stand again due to term limits. The immigration law was "a botched job", RN vice-president Sebastien Chenu told broadcaster RTL on Sunday — while saying the party's 80 MPs could vote for it in the hope of "small results". — AFP



AGÜIMES: Gravedigger Bartolome Gomez, 61, cleans a grave on Oct 14, 2023, at the cemetery of the Canary village of Agüimes. - AFP photos



LAS PALMAS DE GRAN CANARIA: This photograph shows the grave of Mohamed, a child who died trying to reach the coasts of the Canary Islands.

Migrants find final resting spot on Spanish islands

AGÜIMES: At the cemetery in the town of Agüimes, on the Spanish island of Gran Canaria, plaques marked the burial vaults holding the remains of 15 migrants found dead on board a boat. Located in the Atlantic off the northwest coast of Africa, Spain's Canary Islands have become a key entry point for migrants seeking a better life in Europe, but strong currents make the route one of the deadliest in the world. Many bodies that are found dead at sea are hard to identify and so cannot be returned to their families, leaving it up to local Spanish officials to find a final resting place for most of them. "Here lies a brother who lost his life trying to reach our shores," the 15 plaques read.



Muller Emmanuel, a 27-year-old Ghanaian recently arrived in Gran Canaria with 55 other migrants by boat from Morocco, speaks during an AFP interview.

Bartolome Gomez, the cemetery's gravedigger, said he picked the inscription along with a local priest so people would know who was buried there "even if we don't know who they are". "They found the boat in the open sea. They were all dead. Of hunger, of thirst," added Gomez, 61, who was still moved by the tragedy three years after it happened.

The perilous route to the Canary Islands has become particularly frequented since controls tightened in the calmer Mediterranean Sea. Migrants travel in overloaded wooden boats, which are often unseaworthy and do not carry enough drinking water and food. More than 7,800 people died or went missing at sea en route to the seven-island archipel-

ago between 2018 and 2022, according to Spanish NGO Caminando Fronteras, which helps migrant boats in distress and the families of those who have gone missing.

Bodies that wash ashore or are found by fishermen or the coast guard at sea are hard to identify, complicating their return to their families and leaving it up to local officials to find a final burial spot. Forensic doctors collect and store DNA samples, take pictures of any identifying markers such as scars and tattoos and study teeth to try to determine who the migrants are. "In 90 percent of cases, the bodies remain unidentified and no one asks for them," said Maria Jose Meilan, director of the morgue in Las Palmas, the main city of Gran Canaria.

'Miss you so much'

Burials of migrants found dead at sea are the responsibility of the municipality of the port where the remains are taken, she added, a duty they sometimes struggle to carry out. The mayor of Mogan, in southwestern Gran Canaria, said last month she did not want to pay for any more migrant burials, saying the central government should instead foot the bill.

Mogan includes the port of Arguineguin, where the Spanish coast guard usually takes migrant ships rescued at sea. The Las Palmas morgue was forced to store the bodies of over 50 migrants in 2020 for several months until cemeteries were assigned for them, Meilan said, describing it as a "chaotic situation". At the sprawling San Lazaro cemetery at Las Palmas, a plaque placed on a mound of earth read: "Migrant boat number 4. 25/09/2022". A little further away was the final resting place of Mohamed, a six-year-old boy who was found dead in a boat in October 2021. "Your mum, sister and cousin love you and miss you so much," read a laminated sheet of paper.

'Very dangerous'

Other migrants got a much more basic burial spot. The remains of 30 migrants were buried in a common grave at a cemetery in Mogan decorated with just a few cacti. There was no plaque. The remains of 16 other migrants were held in burial niches, above-ground vaults, the mayor's office said.

On a stretch of land at the port of Arinaga, on Gran Canaria's eastern coast, colorful wooden boats used by migrants to reach the island piled up. Inside were belongings hastily abandoned by migrants when they were rescued at sea — a single flip-flop or trainer, rucksacks and a baby bottle.

Muller Emmanuel, a 27-year-old Ghanaian, recently arrived in Gran Canaria with 55 other migrants by boat from Morocco. Their vessel started to take on water during the crossing, but they all made it. His friend Jo, who attempted the crossing two weeks earlier, was apparently not so lucky — several people on his boat died and he has not been heard from since. "It's very dangerous. I would not advise anyone to come and take this trip," Emmanuel told AFP. — AFP

Muslim prayer at Paris airport stirs controversy

PARIS: Images of Muslim travelers in collective prayer at a French airport have caused controversy, with the government on Monday vowing "firmness" and the airport operator describing the incident as regrettable. The pictures shared virally on Sunday through social media showed several dozen travelers in the departures hall of Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris praying together ahead of a flight to Jordan.

The controversy sparked by the images comes as tensions rise in France over Zionist military campaign against Gaza, which has killed at least 10,000 people, mostly women and children, according to the Gaza health ministry. France is home to large Muslim and Jewish communities.

Transport Minister Clement Beaune wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter, that airport authorities were fully committed to implementing rules and vowed "firmness". The prayer at terminal 2B of France's largest airport, in which around 30 travelers took part, lasted around 10 minutes, an airport source who asked not to be named told AFP.

Special closed areas are set aside at the airport for people of all faiths to pray in private. France is strictly secular and there are limits on displays of religious belief in public spaces such as schools and public buildings including airports. "This is a regrettable first," the chief executive of operator Aeroports de Paris (ADP), Augustin de Romanet, wrote on X.

"Dedicated places of worship exist," he added. "The border police have been instructed to prohibit this and will increase their vigilance," De Romanet also warned against exaggerating the incident "at this time", in an apparent allusion to the Zionist escalation of violence.

The picture was notably shared on social media by Noelle Lenoir, a former European affairs minister under right-wing president Jacques Chirac. "What does the CEO of Aeroports de Paris do when his airport is transformed into a mosque? Is the change in status official?" she asked sarcastically.

"There are specially dedicated places of worship at the airport," said ruling party MP Astrid Panosyan-Bouvet, adding that the authorities had to implement "the rules that prevail in France, including at the airports". However Luc Carvounas, the Socialist mayor of Alfortville outside Paris accused Panosyan-Bouvet of "clumsy comments that could be compared to Islamophobia" and called on her to "clarify her remarks or even apologize". — AFP



PARIS: A group of travelers pray at Charles de Gaulle airport. - Noelle Lenoir/ social platform X



ODESA: This photograph taken on Nov 5, 2023 shows an exhibition hall at the Odesa Fine Arts Museum damaged following a strike. - AFP

Russia strikes Odesa, damaging museum, injuring 8

KYIV: Russian strikes overnight in the southern Ukrainian region of Odesa left eight people wounded and damaged a historic art museum, Ukrainian officials said on Monday, in the latest barrage of drones and missiles. Three more were injured in a Russian shelling attack on the southern city of Kherson on Monday, as Kyiv doubled down on its warnings that Russia is planning to pummel Ukraine's energy infrastructure ahead of the winter.

Images released by officials from inside the Odesa Fine Arts Museum showed art ripped from the walls of the 19th-century building and windows blown out by the aerial bombardment. Ukraine's deputy foreign minister Emine Dzheppar said Kyiv was "deeply outraged" by the attack and urged the United Nations' Paris-based heritage agency UNESCO to condemn the strike. UNESCO said it "strongly condemns the attack" and that "cultural sites must be protected". Kyiv said earlier that Russian forces had launched four missiles and nearly two dozen attack drones from occupied regions of the country in the south overnight. Ukraine's military downed 15 drones and one of the missiles, it said in a statement. The gallery said on social media the attack had occurred on the museum's 124th birthday and the facility would be closed until further notice. The governor of the Odesa region, Oleg Kiper, said most of the collection had already been removed during the war. "Canvases and paintings from the current exhibition were not damaged," he added on social media.

A woman who lived in a nearby building said she and her family were away during the strike but their home had been damaged. "God led us away. We'll see what happens in the flat next. Out of five windows, I have none left," the woman, who gave her name only as Svitlana, told AFP.

Fears for winter

Interior Minister Igor Klymenko meanwhile said the overnight attacks had also damaged 20 residential buildings and infrastructure facilities. Eight people were wounded in the Odesa region, he said. Fears are building in Ukraine that Moscow will again launch systematic attacks on energy facilities as it did last winter, leaving millions without regular heating or light.

"The winter is going to be really challenging. RF (Russian Federation) will continue to attack our energy infrastructure. RF is preparing, so we must be prepared too," Andriy Yermak, head of President Volodymyr Zelensky's office said on social media.

In an interview with German newspaper Die Welt published Monday, Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said he was bracing for "the worst winter ever". "I bought dozens of candles and my father bought a truck full of firewood," he said. The southern region of Kherson was also targeted in an overnight missile strike and came under renewed artillery fire. — AFP

Business

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2023

Technology giants jockey for position at dawn of AI age

'Everyone's trying to outmarket and out-hype everybody else'

SAN FRANCISCO: Whether they sell smartphones, ads or computer chips, the heavyweights of Silicon Valley have everything to prove to investors looking to see who is best placed in the race to dominate the generative artificial intelligence market.

"If you're a company, and you don't have an AI message, you're not going to be in business very long," says independent industry analyst Jack Gold. "Everyone is focused on AI right now. And everyone's trying to outmarket and out-hype everybody else. And there's room for a whole lot of players."

Over the past two weeks, tech's top companies released their corporate earnings reports for the July-September quarter. Most of them beat analyst expectations, but on Wall Street, all eyes were on plans for generative AI, popularized by the ChatGPT chatbot. OpenAI's interface that was launched a year ago and dazzled the world.

The parent company of Google, the world leader in online advertising, saw its profit jump 42 percent in the third quarter to nearly \$20 billion—well above market estimates. Shares in Alphabet however dropped more than 10 percent over two sessions because Google Cloud, though expanding, was seen as disappointing. For Max Willens, an analyst at Insider Intelligence, while the division's credibility among AI startups could "bear fruit in the long run, it is not currently helping Google Cloud enough to satisfy investors."

The cloud is where most generative AI systems—which can deliver content as complex as a poem or scholarly essay in just seconds—will be unfurled. Generative AI, considered by many observers to be a seismic change

similar to the advent of the internet age, is based on AI systems called large language models. These models compile mountains of data that are the building blocks for "creating" content. Microsoft—a major investor in OpenAI—along with Google and Meta have trained their own models.

Companies specializing in cloud services—led by Microsoft's Azure, Amazon Web Services (AWS) and Google Cloud—are beginning to monetize AI, though the costs remain high for now, says Yory Wurmsler, another analyst for Insider Intelligence. "The excitement is on what's possible, and how fast it's changing," Wurmsler told AFP. The main cost comes from the microprocessors needed to churn through the data. Chipmaker Nvidia hit the jackpot by betting years ago on developing graphics processing units (GPUs), now a crucial pillar in the rapid development of generative AI. But for Gold, one must understand "how AI is ultimately going to be used."

He says "probably 80 or 90 percent of all workloads will be inference workloads," meaning the usual functioning of AI models once they've been created. US chip giant Intel has been working to catch up with its rivals, especially Nvidia, when it comes to powerful chips needed to handle AI's processing demands.

"The inferencing use of those models is what we believe is truly spectacular for the future," said Intel chief executive Pat Gelsinger. "A huge amount of that is going to run right on Xeons," he said, referring to the company's processors.

Amazon, which plans to invest up to \$4 billion in Anthropic, a rival to OpenAI, is insisting on the importance of Bedrock, its service for building generative AI applications.



MOUNTAIN VIEW, United States: A bicyclist rides along a path at Google's Bay View campus in Mountain View, California, on June 27, 2022. Whether they sell smartphones, ads or computer chips, the heavyweights of Silicon Valley have everything to prove to investors looking to see who is best placed in the race to dominate the generative artificial intelligence market. — AFP

"It's still complicated to actually figure out which models you want to use ... and trying to make sure you have the right results" while keeping costs in check, said Amazon CEO Andy Jassy.

"Bedrock just takes so much of the difficulty out of those decisions in those variables, that people are very excited about Bedrock," he said. Even Apple, which is loathe to allow trends to dictate its agen-

da, was unable to escape questions about its AI plans. "In terms of generative AI, obviously we have work going on," said Apple chief Tim Cook. "I'm not going to get into details... but you can bet that we're investing quite a bit."

Observers are expecting big things from Apple with respect to its digital assistant Siri, which has not evolved all that much in recent years. Amazon recently announced

it would gradually add AI capability to its Siri equivalent, Alexa. For Carolina Milanesi, an analyst at Creative Strategies, no one is behind—yet. "Nobody's late in a market that is just getting started and that will require investment and commitments," Milanesi told AFP.

"It starts first from an enterprise perspective before it starts from a consumer perspective." — AFP

US treasury chief, China VP to meet before APEC summit

WASHINGTON: US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen is set to meet Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng, the Treasury said Monday, ahead of an economic summit in San Francisco where the countries' leaders are expected to convene. Yellen will host He for two days of bilateral meetings, at "a time of more intensive diplomacy" aimed at stabilizing ties and helping with progress on economic issues, the Treasury Department said in a statement.

The talks on Thursday and Friday come before the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit, which is anticipated to serve as a backdrop for President Joe Biden and Chinese leader Xi Jinping to meet. The White House has said Biden is aiming for "constructive" talks with Xi—set to be their first since they met in Bali in Indonesia November 2022.

The world's two biggest economies have had tense relations as they vie for influence in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond, and as Beijing boosts cooperation with Russia in a bid to reduce US dominance.

But a number of high level US officials have visited China in recent months, including Secretary of State Antony Blinken, as well as Treasury and Commerce Secretaries Janet Yellen and Gina Raimondo. Yellen's planned meetings with He come after "significant strides" in deepening communication between the two countries, the Treasury said Monday.

In their upcoming meetings, both sides are expected to share views on their respective economies and the global economy, said a Treasury official on condition of anonymity. Yellen is also anticipated to raise concerns on economic practices such as barriers to market access, and discuss issues relating to national security concerns, the official added. There are also plans to speak on challenges like climate change and debt distress, seeking areas of cooperation, the official said. — AFP

China, Australia can become 'trusting' partners, Xi says

BEIJING: Chinese leader Xi Jinping told Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese Monday that their countries could become "trusting partners", pledging to work with Canberra on everything from regional security to climate change as the two leaders eased years of tensions that cut billions of dollars in trade.

Beijing is Canberra's biggest trading partner, but relations plummeted in 2020 after Australia's then-conservative government barred Chinese tech giant Huawei from 5G contracts and called for an inquest into the origins of COVID-19, which was first detected in China.

A furious Beijing then slapped punitive tariffs on a slew of Australian commodities including coal, barley and wine as the relationship descended into a deep freeze. But China has reversed course since Albanese took power in May last year, lifting most of its restrictions on Australian goods and saying it wants "healthy and stable" ties.

Meeting Albanese in Beijing on Monday, Xi said the two countries had "no fundamental conflict of interests". China and Australia, Xi said, could "become mutually trusting and mutually successful partners", according to a readout of the meeting by state broadcaster CCTV. "In the face of major changes in the world, the two sides should grasp the correct development direction for China-Australia relations," he said. This included cooperation on everything from "the peace and

stability of the Asia Pacific region" to climate change, the Chinese leader said.

And in opening remarks shown by Australia's public broadcaster ABC, Albanese—the first Australian leader to visit China in more than seven years—hailed the "unquestionably very positive" progress in ties. Since the two leaders met in Indonesia last year, Albanese told Xi, "trade is flowing more freely to the benefit of both our countries".

"We can of course today take up the opportunity to explore how we can have further cooperation between our two countries," he said. Albanese has previously acknowledged the need to remain "clear-eyed" about the differences between the two countries.

"We need to cooperate with China where we can, disagree where we must, and engage in our national interest," he told reporters Monday.

And China has bristled at Australia's security pact with the United States and Britain, and rebuked its decision to purchase nuclear-powered submarines—widely seen as an effort to parry Chinese military might in the Asia-Pacific. Albanese has spoken up on behalf of nations' right to self-determination, as well as human rights and maintaining peace—including in the Taiwan Strait, which separates China from the self-ruled island it regards as part of its own territory.

But Xi on Monday told Albanese the two could work together on regional security challenges.

"Where there are efforts to cause disturbances in the Asia Pacific region, we must firstly stay vigilant, and secondly oppose them," the Chinese leader said. And in the South Pacific—where Canberra and Beijing have in recent years clashed over influence—Xi said China was willing to work with Australia to "support the strengthening of development". It also sought to

grounded flights worldwide.

"We want to thank those shareholders for their support during a very difficult COVID period," Ryanair chief executive Michael O'Leary said. The carrier announced "a maiden ordinary dividend of 400 million euros" spread across two equal payments in February and September next year.

In the years ahead, Ryanair said it expects to pay about 25 percent of net profits in dividends. The dividend announcements, along with expectations of record-high annual profits despite a number of headwinds, helped send Ryanair's share price rallying six percent to 16.12 euros in Dublin. Ryanair has previously paid out a total of 6.74 billion euros in share buybacks and ad hoc dividends in the 12 years to 2020, the company confirmed to AFP.

O'Leary added that the carrier's full-year outlook "remains highly dependent on the absence of any unforeseen adverse events—for example such as Ukraine or Gaza—between now and the end of March". Ryanair profits ballooned in the first



SHANGHAI: China's Premier Li Qiang (left) and Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese shake hands during the opening ceremony of the 6th China International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai on November 5, 2023. — AFP

cooperate on protecting "the peace and stability of the Asia Pacific region with openness and tolerance" and "tackle challenges including climate change", he said.

But analysts say high-level meetings this week will see Beijing project itself as a "benevolent and benign partner" welcoming a wayward friend back to the fold. "China won't want to dwell on criticisms of its economic coercion or hostage diplomacy," Courtney Fung, scholar in residence with the Asia Society Australia, told AFP. Analyst Yun Sun said Beijing would be keen to present "the trip as Australia recognizing its previous mistakes". "It will portray Albanese as being on the right side of history and making the correct choice for the sake of (Australia's) economy, especially export industries, including its wine industry," said Sun, of the Washington-based Stimson Center. "That will be the Chinese narrative." — AFP



STANSTED, United Kingdom: Ryanair aircraft are pictured at Stansted airport, northeast of London on August 20, 2020. — AFP

half "thanks to a strong Easter in the first quarter, record summer traffic and higher fares which offset significantly higher fuel costs", the company statement said. Traffic grew 11 percent to 105 million passengers and average fares jumped by almost one quarter. — AFP

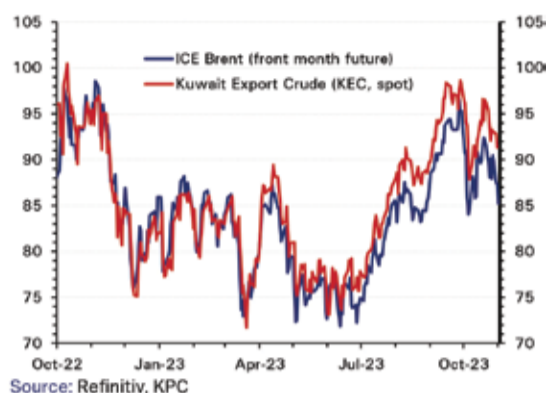
Business

NBK ECONOMIC REPORT

KPC plans investments in fossil fuel and renewables in its 2040 strategy

Oil prices decline sharply on intensifying global macroeconomic worries

Chart 1: Oil prices (\$/bbl)

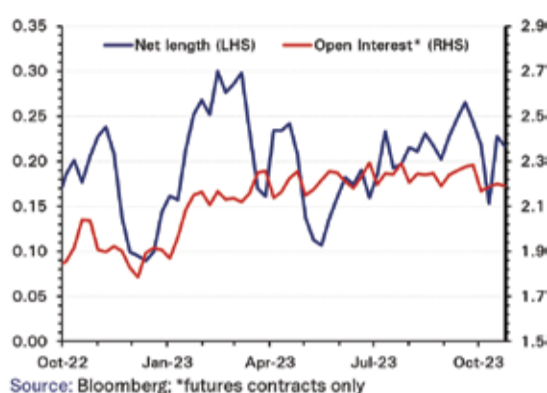


KUWAIT: Oil prices declined sharply in October on intensifying global macroeconomic worries amid the prospect of 'higher for longer' central bank interest rates and despite the return of the geopolitical risk premium linked to the Zionist entity-Hamas conflict – which peered out towards the end of the month with the conflict appearing contained – and better-than-expected US and Chinese economic data. Speculators also booked profits from oil's precipitous rise in the third quarter. International benchmark Brent crude ended the month at \$87.4/bbl (-8.3 percent m/m; +1.8 percent ytd), while local marker Kuwait Export Crude (KEC) fell to \$91.3/bbl (-6.7 percent m/m; +11.3 percent ytd), outperforming Brent in 2023 reflecting tighter medium-sour crude fundamentals. Money manager net length, meanwhile, remained elevated in October, jumping after the outbreak of hostilities in Gaza.

In Kuwait, output was flat month-on-month at 2.55 mb/d in September, according to official sources. Earlier in October, the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) unveiled its 2040 energy strategy, which includes \$410 billion in planned investments in both fossil fuel (\$300 billion) and renewable energies (\$110 billion). Seeking to maximize refined products output from the new Al-Zour refinery and satisfy external demand for its crude, KPC reaffirmed its commitment to raise the country's crude production capacity to 4.0 mb/d by 2040, with an interim target of 3.2 mb/d by 2025/2026. KPC hopes that its \$110 billion investment in renewables will achieve Kuwait's 2030 target of sourcing 15 percent of its total energy requirements from renewables and KPC's 2050 target of carbon neutrality (2060 for the State of Kuwait).

Global macroeconomic conditions look to be softening against the backdrop of tight-

Chart 2: Brent money manager net length (million futures and options contracts)



er global monetary policy, though the world's two largest economies, US and China, both witnessed stronger-than-expected economic growth in Q3 2023. European economies, on the other hand, remain close to recession. The outlook for 2024 is proving difficult to gauge, though the International Monetary Fund in October did revise down slightly its forecast for world GDP growth to 2.9 percent (from 3.0 percent in June).

Reflecting the uncertainty, OPEC and the International Energy Agency (IEA) maintain widely divergent projections for oil demand in 2024. While the two organizations are closely aligned on this year's demand growth forecast (2.3-2.4 mb/d), thanks to better-than-expected oil consumption in China, they differ significantly in their outlook for 2024. The IEA pegs growth at 0.9 mb/d, below the historical annual average, while OPEC is far more bullish at 2.2 mb/d.

The IEA also published new medium-to-long term oil demand forecasts. The eye-catching projection here is its base case scenario which sees demand peaking at 102 mb/d by 2030 before declining to 97 mb/d by mid-century due to reduced road transportation fuel use resulting from increased electrical vehicle penetration and slowing rates of Chinese economic growth. OPEC, in contrast, raised its long-term oil demand forecast by 6.2 mb/d from last year's estimate to 116 mb/d by 2045, on stronger consumption in India, China and MENA.

On the supply side, combined data from OPEC secondary sources and S&P Global show aggregate OPEC+ production (excluding quota-exempt members) rising 372 kb/d to 35.9 mb/d in September. Oil output in Nigeria, while still significantly underperforming quota targets, led the gains (+141 kb/d to 1.39 mb/d) for the second consecutive month. Kazakhstan

Chart 3: OPEC short-term oil demand outlook (mb/d)

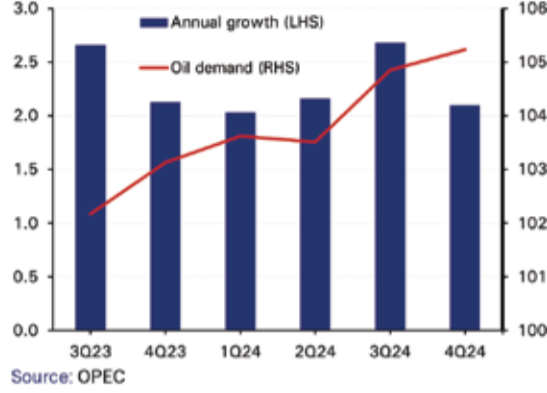


Chart 4: Long-term oil demand forecasts (mb/d)

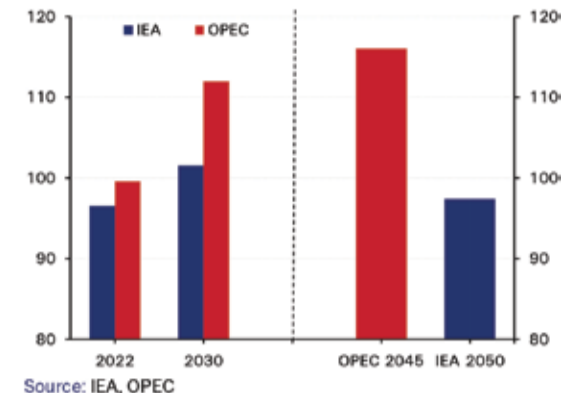


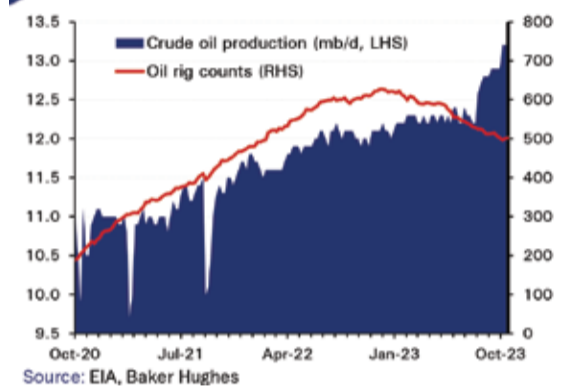
Chart 5: OPEC+ production (quota members) (mb/d)



and Saudi Arabia also increased output, by 90 kb/d and 82 kb/d, respectively. Meanwhile, quota-exempt Iran only managed a modest production increase in September (+10 kb/d) but surging oil output gains this year of almost 500 kb/d have brought production to its highest level in five years (3.1 mb/d), despite US sanctions. The US, meanwhile, eased its sanctions on Venezuela, a step that could see oil flows rise by around 200 kb/d in the near term.

In the US, weekly Energy Information Administration (EIA) data showed crude output surging to a record 13.2 mb/d in October, a substantial gain of 1.1 mb/d (+9.1 percent) year-to-date. Production growth in 2024 is not expected to be so robust, however, with the EIA estimating an annual average increase of just 374 kb/d to 13.2 mb/d (+2.9 percent y/y from an average of 12.8 mb/d in 2023). What is impressive, however, is that output gains have occurred while the number of actively drilling oil rigs has declined, by 18 percent ytd (to 504) as of October's close, according to Baker Hughes. Meanwhile, the Department of Energy (DoE) announced monthly solici-

Chart 6: US oil production and rig counts



tions to buy barrels at or below \$79/bbl (for WTI) out to May 2024 in a bid to refill the US's partially depleted Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR), currently standing at 351 mb (down 39 percent from March 2022 levels). The DoE aims to acquire 6 mb for delivery in both December and January.

In the short term, still tight oil market fundamentals and present-though-waning geopolitical risk are combining to lift oil prices. We maintain our forecast of Brent to average around \$88/bbl this quarter. For 2024, uncertainty surrounding the outlook for oil demand and the path for OPEC+ voluntary supply cuts—due to be unwound in January—is complicating the picture. Nevertheless, with economic metrics pointing in a recessionary direction, amid continued tight monetary policy, oil demand growth is likely to slow in 2024. With non-OPEC supply gains likely to continue albeit at a slower rate, the onus to balance the market will once again fall on OPEC+ and Saudi Arabia especially to backstop any softness in oil prices. We see Brent averaging \$85/bbl in 2024.

Telecom Italia okays US fund's bid for network

MILAN: Telecom Italia on Sunday approved an offer by US investment fund KKR for its fixed-line network, infuriating its main shareholder which vowed to contest the "illegal" decision. The Italian telecommunications operator is seeking to sell its fixed network to pare down a huge debt pile that stands at more than 26 billion euros (\$28 billion).

TIM said its board had approved the deal, whose value could reach 22 billion euros and which would reduce the debt by "around 14 billion euros". Its main shareholder, French media giant Vivendi, has opposed selling the network and valued it at 31 billion eu-

ros, saying KKR's previous bids were far too low.

Vivendi said it would "use all legal means at its disposal" to contest TIM's "illegal" decision.

It had previously threatened to launch legal action if the KKR offer was approved without being submitted to an extraordinary general assembly of shareholders, where Vivendi would carry considerable weight. "The rights of Telecom Italia shareholders are being trampled on," Vivendi added.

TIM chief executive Pietro Labriola welcomed the board's "historic decision" and said he remained open to dialogue, particularly with the "biggest shareholders".

The Italian government is already the second-largest shareholder in TIM, which was privatised in 1997.

Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's government intends to take a stake of up to 20 percent in the fixed-line



network, viewing it as strategic infrastructure. After months of suspense, TIM's board in June approved the start of exclusive negotiations with KKR. The board rejected a lower offer from the Italian Caisse des Dépôts and Australian fund Macquarie Asset Management, worth around 19.3 billion euros.

If the deal goes through, TIM will become the first major operator in Europe to sell its fixed network on its domestic market to slash debt. The debt load is hampering TIM's efforts to invest in rolling out fiber optic networks, where Italy is lagging behind other advanced economies. — AFP

Improved foreign demand lifts factory orders in Germany

FRANKFURT: German factory orders rose slightly in September, buoyed by stronger foreign demand, official data showed Monday, in a glimmer of good news for Europe's biggest economy as it battles a slowdown.

New orders, a key indicator closely watched as a sign of future business activity, were up 0.2 percent from a month ago, federal data agency Destatis said. Analysts surveyed by financial data firm FactSet had predicted a substantial drop of 1.3 percent.

The positive data followed a big rise of 1.9 percent in August—a figure that was revised significantly downwards from a previous estimate due to errors in data provided by some sectors. Foreign demand and in particular large orders had lifted September's numbers, said the economy ministry in a statement, with orders from abroad rising 4.2 percent.

If large orders were stripped out, September's overall industrial figures would have dropped 2.2 percent on the month, added the ministry. Domestic orders meanwhile slumped 5.9 percent.

High inflation, elevated energy costs and weaker demand from key market China have all been weighing on Germany's crucial manufacturing sector in recent months. Germany tipped into a recession at the start of 2023, and economic growth stagnated in the second quarter. A slew of weak indicators since then have added to fears of a prolonged slowdown. The International Monetary Fund has predicted that Germany will be the only major advanced economy to shrink this year. Energy costs rose sharply in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, as Moscow dwindled critical gas supplies to Europe.

The electricity price for non-residential customers averaged 0.18 euros without taxes in the second half of 2022, according to the German statistics agency Destatis. The leap in costs for heating and electricity have weighed on industry with Germany experiencing anemic growth in the months since the outbreak of the conflict. Berlin announced a 200-billion-euro package in November to protect consumers and businesses from sky-high energy costs through April 2024.

The new cap would ensure that "critical branches of industry" remained based in Germany and Europe, Habeck said. The Green party minister described the proposal as a longer-term "bridge" solution until renewables capacity has been increased and prices have come down. A

"clearly defined" group of energy-intensive industries would have access to the low-cost electricity, according to the plan, including sectors such as chemicals, steel and glass manufacturing. Beneficiaries would see the difference between the market price for electricity and the cap reimbursed, with the total cost of the project running to between 25 and 30 billion euros, according to the economy ministry's estimates. The VCI chemicals lobby welcomed the price cap in a statement as a "clear game changer for our international competitiveness".

The proposal however faces resistance from within the government coalition, a three-way alliance between the Social Democrats, Greens and the liberal FDP. "I take a very critical view of the industrial electricity price," Finance Minister Christian Lindner wrote in the Handelsblatt daily earlier this week. The idea was "economically unwise", said Lindner, whose party the FDP has championed Germany's balanced-budget orthodoxy. Habeck's proposals could also raise concerns in Brussels that Germany is unfairly subsidizing its industry. The ministry said it would "enter into a constructive discussion with the European Commission on all competition-related issues", while calling for a broader "European strategy to strengthen energy intensive industries". — AFP

Indonesia economic growth hit by lagging exports

JAKARTA: Indonesia's economy grew at its slowest pace for two years in the third quarter owing to a fall in exports caused by softer commodity prices, data showed Monday. The 4.94 percent on-year expansion was lower than forecast in a Bloomberg survey, though Central Statistics Bureau (BPS) head Amalia Adininggar Widayanti pointed out that the figure was better than the global average.

"In the middle of the slowing global economy, climate change, and the falling price of main commodities, Indonesia's economic resilience is reflected in the 4.94 percent of economic growth," Widayanti told a news conference Monday. Exports contracted 4.26 percent, the biggest fall since the end of 2020 owing to a drop in demand for commodities including coal and palm oil. Overseas shipments have shrunk for six for the past seven months, according to Bloomberg.

Indonesia last month raised interest rates 25 basis points to six percent, an unexpected move to defend the rupiah amid growing global economic uncertainty. The rupiah has outperformed regional peers against a strengthening US dollar but has nonetheless tumbled and last month hit 15,800 to the greenback, its lowest level since April 2020.

The weakening currency may force the government to raise fuel prices, given the country imports half of its petroleum. "Because we rely mostly on economic consumption, we may be able to maintain five percent growth, but the natural resources sector... is not sustainable because of exploitation and over-supply," said Bhima Yudhistira, an economist from the Center of Economic and Law Studies. — AFP

Business

AI ethics gets short shrift among employers: OECD

Boosting skills is key to harnessing the potential of AI

PARIS: Despite increasing concerns about the ethical risks posed by rapidly developing AI applications, employers are paying little attention to the issue in recruiting, an OECD study said Monday.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development searched online job offers for AI posts in 14 countries. It found that while the percentage including keywords relating to ethics had increased sharply in the past four years, it still remained very low at an average of 0.4 percent in 2022.

"Results indicate that in the majority of countries, less than 1 percent of all vacancies mentioned keywords associated with AI ethics," the OECD said in its annual job skills report. In the United States in 2019 only 0.1 percent of all online job postings for AI professionals mentioned any keyword associated with ethics in AI. These were for vacancies requiring prospective workers to possess skills related to AI development and use, but the figure had risen to 0.5 percent in 2022.

New Zealand had the highest result of 1.6 percent in 2022.

"This suggests that despite strong commitments on the part of countries and stated intentions on the part of AI development firms, ethics in AI is not yet prioritized in hiring decisions," said the report. "These considerations should be prioritized."

The release of ChatGPT and other

generative AI systems has captivated the public and offered a glimpse into the technology's potential. These new systems are capable of quickly producing text, images and audio from simple commands in everyday language. But they have also prompted concerns around issues ranging from job losses to cyberattacks and the control that humans actually have over the systems. UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak hosted political and tech leaders at the inaugural global AI summit last week. Ahead of the meeting, the G7 powers agreed on a non-binding "code of conduct" for companies developing the most advanced AI systems. But governments appear to be playing catch-up in terms of regulating the rapidly-developing technology.

Countries should significantly scale-up efforts to strengthen initial education systems and provide improved upskilling and reskilling opportunities for life-long learning, to ensure skills available respond more effectively to the needs in the labor market. This is also essential to ensure societies can harness the full potential of artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics and successfully transition to a net-zero economy, according to the OECD's Skills Outlook 2023.

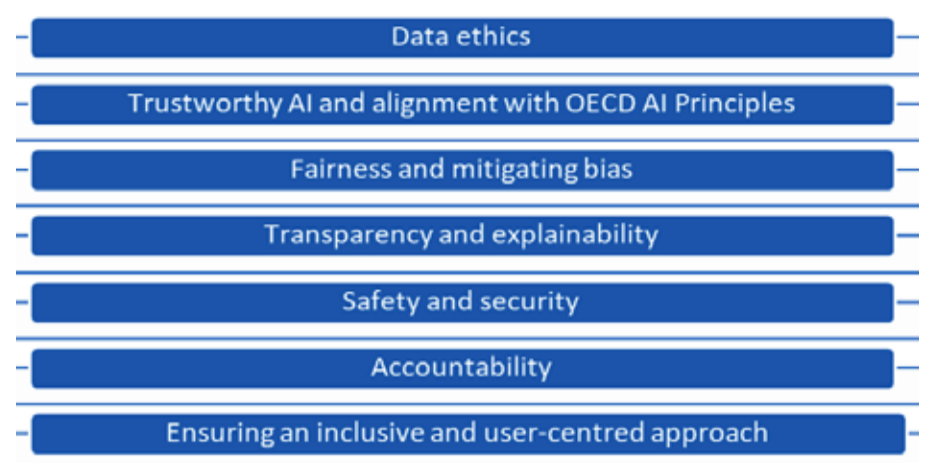
Investments in skills are critical to building a resilient green and digital transition. However, the speed of envi-

ronmental and digital transformations is outpacing the rate of change in education and skills policies and their capacity to respond to emerging trends and needs in society and labor markets.

As new job profiles and skills requirements emerge, on average across OECD countries only around four in ten adults participate in formal or non-formal learning for job related reasons. This hampers the ability of workers to upskill and re-skill, limiting their opportunities to reallocate from sectors and occupations and their ability to strengthen the skills they will need to work alongside new technologies to make the most of potential productivity gains.

"Skills play an essential role in building strong, fair, and sustainable economies and societies, but the skills needs of our economies and societies are evolving," OECD Secretary-General Mathias Cormann said. "To ensure everyone can participate in and benefit from economic development and growth and in particular the opportunities created by the green and digital transformations, policymakers must better aligning education and skills training with the skills needed in the labour market. This is essential to help workers navigate the significant impacts of these transformations on labor markets."

Ensuring adequate upskilling and reskilling, as well as providing assis-



tance for populations negatively affected by climate change, is critical to ensure continued support of action to halt environmental degradation. Education systems should redouble their efforts to build the environmental sustainability competences of young people, equipping them with both the skill and the will to support the achievement of green objectives. Only around one in three young people in OECD countries combine foundational levels of scientific literacy with the attitudes and behaviours that enable them to be thoughtful consumers and future workers in the green economy.

Developments in generative artificial intelligence and robotics will re-

quire individuals to develop skills to work alongside AI systems and not just existing technologies. This will pose a second challenge for education and training systems. Individuals from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds are also less likely to gain proficiency in a range of skills during formal education, including to develop attitudes and dispositions that can support the twin digital and green transition and reduce their vulnerability to environmental and technological changes. Policy action is needed to identify vulnerability due to a lack of proficiency in skills in order to improve both equality of opportunity and overall well-being. —Agencies

Scientific benefits of sleeping and how we can get better at it

KUWAIT: As much as the heart powers our body, the same could be said of sleep. It's as vital to us as the air we breathe and is the make-or-break habit that influences our lives and health. Unfortunately, as the world gets more modern and digital, we seem to neglect the importance of sleep and pick up unhealthy bedtime habits. One of the most common ones is scrolling on our screens right before falling asleep.

According to the World Economic Forum, almost 62 percent of adults all over the world are reporting a lack of quality sleep. Many are unaware of the major implications that sleep has on health, especially in the long term. Poor sleep can affect our heart, immune system, mental health, and more. Moreover, many don't have the proper tools to understand how they can sleep better. To bridge the gap and improve access to sleep management tools, some brands like Huawei have invested in sleep technology and introduced sleep monitoring features in their wearable devices.

Personalized solutions for everyone

From the night-shift worker to the working parent, the way we sleep is as unique to us as our identities, which is also why experts struggle to figure out a one-size-fits-all solution to sleeping better. This means we need to understand our own sleep cycles and habits in a personalized way.

Smartwatches can help us with that, as they offer

easy access to sleep monitoring technologies. Currently, many smartwatches in the market can detect the different phases of sleep (Light Sleep, REM sleep, deep sleep, etc.). Huawei's latest smartwatches go a step further, giving users the most customized sleep tracking experience possible.

Huawei's TruSleep 3.0 can detect micro-movements during sleep to more precisely identify the stage of sleep the user is in. If you wonder whether you toss and turn during sleep, or whether you get enough deep sleep to avoid daytime sleepiness, the watch can help you with that. Additionally, new smartwatches like the Huawei Watch GT 4 utilize the Huawei TruSeen 5.5+'s advanced sensor to detect changes in heart rate during sleep, which means it takes a more comprehensive reading of your sleep cycle.

Tools for a good night's rest

Sleep doesn't have to be complicated or stressful. It should be a natural and relaxing activity that benefits our health and wellbeing. The Watch GT 4's sleep monitoring feature takes care of various aspects of the user's sleep, including the very moment of waking, connecting to other features like the Clock app, so that users can rest easy and not fret about oversleeping. Users can also set notifications that will inform them when it's bedtime so that they'll be reminded to get sufficient rest without having to repeatedly check the clock or set alarms. The sleep tracking algorithm is also comprehensive yet user-friendly. Instead of overwhelming you with a ton of data, the watch gives you a score on sleep quality and provides recommendations on how to improve your sleep habits. It intelligently does so by gathering your physiological data and assessing the steps needed to improve sleep.



How breathing influences sleep

Many conventional smartwatches today overlook the importance of breathing well – especially during sleep. Our breathing rate slows down when we fall asleep, and it can vary across the different stages of sleep. In some cases, we may experience disruptions or irregularities in our breathing that can affect our overall wellbeing and sleep quality without us noticing. Currently, one of the few smartwatches with the ability to measure breath irregularity is the Watch GT 4. It has a new feature called Sleep Breathing Awareness that helps monitor breathing during sleep, and rates it from Low to High. Although it is not a medical device, it can help you understand your respiratory health and sleep quality better, and alert you when it's time to seek professional help.

If you're looking for a solution to help you sleep better, wearable technology can be a great way to start learning and improving your sleep habits. And the Huawei Watch GT 4 has one of the most comprehensive sleep tracking technologies in the market now.

S Korean stocks surge after short-selling ban

SEOUL: South Korean stocks surged Monday after authorities imposed an eight-month ban on short selling, with officials citing "illegal shorting practices" by global investors as driving the move. Financial regulators announced the ban Sunday, saying "fair trading ground was no longer possible" because of investment banks' "unfair trading practices".

Short selling involves traders borrowing securities to sell in hopes of buying them back at a cheaper price later. Officials judged that "illegal shorting practices pose a risk to the stability of the market and fair pricing". Kim Joo-hyun, chairman of the Financial Services Commission, said at a news briefing.

"We have decided to suspend short trading until the end of the first half of next year," Kim added. The benchmark Kospi rallied more than four percent Monday, while the small-cap Kosdaq was up almost six percent. A decision on whether to reinstate short selling in July will be made after a review of improvements in the market, Kim added. The FSC chief said there would be a thorough probe into global investment banks to see whether they have carried out any illegal short selling, warning of "stern punishment". Around 10 global investment banks, which ac-



A South Korean woman looks at a stock index board at the Korea Stock Exchange in Seoul. --AFP

count for the "significant portion of short selling", would be under scrutiny, regulators said.

But critics say the ban is "excessive" and question whether political motivations were behind the move, which comes ahead of parliamentary elections next year.

"An outright ban of legitimate short selling is an excessive regulation," said the Maeil Business newspaper in an editorial. "It is suspicious that the FSC had succumbed to the pressure from the ruling party that tries to win retailer investors' votes." — AFP

Stocks extend global rally as US jobs data cements rate hopes

HONG KONG: Markets rallied again Monday following another strong performance on Wall Street, as below-forecast US jobs data fanned optimism that the Federal Reserve had reached the end of its interest rate hiking cycle. After a tough year for traders, the bank's decision last week to pause on monetary policy for

a second meeting and hint that it would not tighten further has provided some much-needed vigor, and sparked talk of a new year cut. Those hopes were given a boost Friday by figures showing far fewer jobs than expected were created in October, while other data pointed to a slowing economy, easing pressure on policymakers to lift rates further. "The recent deluge of economic data does not paint a picture of an impending recession," said SPI Asset Management's Stephen Innes.

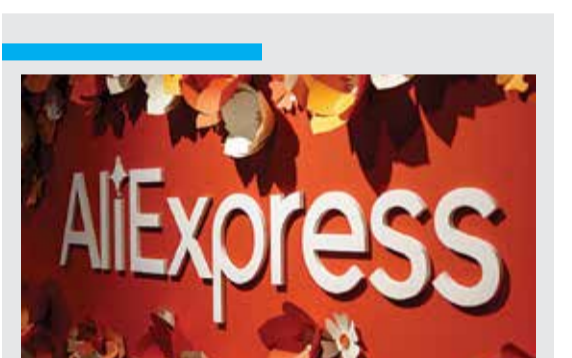
"Most economic indicators, aside from a notable miss in the ISM manufac-

turing index, did not signal a recession. Instead, the data seemed to align with a 'just right' scenario, akin to Goldilocks," he added, referring to data that was neither too strong nor too weak. "The deceleration in job growth... mitigated the risk of overheating or an excessively rapid economic expansion, a key factor holding the Federal Reserve back from officially declaring that it has reached its terminal rate."

All three main indexes on Wall Street jumped Friday after the jobs reading, which also fuelled bets on an interest

rate cut by June, while Treasury yields eased back from 16-year highs. Observers now say the road is open for equities to end the year on a strong note. Asian markets tracked the rally in New York, with Tokyo more than two percent higher, while Hong Kong, Wellington, Manila and Jakarta were up more than one percent.

There were also gains in Shanghai, Sydney, Singapore, Mumbai, Bangkok and Taipei. Seoul piled on more than five percent after authorities reimposed a ban on short-selling. — AFP



EU probes AliExpress to examine curbs on illegal products

BRUSSELS: The EU on Monday announced an investigation into Chinese e-commerce giant AliExpress, seeking more details on what measures it is taking to protect consumers online from illegal products, including fake medicines.

The European Commission said it had sent a formal request for information to AliExpress, owned by Alibaba, in what is a first step in a process under a new EU law, the Digital Services Act (DSA), that aims to counter the spread of illegal goods and content online. It said it wanted to know more about how AliExpress will "comply with obligations related to risk assessments and mitigation measures to protect consumers online, in particular with regard to the dissemination of illegal products online such as fake medicines".

AliExpress has until November 27 to respond. The European Union has developed a powerful armory to challenge the might of Big Tech with its milestone DSA and a sister law, the Digital Markets Act, that hits web giants with strict curbs, obligations and oversight on how they do business.

The DSA came into effect in August for 19 "very large" platforms, including AliExpress, Facebook and Instagram, that have more than 45 million monthly European users. The EU has already started probes into Meta, TikTok and X (formerly Twitter), requesting more details about how they have acted against disinformation. Platforms face fines that can go up to six percent of global turnover for violations.

The EU's top tech enforcer, Thierry Breton, stressed that the DSA was not just about countering hate speech and disinformation online. "It is also there to ensure removal of illegal and unsafe products sold in the EU via e-commerce platforms, including the growing number of fake and potentially life-threatening medicines and pharmaceuticals sold online," Breton said.

Amazon Store, Google Shopping and clothing retailer Zalando are also among the 19 platforms named by the EU. Amazon and Zalando have launched legal challenges against being designated on the list.

The DSA stipulates that online shopping sites must verify the identity of vendors before allowing them on their platforms and block repeat fraudsters. The rules say online marketplaces may be held responsible for any damage from products bought by users that are non-compliant or dangerous.

The European Medicines Agency last week warned fake injection pens of Ozempic, a wildly popular diabetes drug that went viral on social media as a way to lose weight, were circulating in Europe.

A 2022 report by Europol and the European Union Intellectual Property Office warned of an increase in counterfeit goods shipped into the EU via small parcels. "This notable increase is related to the growth in online marketplaces," it said. According to the report, the production of fake goods and their sale were heavily reliant on online platforms, social media and instant messaging services. — AFP



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

Public outcry over construction near Vietnam's Ha Long Bay

A huge residential complex being built on the borders of Vietnam's Ha Long Bay prompted a public outcry in the Southeast Asian country Monday, as concerns mount over human impacts that have degraded the UNESCO World Heritage Site. The bay, famed for its brilliant turquoise waters dotted with towering rainforest-topped limestone islands, is one of Vietnam's most popular tourist destinations, attracting more than seven million visitors last year. The shore and the surrounding town are already heavily developed. But on Sunday pictures were published in state media of an enormous construction site running through the waters—and next to the spectacular karsts—of Bai Tu Long Bay, which borders Ha Long.

likes and shares, Nguyen Xuan Dien, a well-known historical researcher, called the plans "a direct threat" to the world heritage site. "The limestone karsts have been turned into toys of the newly rich", Dien wrote. Trang Nguyen, a prominent conservationist, wrote on Facebook: "Killing birds, killing animals, killing everything."

"The mountains are turned into cheap amusement parks, painted with green and red. The sea and its sand is exploited. Beautiful places are auctioned off." In response to the criticism, authorities in northern Quang Ninh province -- where the construction site is situated—ordered Monday an immediate review of the project. The plans received official approval in 2021.

The rapid growth of Ha Long City—which is now home to a cable car, amusement park, luxury hotels and thousands of new homes—has severely damaged the bay's ecosystem. Conservationists estimate there were originally around 234 types of coral in the bay—now the number is around half. There is also a huge problem with both human and plastic waste. UNESCO's Vietnam office and the Ha Long Bay management board did not immediately respond to requests for comment from AFP. State media have recently reported on several other construction projects threatening protected areas across Vietnam.—AFP

The project owner, Do Gia Capital Limited Company, is preparing the ground for a residential and hotel complex on an area of more than 318,000 square meters, Tien Phong newspaper said. The paper reported that the construction site is in Ha Long Bay's 'buffer zone', which UNESCO says provides an additional layer of protection to a World Heritage property. Once finished, the complex will consist of 451 villas and houses, multiple seven-storey hotels, and service and trade areas, Tien Phong added.

Truong Quoc Binh, former deputy head of the culture ministry's heritage department, said "the boundaries of Ha Long Bay had been seriously violated", according to the paper. In Facebook posts that received thousands of



This aerial photo shows the construction site of a residential and hotel complex near Ha Long Bay in Vietnam's Quang Ninh province.—AFP

New Beatles song set to reach number one on UK singles chart

A new Beatles song, produced with the help of AI, is on track to be named number one on the UK's official singles chart on Sunday night, the chart company said. The song, "Now and Then", that used artificial intelligence to include the vocals of John Lennon and guitar by George Harrison, who died in 1980 and 2001 respectively, was released last Thursday. "Now And Then debuted at Number 42 in the UK last week based on just 10 hours of sales, but is now expected to jump 41 places to the top of the Official Singles Chart when Friday's chart is announced on BBC Radio 1's The Official Chart," Official Charts said.

The song is set to be the Fab Four's 18th UK chart-topper and their first in 54 years, since The Ballad of John and Yoko in 1969. The Beatles remain second to Elvis Presley, who has scored 21 number ones on the chart since his first hit in 1957. "Now and Then" is currently ahead of the song "Standing Next to You" by Jung Kook, and last week's number one, "Is it Over Now?" by Taylor Swift, according to the chart which is based on preliminary sales and early streaming reports from key distribution channels in the UK. Despite being highly anticipated, "Now and Then", which comes more than four decades after it was originally recorded as a demo by Lennon, received lukewarm reviews



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

by his fellow band members Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr. The track was unveiled by Apple Corps, Capitol and Universal Music Enterprises, with a music video debuting on Friday. McCartney, 81, announced the song's release in June, in what was dubbed in a promotional trailer "the last Beatles song".

"Now And Then" was one of several tracks on a cassette that Lennon had recorded at his home in New York's Dakota Building in 1979 -- a year before his death. It was given to McCartney by Lennon's widow Yoko Ono in 1994. Two other songs, "Free As A Bird" and "Real Love", were cleaned up by the producer Jeff Lynne, worked on by the other former Beatles, and released in 1995 and 1996.

An attempt was made to do the same with "Now And Then" but the project was abandoned due to background noise on the demo. AI has now made it possible to extract the vocals from that recording, although the use of the technology in music is the subject of industry-wide debate, with some denouncing copyright abuses and others praising its prowess. The two surviving Beatles finished "Now And Then" last year, including George Harrison's electric and acoustic guitar parts recorded in 1995.—AFP

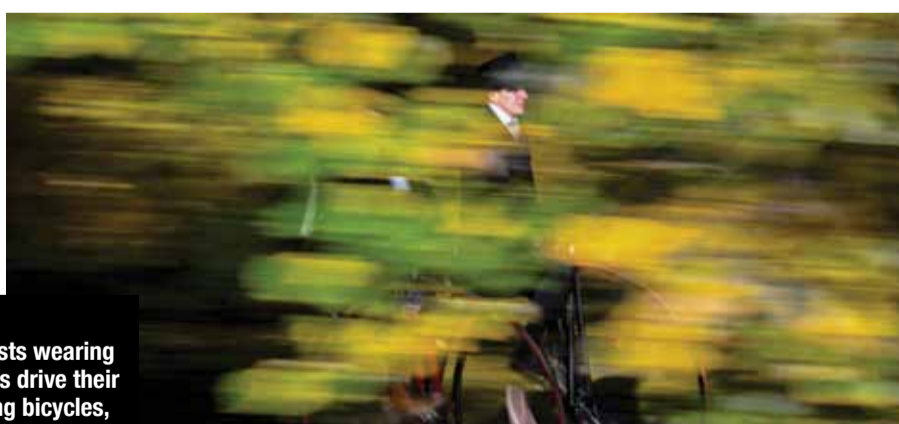
from music critics after its release. "Now and Then" is not terrible... But ultimately, it's kind of mundane," wrote Geoff Edgers in the Washington Post. The Times daily in the UK said the song showed AI being used to its best advantage.

Parts of it also conjured up "that classic, bittersweet, Beatles-esque flavour", wrote reviewer Will Hodgkinson. "Unfortunately, none of this can mask the fact that the Last Beatles Song is far from a lost masterpiece," he added.

AI solution
"Now And Then", first written and sung by Lennon in 1978, was finished



Bike enthusiasts wearing historical dress drive their penny-farthing bicycles, also known as high wheel, during the traditional 'One Mile Race' competition at Letna Park in Prague. —AFP photos



Lifestyle



Visitors view the burial epitaph of Lebanese-American writer, poet, and visual artist Gibran Khalil Gibran at his tomb at his museum.



Joseph Geagea, director of the Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum dedicated to the eponymous Lebanese-American writer, poet, and visual artist, gives a briefing before one of Gibran's pencil drawings at the premises in the artist's hometown of Besharre (Bsharri) in northern Lebanon.



Books that are part of the collection of the Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum are displayed in the artist's hometown of Besharre.



A view of the burial coffin of Gibran Khalil Gibran on display at his museum.



Joseph Geagea gives a briefing before one of Gibran's pencil drawings.



Joseph Geagea gives a briefing before one of Gibran's paintings.



A bust sculpture depicting Lebanese-American writer, poet, and visual artist Gibran Khalil Gibran is displayed at the entrance of his hometown of Besharre (Bsharri).

Khalil Gibran's Lebanon hometown celebrates 'The Prophet' centennial

Nestled in the mountains of northern Lebanon, a museum dedicated to Khalil Gibran in his hometown of Besharre has been celebrating the centennial of "The Prophet", the renowned author's most famous work. Since it was



This picture shows a pencil drawing by Lebanese-American writer, poet, and visual artist Gibran Khalil Gibran on display at his museum.

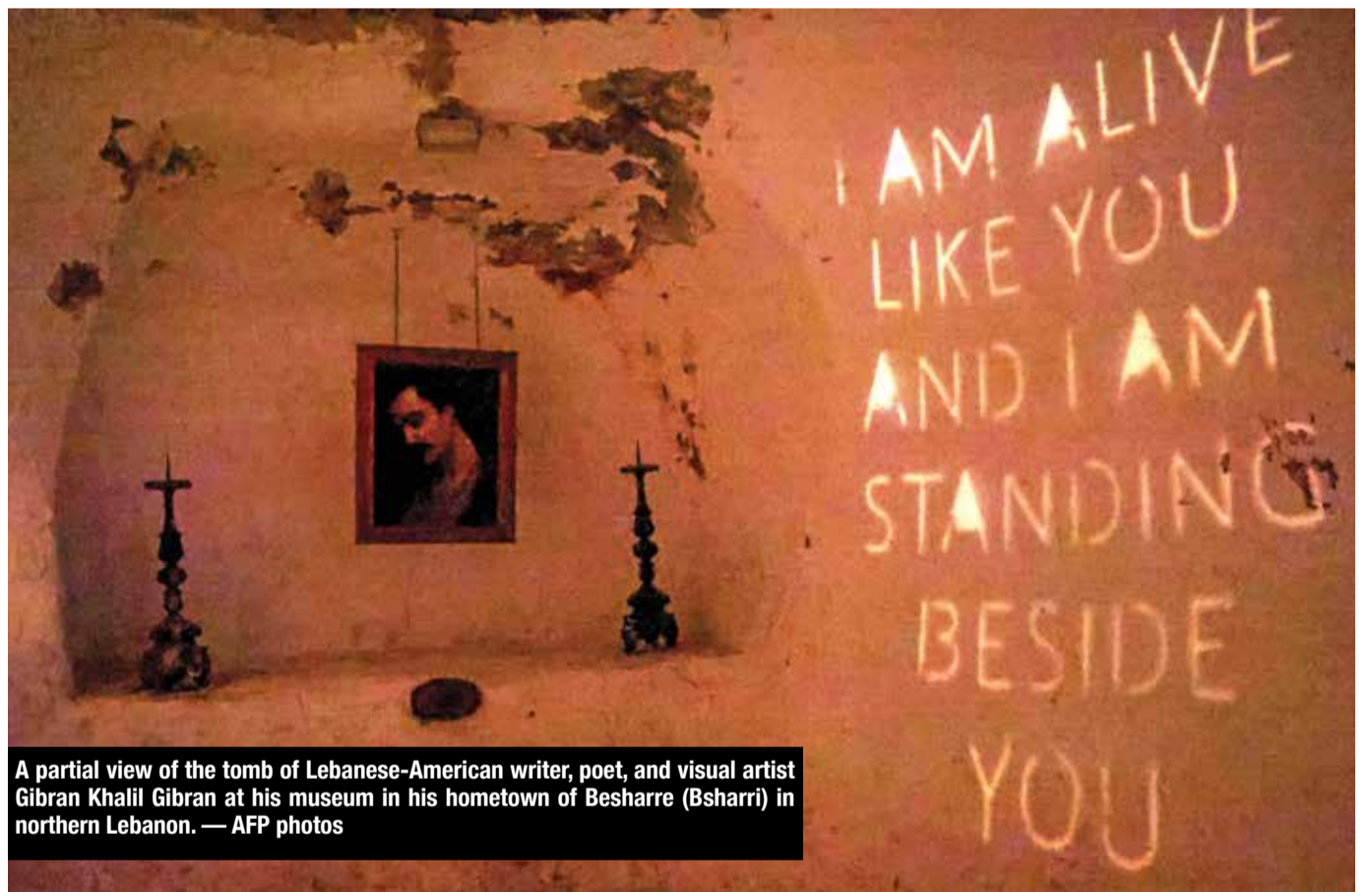
been translated into dozens of languages from the original English.

"Every reader, no matter where they're from, feels that this book relates to them and moves them deeply... whether they are Christian, Muslim, Jewish or atheist, said museum director Joseph Geagea. It "touches the spirituality of each individual, dealing with death, life, friendship, love, children" and other topics, he added.

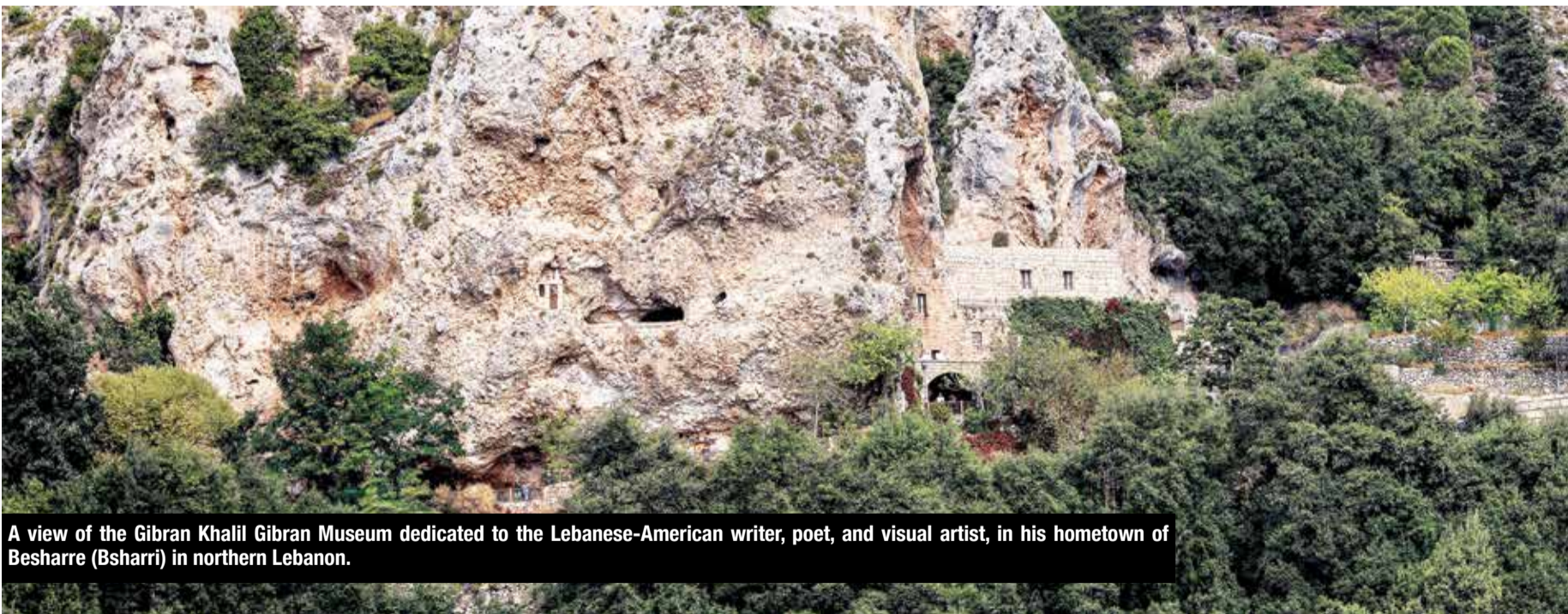
Divided into 26 chapters, verses from "The Prophet" are often quoted at births, weddings and funerals around the world. "Biblical style is pervasive" in "The Prophet", Lebanese author Alexandre Najjar said during a recent reading in Beirut, also noting the influence of Islam's mystic Sufi tradition. "The Prophet" captured the hearts of students and hippies in the 1960s, Najjar said, including for the passage: "Your children are not your children... they come through you but not from you."

Elvis Presley "loved the book so much that he used to give it to his friends on their birthday", he added. Other celebrities and leaders, from John Lennon to Japan's former Empress Michiko and late Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi, were also fond of the book, the museum's Geagea said.

first published in the United States in 1923, millions of copies of "The Prophet" have been sold worldwide, with the book becoming a literary classic that has



A partial view of the tomb of Lebanese-American writer, poet, and visual artist Gibran Khalil Gibran at his museum in his hometown of Besharre (Bsharri) in northern Lebanon. — AFP photos



A view of the Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum dedicated to the Lebanese-American writer, poet, and visual artist, in his hometown of Besharre (Bsharri) in northern Lebanon.



A view of the burial epitaph of Lebanese-American writer, poet, and visual artist Gibran Khalil Gibran on display at his tomb at his museum.



People walk past a bust sculpture depicting Lebanese-American writer, poet, and visual artist Gibran Khalil Gibran at his museum.



Joseph Geagea gives an interview at the premises in the artist's hometown of Besharre (Bsharri) in northern Lebanon.



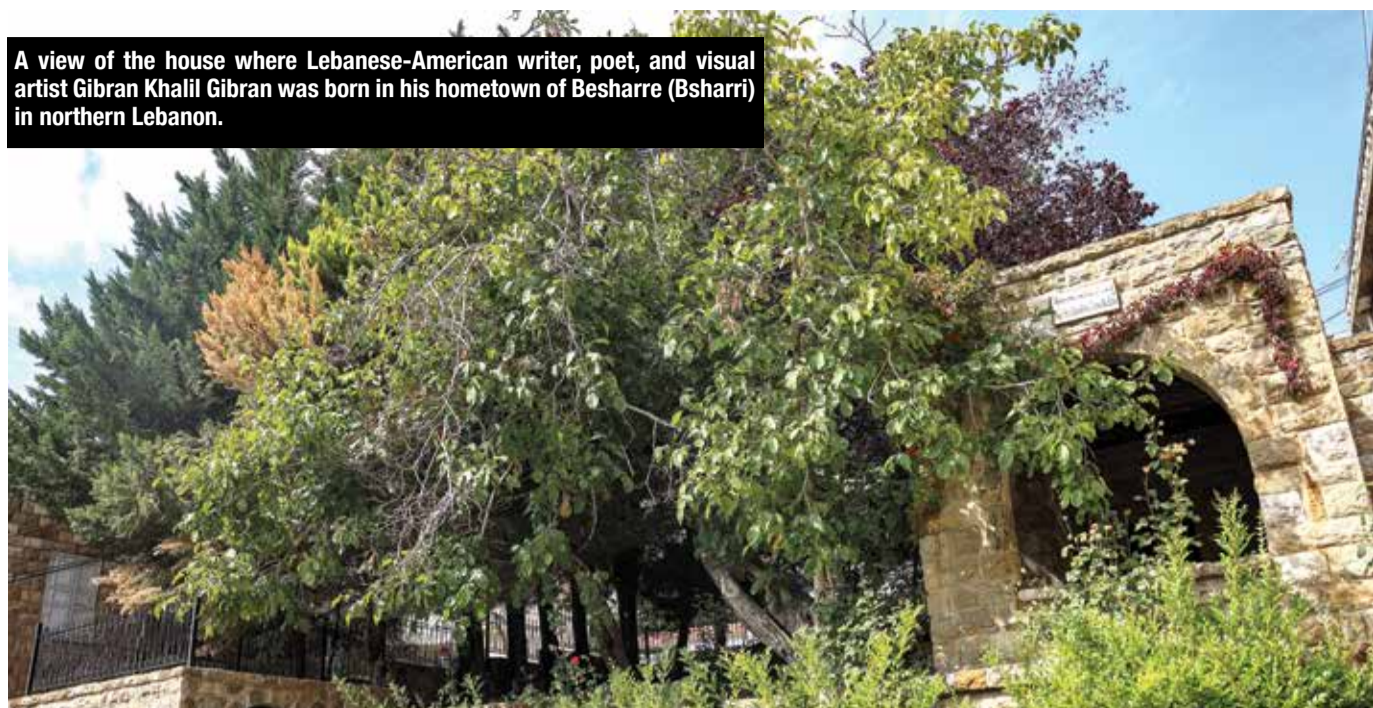
Translations of Lebanese-American writer, poet, and visual artist Gibran Khalil Gibran's book "The Prophet" in various languages are displayed at his museum.



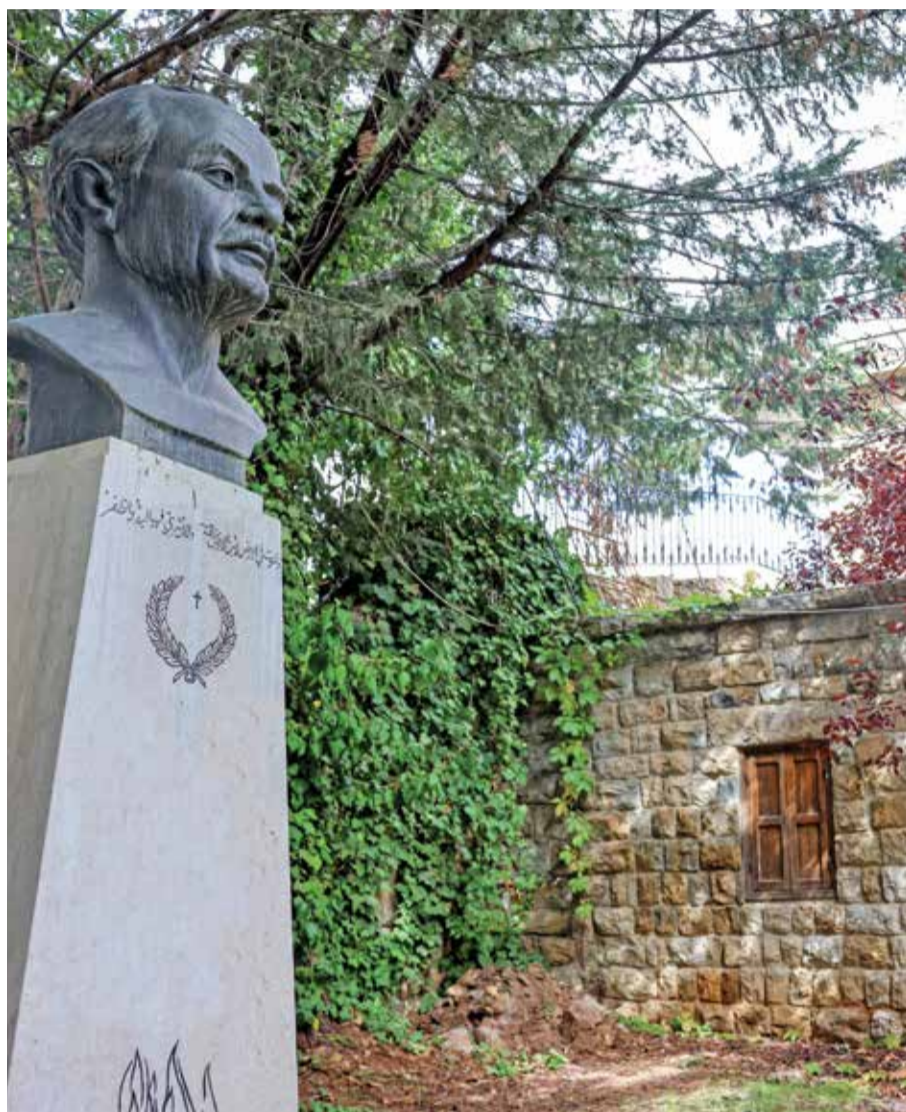
Translations of Lebanese-American writer, poet, and visual artist Gibran Khalil Gibran's book "The Prophet" in various languages are displayed at his museum.

Lifestyle

A view of the house where Lebanese-American writer, poet, and visual artist Gibran Khalil Gibran was born in his hometown of Besharre (Bsharri) in northern Lebanon.



Joseph Geagea gives a briefing before one of Gibran's paintings.



A view of the house where Lebanese-American writer, poet, and visual artist Gibran Khalil Gibran was born in his hometown of Besharre (Bsharri).

'Deeply spiritual vision'
Gibran was born in Besharre in 1883, when Lebanon was under Ottoman rule, but wrote most of his books in the United States, where he headed the New York Pen League, the first Arab-American literary society. Overlooking Lebanon's Qadisha Valley, the museum was set up in a former 18th century monastery and exhibits some 150 paintings by the author that show "his deeply spiritual vision of existence", Geagea said. A table displays 11 translations of "The Prophet" released between 1923 and 1931. "Gibran strongly wished to return to Besharre, which he left at age 12," said Geagea, but the writer died before he could get the chance. The monks decided to sell the monas-

tery and the surrounding land to Gibran's sister after the author's death in 1931, when he was just 48. The site was transformed into his burial place and then into a museum for his artworks and other objects, and receives around 50,000 visitors a year from five continents, Geagea said. Despite his popularity among readers, Gibran's most famous work received a lukewarm reception at the time of writing from American critics, who criticized it as simplistic and moralizing. In April this year, an exhibition at the United Nations headquarters in New York also marked the work's centenary. — AFP



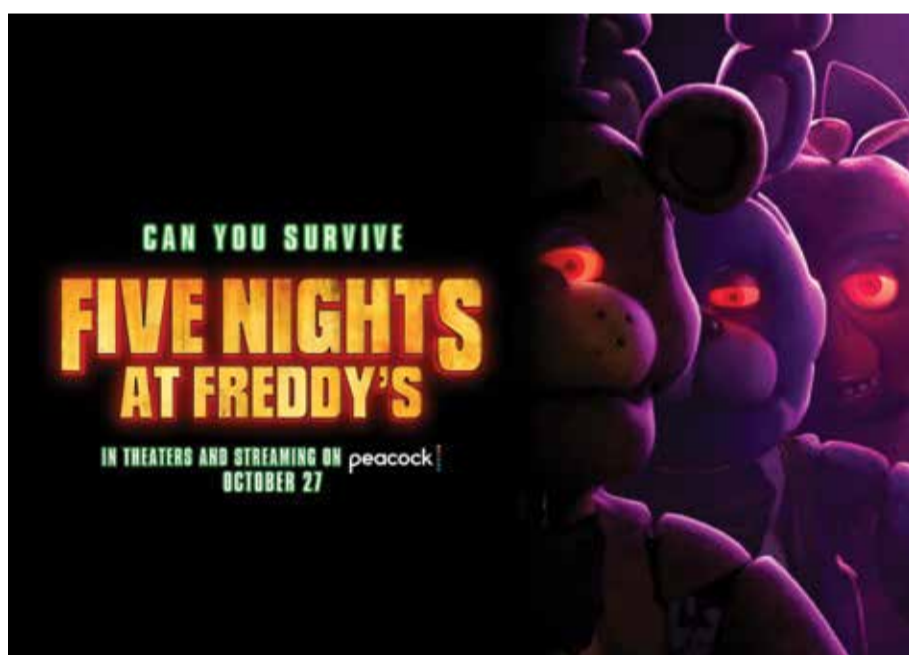
A view of the house where Lebanese-American writer, poet, and visual artist Gibran Khalil Gibran was born.



A view of furniture from the studio of Lebanese-American writer, poet, and visual artist Gibran Khalil Gibran on display.



Joseph Geagea gives a tour of Gibran's first studio furniture at the premises in the artist's hometown.



All spooked up: Horror film leads 'Priscilla' at North American box office

Universal's Halloween season release "Five Nights at Freddy's" remained in first place at the North American box office, beating out the awards-tilted biopic on Elvis Presley's wife "Priscilla," estimates showed Sunday. Despite maintaining its lead in ticket sales, "Freddy's" still had a frightening drop from \$78 million in its debut weekend to only \$19.4 million this week, according to industry watcher Exhibitor Relations. The video-game based film, released both in theaters and on Universal's Peacock platform, is "crashing in its second weekend of simultaneous streaming," said analyst David A. Gross. Josh Hutcherson, starring in his biggest role since the "Hunger Games" franchise, leads the cast as a security guard working nights at an abandoned family entertainment center, where creepy animatronic characters spring murderously to life after dark. The horror film was followed again by "Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour," earning another \$13.5 million in its fourth week out, for a total domestic haul of \$166 million. Martin Scorsese's "Killers of the Flower Moon" maintained its third-place spot at \$7 million in North American theaters, while also crossing the

symbolic \$100 million figure in worldwide sales. The over-three-hour film is to be released on Apple's streaming platform, but a date has not yet been announced. In its first wide-release weekend, Sofia Coppola's "Priscilla" landed in fourth place at just \$5 million. The film charts the rocky relationship between Elvis and Priscilla Presley, from their first meeting on a German army base when she was just 14 and the rock'n'roll star was 24, through to their acrimonious split. In the titular role, 25-year-old Cailee Spaeny has already earned the Venice Film Festival's best actress award, while Jacob Elordi has received strong reviews for his performance as Elvis. The latest Elvis-related biopic to hit theaters had a "fair opening for a romance drama," said analyst David A. Gross. It may find some more momentum, he said, given its "excellent reviews and very good audience scores." In fifth was newly released Spanish-language film "Radical" at \$2.7 million. Based on a true story, it follows a teacher in a Mexican border town who "tries a radical new method to unleash the curiosity and potential of his students," according to production company Pantelion Films. Rounding out the top 10 were: "Exorcist: The Believer," (\$2.2 million) "After Death" (\$2.0 million) "Paw Patrol: The Mighty Movie" (\$2.0 million) "What Happens Later" (\$1.6 million) "Freelance" (\$1.2 million). — AFP

K-pop star G-Dragon appears for questioning over alleged drug use

K-pop star G-Dragon, of wildly successful but problem-plagued band BIGBANG, denied any wrongdoing as he appeared for police questioning Monday over alleged drug use. South Korea has extremely tough legislation on illegal drugs, and even Koreans who take drugs like marijuana legally overseas risk prosecution upon returning to their home country. G-Dragon, whose real name is Kwon Ji-yong, arrived at the Incheon Nonhyeon police station in a black sedan, dressed in a dark suit and wearing black-rimmed glasses. "I have not committed drug-related crimes and I'm actually here to reveal that," the 35-year-old told reporters outside. This year, President Yoon Suk Yeol called for more stringent measures to eliminate drug traffickers, saying the country was no longer "drug-free". Leaving the police station after the questioning that lasted for nearly four hours, the artist said that he had tested negative for drugs, adding that he had put in an urgent request for a more detailed test. "I think it would be good if the investigative agency would quickly and accurately state the results," he told reporters. "I actively cooperated with the investigation, whether it was testifying or submitting hair," he said, adding: "I answered truthfully." G-Dragon is the latest in a string of South Korean entertainers to be probed for alleged drug use. Police have launched an



K-pop star G-Dragon (center) speaks to the media as he arrives at a police station for his police questioning in Incheon.

investigation into "Parasite" actor Lee Sun-kyun, who stands accused of using marijuana and other psychoactive drugs. Lee was previously celebrated for his wholesome image, but local news outlets have reported that he is being dropped from television and commercial projects. Last month, another high-profile actor, Yoo Ah-in, was indicted for alleged drug use. G-Dragon's group BIGBANG is one of South Korea's most successful boy bands, having sold at least 140 million records worldwide since its debut in 2006. But its members have often been in the limelight for misconduct.

Group member Seungri retired from show business in 2019 amid mounting criminal investigations, and was later sentenced to 18 months in prison for offering women to potential investors for sexual services, among other charges. Rapper T.O.P, who in May revealed he had "withdrawn" from BIGBANG, received a suspended jail sentence in 2017 for using marijuana. G-Dragon himself was investigated for marijuana use in 2011, but he was released without indictment. — AFP



K-pop star G-Dragon (right) arrives at a police station for his police questioning in Incheon. - AFP photos

Sports

Mathews becomes first 'timed out' dismissal in international cricket

There are 10 modes of dismissal in cricket, the rarest of which is 'timed out'

NEW DELHI: Sri Lanka's Angelo Mathews was on Monday controversially given "timed out" in a World Cup clash against Bangladesh, becoming the first man to suffer the dismissal in the 146-year history of international cricket. The former captain took more than two minutes to take strike and opposition skipper Shakib Al Hasan appealed, which was upheld by the on-field umpire. Mathews came into bat after the fall of Sadeera Samarawickrama in the 25th over but was unable to secure his helmet strap tightly enough, an action which delayed the resumption of play.

Following the Bangladesh appeal, the umpires held a lengthy discussion with the players including Mathews. They ruled Mathews to be out and the 36-year-old veteran reluctantly trudged off with most spectators appearing bemused by the decision. Some Bangladesh fans applauded. Former South African fast bowler Dale Steyn writing on X, formerly Twitter, said: "Well, that wasn't cool".

Ex-India batsman Gautam Gambhir, on 'X', said: "Absolutely pathetic what happened Delhi today! #AngeloMathews." Australian Test batsman Usman Khawaja also blasted the decision. "Angelo made his crease then his helmet strap broke. How is that timed out? I'm all for timed out if he doesn't make his crease but this is ridic. No different then a batsman getting to

the crease then taking 3 minutes to face up," he wrote on social media. According to laws of cricket, after the fall of a wicket or the retirement of a batsman, the incoming player must be ready to receive the ball within two minutes. The Association of Cricket Statisticians and Historians said there have been six instances of "timed out" in first-class cricket. "There have been no instances recorded in List A or Twenty20 cricket until Mathews," they wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter. The vastly-experienced Mathews was playing in his 225th one-day international on Monday in a career which has yielded 5,900 runs and 122 wickets.

He has also played 106 Tests and 78 Twenty20 internationals. There are 10 modes of dismissal in cricket, the rarest of which is "timed out". Former India captain Sourav Ganguly escaped being timed-out when he had to rush onto the pitch after the fall of a wicket during a South Africa Test at Cape Town in 2007.

India had lost a wicket and with next batsman Sachin Tendulkar not allowed to take the field owing the time he had spent off the pitch, and VVS Laxman taking a shower, the onus to come out fell on Ganguly, who was still in his tracksuit. The timed-out rule in Tests was three minutes but Proteas skipper Graeme Smith did not appeal and waited patiently for Ganguly to stride out despite exceeding the time limit. — AFP



NEW DELHI: Sri Lanka's Angelo Mathews (R) listens to the umpires after he was timed out during the 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup one-day international (ODI) match between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi on November 6, 2023. — AFP

Closing eagle lifts van Rooyen to PGA Tour title

LOS CABOS: South Africa's Erik van Rooyen, inspired by a sick friend, rolled in a long eagle putt at the final hole to grab an emotional two-shot triumph Sunday in the US PGA Tour World Wide Technology Championship in Mexico.

Van Rooyen saved his best for last in claiming a second US tour title to go with his 2021 Barracuda Championship win. He played the last five holes in five-under, playing the back nine in eight-under 28 on the way to a nine-under par 63 and a 27-under par total of 261 at Cardonal at Diamante in Los Cabos—the first Tiger Woods-designed course to be used for a PGA Tour event.

His walk-off eagle gave him a two-shot triumph over third-round co-leaders Matt Kuchar and Camilo Villegas. "I was calm because there's bigger stuff in life than golf," said van Rooyen, breaking down in tears as he explained that dear friend Jon Trasmalar is battling cancer.

"Every shot out there today was for him," van Rooyen said. "When you're playing for something bigger than winning some silly trophy it puts it in perspective and at the end of the day whether I won here or I lost here it really didn't matter."

One back to start the day, van Rooyen shook off an opening bogey, nabbing birdies at the second and sixth to get himself on track. He added three straight birdies at the 10th, 11th and 12th and another at 14 before birdies at 16 and 17 saw him pull level with overnight co-leader Kuchar atop the leaderboard at 25-under.

Kuchar started the day tied with Villegas after a rollercoaster round that included an eagle and a quadruple bogey. Six birdies had him atop the board through 14 holes, but he couldn't find another birdie the rest of the way. He was joined on 25-under 263 by Villegas, who made two of his six birdies at 17 and 18 to claim his share of second. American Justin Suh was fourth after a bogey-free seven-under par 65 for 264. The near miss left Colombia's Villegas still looking for a fifth PGA title—nine years after he claimed his fourth.

Kuchar had been hoping a trip to Mexico would again see him end a victory drought. He claimed the last of his nine PGA titles at the 2019 Sony Open—a month after he ended a near four-year title drought at this event when it was held at Mayakoba.

Instead, it was van Rooyen in the winner's circle at the fifth event of the FedEx Cup Fall, a series of seven tournaments played after the TOUR Championship that finalizes eligibility for the 2024 PGA tour season. —AFP

Sri Lanka sacks cricket board after WCup thrashing

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's sports minister Roshan Ranasinghe sacked the national cricket board on Monday, days after a humiliating defeat by India at the World Cup. Ranasinghe has been at loggerheads with Sri Lanka Cricket—the richest sports organization on the financially-stricken island—for months over allegations of widespread corruption. The country's 1996 World Cup-winning skipper Arjuna Ranatunga, 59, has been appointed chairman of a new interim board, Ranasinghe's office said in a statement. The former captain was "the most suitable person to revive cricket", the minister told reporters in Colombo. "The priority is to get the team to perform better."

Three judges were included on the seven-member panel to help investigate corruption, he added. Ranatunga said he had accepted the challenge of rebuilding cricket. "Sri Lanka Cricket had become known as the most corrupt institution in the country," he added. "I want to change that image."

The move came a day after the board's second-highest officer, secretary Mohan de Silva, quit. Minister Ranasinghe publicly demanded the entire board's resignations after Sri Lanka's 302-run World Cup thrashing by hosts India last week.

Sri Lanka were at one point 14-6 and were all out for 55, the fourth-lowest World Cup total in history, while chasing India's 358 in Mumbai. The defeat prompted a public outcry and police have been deployed outside the board office in Colombo since Saturday when there were angry protests.

Ranasinghe said that Sri Lanka Cricket officials had no moral or ethical right to remain in office. "They

should voluntarily resign," he said, having previously accused the board of being "traitorous and corrupt".

Sri Lanka play Bangladesh later Monday and need a mathematical miracle if they are to squeeze into the last four of the World Cup.

Good governance

The interim panel is the 10th appointed by a sports minister for various reasons since 1999 -- when the government intervened after the president's uncle lost the election to lead the board—despite International Cricket Council rules against political interference.

On Saturday Ranasinghe wrote to full members of the ICC asking for their understanding and support. "Sri Lanka Cricket has been besieged with complaints of player disciplinary issues, management corruption, financial misconduct and match-fixing allegations," Ranasinghe said in the letters, released to Sri Lankan media.

"I would like to emphasize that interim measures will only be taken to establish good governance principles." The minister was last month forced by the ICC to withdraw a three-member panel he had appointed to investigate alleged corruption at the board after it was deemed to violate the interference rules.

There was no immediate reaction from the ICC to Ranasinghe's latest move and dismissed board president Shammi Silva, who was elected to a third consecutive term in May, also did not comment. Sri Lanka did not win the World Cup since 1996, with Ranasinghe blaming the board for the "deterioration" of standards. Another cabinet minister, Prasanna Ranatunga—brother of the newly appointed interim board chairman—told parliament in August that the 1996 triumph had been "the biggest curse for our cricket".

"Money started flowing to the cricket board after 1996 and with that came those who wanted to steal," he said. A former sports minister, Harin Fernando, introduced tough anti-corruption laws in 2019 after saying that the ICC considered Sri Lanka one of the world's most corrupt cricketing nations. — AFP



COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's sports minister Roshan Ranasinghe arrives at the Ministry of Youth and Sports, in Colombo on November 6, 2023. Ranasinghe sacked the national cricket board on November 6, days after a humiliating defeat by India at the World Cup. — AFP

Aussies face 'double standards' blast over Afghanistan WCup clash

MUMBAI: Australia star Steve Smith said the decision to let the team play Afghanistan in a crunch World Cup match was "above my pay-grade" as Cricket Australia faced accusations of "double-standards". Earlier this year, CA scrapped a three-match one-day international series against Afghanistan on the grounds of Taleban, who regained power in 2021, had placed fresh limits on education and work opportunities for Afghan women and girls, including female cricketers.

In the run-up to Tuesday's high-stakes match in Mumbai, Afghanistan fast bowler Naveen-ul-Haq took to social media to suggest there was an element of hypocrisy in CA abandoning the one-day games but going ahead with a World Cup match where it had something to lose.

"Refusing to play the bilateral series, now it will be interesting to see cricket Australia stand in the World Cup #standards #human rights or 2 points," Naveen wrote on Instagram. Former Australia captain Smith, however, told a pre-match press conference at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium on Monday: "We obviously played against Afghanistan in the T20 World Cup at home recently and we're playing tomorrow (Tuesday) so it's not a question for me, it's far above my pay grade." Cricket Australia had earlier responded to Naveen's post, with a spokesperson telling News Corp Australia: "CA made the decision not to proceed with the three match ODI series against Afghanistan in March following the announcement by the Taleban of further restrictions on women's rights including education and employment opportunities and the access to parks and gymnasiums."

"There is a distinction between playing bilateral series against Afghanistan which falls under CA control as compared to playing in a World Cup tournament which is an ICC (International Cricket Council) event and subject to their regulations."

Tuesday's World Cup match has plenty of significance for both sides, with emerging nation Afghanistan still in contention for a semi-final place after winning four of their seven pool matches so far during the tournament.

Meanwhile five-time champions Australia still need to win one of their final two group games, against Afghanistan and Bangladesh, to secure a place in the knockout stage. There have been boycotts and walkovers at previous World Cups, with both Australia and the West Indies forfeiting matches in Sri Lanka during the 1996 edition on security grounds. England also refused to play a match against 2003 co-hosts Zimbabwe, citing safety concerns, with the lost points contributing to their early exit from that edition. — AFP

British sensation Oppon getting ready to tumble

PARIS: Naana Oppon, the newly crowned British tumbling champion at the age of 16, heads to the Trampoline World Championships this week confident of winning a medal and encouraging more "black or girls of colour" to take up the sport.

The engaging Oppon says she "loves seeing the world upside down" as she jumps and twists down the 25-metre (82-foot) track with only her hands and feet allowed to touch the surface. "As much as you have to stay focused there is also a sense of freedom and it is great fun," she told AFP in a Zoom interview.

"It comes with a lot of skills. It is a very power-based sport and that was what drew me in." Oppon says she was a "very active girl" and aged four took up tumbling, a trampoline gymnastics discipline that falls under the aegis of the International Gymnastics Federation. Her progress has been so swift that she has been described by coaches as the sport's Usain Bolt and compared to American gymnastics superstar Biles.

Not surprisingly she identifies strongly with the American four-time Olympic gold medalist and says she "absolutely" hopes she can be as inspirational as Biles. "In the gym, people doing tumbling specifically

do not look like me, either black or people of colour. The way Biles carries herself has been a big inspiration," Oppon said. "I think I have already definitely inspired the black community and people of colour to try tumbling out. "Anyone can join." Oppon accepts she could inspire even more to take it up if she were to win a medal at the world championships which take place in the English city of Birmingham from Thursday to Sunday. "I do definitely think it's realistic to win a medal in the team or individual," she said. "It would mean a lot to win a medal as it means all the hard work and sacrifices made by me and my family were worthwhile."

For Oppon to fulfil her dream, she has had to lead a life far from that of a normal teenager. "I have made quite a few sacrifices, especially my social life and hanging out with friends," she said. "I have also been a little behind with schoolwork because I have been training in two gyms for the past year and a half. "However, it balances out in the end, I guess."

Her parents, mother Antonia and father Paul, have also sacrificed a lot by, at one point, taking two jobs each to finance expenses that amount to roughly 700 pounds (\$850) a month—as tumbling does not receive the funding from the lottery that Olympic sports do.

However, supermarket worker Antonia gave up one of her jobs so she could drive Oppon to one of the gyms that is quite a distance from their home. Paul still works two jobs and Oppon says her sister is also supportive of her pursuit of her goal. The British title in September therefore made her proud that she had repaid their time and efforts. "I am very, very proud of myself as it was

not really what I expected to do," she said. "I was really just hoping to do my best but I did even better than that and came out on top. "It was a very nice outcome." As it turns out she was not so far behind in her schoolwork and despite being "very, very nervous" about her GCSE exams she got "very good" results.

Oppon says while she is focused on her sport—the

worlds are the pinnacle for her discipline as it is not part of the trampolining category at the Olympics—she also has an eye on what is to come after school. Further down the line she envisages "learning sign language" and either being a sports physiotherapist or a sports psychologist—but before then a year at the circus appeals, but no ordinary one. —AFP



BIRMINGHAM: This handout photograph released by British Gymnastics on November 1, 2023, shows Britain's Naana Oppon as she competes in the tumbling event during the British Championships at The Utilita Arena in Birmingham on September 17, 2023. — AFP

Sports

'No drama' says Real Madrid's Ancelotti despite Rayo draw

'We're confident, we will do things well, like we did today'

BARCELONA: Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said there was "no drama" despite his team failing to build on their Clásico triumph, dropping two points in La Liga's title race with a 0-0 derby draw against Rayo Vallecano on Sunday. Los Blancos spurned several chances as they drove Rayo back throughout at the Santiago Bernabeu but could not find the last-gasp winner they so often manage to produce.

The draw leaves Madrid second, two points behind shock leaders Girona, who came from behind to beat Osasuna, and two ahead of Barcelona after the Catalans' fortunate win over Real Sociedad on Saturday. "In the table we are doing very well, we're in the fight, we're doing very well in the Champions League — there is no drama," Ancelotti told reporters.

"We're confident, we will do things well, like we always do, like we did today." The Italian said the result was not fair on his team, who could not find the goal they craved. "We're hurt by the result, not the performance, clearly it was a game we deserved to win," added Ancelotti.

"We tried in every way, and it didn't come off, we tried until the last second." Ancelotti lined up with the energetic Eduardo Camavinga replacing injured holding midfielder Aurelien Tchouameni, as well as starting Luka Modric in place of Toni Kroos.

Real Madrid took the game to their neighbours from the off, with Rayo Vallecano's Macedonian goalkeeper Stole Dimitrievski kept extremely busy. He made a superb save to thwart Fede Valverde who burst through on goal early on. Madrid had an early scare when Jude Bellingham, the league's top goalscorer with 10 strikes, went down hurt, holding his left shoulder.

After a couple of minutes the England international recovered and was able to stay on. "Belling-

ham has a problem with his shoulder but was able to continue ... I don't think it will be anything serious," said Ancelotti.

Fran Garcia flashed an effort narrowly over after good work by Bellingham to play him in and Dimitrievski made a fantastic save to deny Joselu after Vinicius Junior cut the ball back to him. The Brazilian winger was increasingly involved as the game ticked towards its final stages and struck in the 66th minute, but the goal was ruled out for offside against Joselu.

Growing frustration

Vinicius was booked for dissent as his and Madrid's frustration grew in the face of the visitors' staunch defending. Bellingham, already the author of several decisive late interventions in matches for Madrid, could not repeat his heroics from last weekend when he scored a brace against Barcelona.

Rodrygo Goes came closest for Madrid in stoppage time with a backheeled effort straight at Dimitrievski, which he collected gratefully. Ancelotti said before the game Brazilian wingers Vinicius and Rodrygo would end up outscoring Bellingham and Joselu this season, but his prediction did not begin to come true soon enough.

The denouement to the match was bad tempered, with Antonio Rudiger and Florian Lejeune booked after squaring off, and the Madrid defender is now suspended for their next La Liga game against Valencia.

Rayo are now unbeaten in eight league games, with their most recent defeat coming at the start of September — and are level with Madrid and Barca on six clean sheets. "It was a really complete game from the team, we put in a huge effort — we know what a tough place this is to come," Rayo striker Raul de Tomas told DAZN.



MADRID: Real Madrid's Brazilian forward #07 Vinicius Junior (R) heads the ball during the Spanish league football match between Real Madrid CF and Rayo Vallecano de Madrid at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid. — AFP

Elsewhere Athletic Bilbao rose to fifth with a dramatic 3-2 win at lowly Villarreal on Sunday. Brothers Nico and Inaki Williams struck for Ernesto Valverde's side in the first half after Inigo Ruiz de Galarreta opened the scoring, as the visitors cruised.

However, Gerard Moreno pulled one back after 86 minutes and Alexander Sorloth headed home imme-

diately after to set up a nail-biting finale. Pacheta's Villarreal have won just one of their last seven league games and sit provisionally 13th, five points above the relegation zone. "The first half was so weak, we cannot play like that," Moreno told Movistar. Athletic are four points behind Atletico Madrid, who lost Friday at Las Palmas. — AFP

Juve squeeze past Fiorentina to keep pace with Inter

MILAN: Juventus kept pace with Serie A leaders Inter Milan thanks to Sunday's 1-0 win at Fiorentina in a match controversially played despite deadly floods, while Romelu Lukaku fired Roma to a late 2-1 win over Lecce.

Massimiliano Allegri's side are two points behind Inter after a hard-fought win in Florence earned thanks to Fabio Miretti's first goal for the club in the 10th minute. "I'm happy because I was looking for it for a long time and finally it's arrived. I hope others are going to come," said Miretti to DAZN.

It was a classic Juve performance under Allegri, whose team were content to sit back and soak up wave after wave of attack from their profligate hosts and try to strike on the break. Juve have kept six clean sheets in as many matches since shipping four goals at Sassuolo in

late September and without European football they look Inter's most credible rivals for this season's Scudetto, with the pair meeting in Turin after this month's international break.

"You also have to win games on the back foot, with good defending," said Allegri, who insisted his team are not looking at the title. "You always have to look forwards, but that doesn't mean the Scudetto. Inter, Milan and Napoli are all better equipped."

Sunday's match took place amid protests from a section of Fiorentina's hardcore support and even the mayor of Florence who had both demanded the fixture be postponed following the serious damage wrought across Tuscany by Storm Ciaran.

Italian authorities declared a state of emergency on Friday as record rainfall led to floods sweeping the region and seven people dying. Fiorentina's ultras did not attend what is traditionally the biggest match of their season in protest at the decision to allow the game to take place.

With the worst of the weather gone they opted instead to help the clean-

up operation, while those who did go to the Stadio Artemio Franchi took part in a minute's silence for the victims before kick-off. Their team could not rally from Miretti sweeping in Filip Kostic's low cross and drop to eighth, level on 17 points with Roma who will be feeling more positive about next weekend's Rome derby after their stunning late comeback.

Roma's late, late show

Jose Mourinho's Roma looked set for a shock defeat at the Stadio Olimpico when Pontus Almqvist netted Lecce's opener in the 71st minute. But Iran striker Sardar Azmoun pulled the hosts level in the 91st minute with a bullet header — his first goal in Serie A — and Lukaku brought the house down three minutes later with a rifled finish.

Lukaku's winner was redemption as he would have bore the brunt of the blame for a defeat after missing a sixth-minute penalty and another golden opportunity eight minutes after the break, but ended the match in Mourinho's arms and hailed by the

raucous home crowd.

Roma are seventh, four points away from the Champions League spots and one ahead of Lazio who lost at Bologna on Friday. Mourinho was also cheered by the return of Paulo Dybala, whose brilliant pass laid on Lukaku's ninth Roma goal in all competitions since he signed on loan from Chelsea in late August.

Dybala could easily have finished the game with a brace after a pair of sumptuous strikes in each half blazed wide, and he looked in fine fettle after recovering from a knee ligament injury. "I've just spoken to him and while I thought he would say it would be better to stay here, not travel (to Slavia Prague in the Europa League) and prepare for next weekend, he told me that he wants to come with us," added Mourinho.

Cagliari moved out of the relegation zone with their second straight win, 2-1 against fellow promoted outfit Genoa. Claudio Ranieri's side sit a point ahead of Verona who are just inside the relegation zone after falling to a 3-1 home defeat at the hands of Monza. — AFP

Lyon still winless, Monaco best Brest as Nice go back top

DECINES-CHARPIEU: A week after coach Fabio Grosso was injured in an assault by Marseille fans, Lyon remain winless but clawed back a 1-1 home draw with fellow strugglers Metz, as Nice reclaimed top spot and Monaco beat Brest on Saturday.

Champions League semi-finalists as recently as 2020, Lyon are adrift with four draws and six defeats in the French top flight this season. Adding injury to insult, Lyon were ambushed outside the Marseille stadium last week and their Italian coach Grosso was hit in the face by a projectile that smashed through the team bus window.

On Sunday, in Grosso's fifth match in charge since taking over from Laurent Blanc, Lyon fell 1-0 behind to Abbie Jallow's long-range snap-shot that pinged in off the post on 77 minutes. Grosso cut a stark figure pitchside with stitches in his eyebrow and a black eye, but he would soon have something to smile about.

Giant Lyon striker Skelly Alvero saved a point for the hosts with his own long-range shot on 84 minutes, giving the Lyon faithful something to cheer. Nonetheless, Grosso predicts a tough slog ahead. "The longer it takes the harder it's going to be," said Grosso, who won the 2006 World Cup as a player with Italy. "The players are too tense to show their true colours. We have to keep working at it."

Last-gasp Lukaku fires Roma to win over Lecce

ROME: Romelu Lukaku fired Roma to a stunning 2-1 win over Lecce on Sunday with a stoppage-time strike which completed an unlikely late comeback and sent his team into next weekend's Rome derby in positive mood.

Jose Mourinho's Roma looked set for a shock defeat at the Stadio Olimpico when Pontus Almqvist netted Lecce's opener in the 71st minute. But Iran

Nice reclaim first

The final fixture of the 11th matchday of the Ligue 1 season ended 2-0 to Nice, allowing the south coast side to move back up to first place in the table. A Jeremie Boga goal right on the stroke of half-time and a late, unlucky own goal by Steve Mandanda sufficed to ensure the Agiles restored their one-point lead at the summit. There was little difference between the two sides in the first half, with the third-placed hosts edging affairs on chances. The match seemed destined to go into the break goalless, until Lorenz Assignon was unable to clear, and Boga slipped the ball past Mandanda in the Rennes goal.

Nice looked to be cruising in the second half until a wild lounge from Youssef Ndayishimiye was upgraded by VAR to a red card with a quarter of an hour left. Rennes pressed but soon went down to 10 themselves when a quick counter was abruptly ended by Warmed Omari just outside his own box.

The resulting clipped free-kick from Sofiane Diop hit the crossbar, rebounded off the diving keeper's head and went in for an own goal in the 87th minute. "I'm very proud of the team as a whole," said Nice coach Francesco Farioli. "They played excellently."

Monaco bounce back

Monaco returned to winning ways with a 2-0 victory over visiting Brest. A headed goal by Denis Zakaria and a Aleksandr Golovin strike were enough for Monaco to rebound from last weekend's loss at Lille and move up to second. "It was an even game, we could have lost too, but it's good to win after last week's defeat," said Monaco boss Adi Huetter.

Jeremy Le Douaron put the ball in the net for the

striker Sardar Azmoun pulled the hosts level in the 91st minute with a bullet header — his first goal in Serie A — and Lukaku brought the house down three minutes later with a rifled finish.

"It was a crazy match which could have gone either way. It went in our favor," said Mourinho to DAZN. Lukaku's winner was redemption as he would have bore the brunt of the blame for a defeat after missing a sixth-minute penalty and another golden opportunity eight minutes after the break.

The Belgium striker, who had a difficult return to Inter Milan last weekend, charged to the stands where he

was hailed for a late winner which moved Roma above Lazio. Roma are eighth on 17 points, four points away from the Champions League spots and one ahead of Lazio who lost at Bologna on Friday.

Mourinho was also cheered by the return of Paulo Dybala, who laid on Lukaku's ninth Roma goal in all competitions since he signed on loan from Chelsea in late August. Dybala could easily have finished the game with a brace after a pair of sumptuous strikes in each half blazed wide, and he looked in fine fettle after recovering from a knee ligament injury.

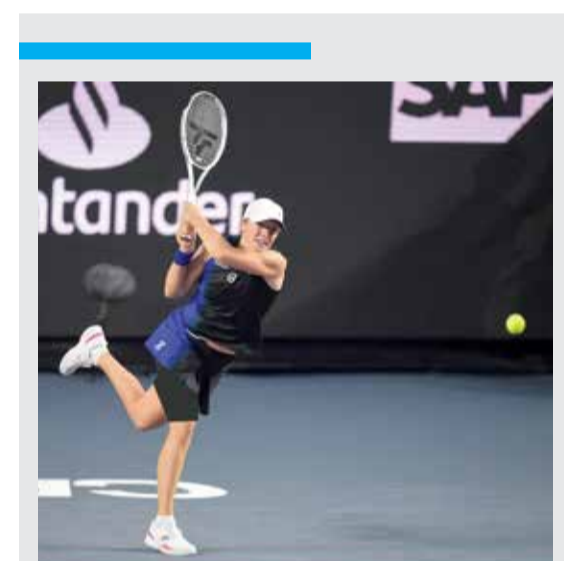


DECINES-CHARPIEU: Lyon's French forward #10 Alexandre Lacazette (top) fights for the ball with Metz's French-Ivorian defender #08 Ismael Traore during the French L1 football match between Olympique Lyonnais (OL) and FC Metz at The Groupama Stadium in Decines-Charpieu. — AFP

visitors on 11 minutes, but the goal was disallowed by VAR. Five minutes later, Zakaria nipped in ahead of Marco Bizot to nod home from a corner. The points were sewn up in the 69th minute when Golovin controlled Youssef Fofana's pass and slotted in Monaco's second. — AFP

"Paulo is obviously important for us," said Mourinho. "I've just spoken to him and while I thought he would say it would be better to stay here, not travel (to Slavia Prague in the Europa League) and prepare for next weekend, he told me that he wants to come with us."

Lecce are 11th after losing four and drawing two of their last six league matches. Roma are level on points with Fiorentina who host Juventus in Sunday's late match, which home fans demanded be postponed following the serious damage wrought across Tuscany by Storm Ciaran. — AFP



CANCUN: Poland's Iga Swiatek returns the ball to Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka during their women's singles semifinal tennis match at the WTA Finals Championship in Cancun, Mexico. — AFP

Swiatek beats Sabalenka in WTA Finals semis

CANCUN: Second-ranked Iga Swiatek defeated world number one Aryna Sabalenka 6-3, 6-2 on Sunday to reach the title match of the WTA Finals, where she will face fellow unbeaten Jessica Pegula. By downing the reigning Australian Open champion, Swiatek denied Sabalenka a victory that would have clinched the year-end top ranking for the 25-year-old from Belarus.

Instead, reigning French Open champion Swiatek of Poland can claim the year-end world number one spot for the second consecutive season by defeating American Pegula in Monday's championship match.

"I feel like it's still a long way away because I feel like tomorrow's match will be the toughest one," Swiatek said. "We can talk about it tomorrow after the match. I'm just going to continue doing what I've been doing."

Sabalenka overtook Swiatek for the top ranking two months ago but would keep it only if Pegula wins. Pegula beat compatriot Coco Gauff 6-2, 6-1 in an hour on Saturday to reach the WTA Finals championship match, stretching her overall win streak to nine matches.

Swiatek owns a 5-3 career edge over Pegula in their rivalry but the American has won two of their three meetings this year, at the United Cup and in an August semi-final on Montreal hardcourts. Swiatek beat Pegula in this year's Doha final.

"I can't truly tell you the keys for tomorrow," Swiatek said. "I'm going to work on that." The final was delayed to Monday due to rain that played havoc with the week's schedule at the outdoor hardcourts in Cancun, Mexico—including stopping Swiatek and Sabalenka only three games into their semi-final on Saturday night.

Swiatek was ahead 2-1 on serve when play resumed Sunday and the Pole went on the grab the only break of the opening set. Swiatek broke early in the second set and broke again for 5-2 with an overhead smash, then held serve to win on her first match point on a service winner.

Sabalenka had beaten Swiatek in last year's WTA Finals semi-finals and they had split two prior meetings this year, both on clay. — AFP

Japan baseball fans leap into river as 'Curse of the Colonel' lifted

Country's most passionately-supported team beat Orix Buffaloes in the final game



OSAKA: Members of the Hanshin Tigers baseball team hoist their manager Akinobu Okada (C) into the air as they celebrate winning the Nippon Series baseball championship for the first time in 38 years, after beating the Orix Buffaloes 7-1 in Game 7 of the best-of-seven series, at the Kyocera Dome in Osaka. — AFP

OSAKA: Dozens of baseball fans in Osaka hurled themselves into a filthy city-centre river and partied long into the night after the Hanshin Tigers won the Japan Series for only the second time in their history. The country's most passionately-supported team beat the Orix Buffaloes in the final game of the best-of-seven series late on Sunday night to win the title for the first time since 1985. It lifted the so-called "Curse of the Colonel", which warned that the Tigers would never win another Japan Series after fans threw a plastic statue of Colonel Sanders snatched from a nearby KFC restaurant

into the river the last time they won the title. Tigers fan Yuko Kawase, who attends about 80 or 90 games a season as well as the team's training camps, told AFP that it felt "like a dream". "It's been 38 years since the last time, and Hanshin fans who I have known have passed away since then," she said. "A lot happens in a person's life over the course of 38 years and I have been reflecting on a lot of things." Police had warned fans not to jump into the Dotonbori River, which authorities had described as like "swimming in toilet water". One person died after diving in when the Ti-

gers won the Central League pennant in 2003. But the warning went unheeded after the Tigers' latest victory, with cheers erupting every time a fan hurled himself into the murky water, though no injuries were reported. One man even arrived for the celebrations dressed as Colonel Sanders, and was duly tossed into the river. "I'm so happy," said fan Hiroshi Okamoto. "I want to celebrate the long-awaited moment of victory with everyone." The Tigers are massively popular in baseball-crazy Osaka, but they have a long history of under-

achievement. They last reached the Japan Series in 2014, where they lost the best-of-seven contest 4-1 against the Fukuoka Softbank Hawks. Their woeful record stands in stark contrast to their Tokyo-based arch-rivals the Yomiuri Giants, who have won the Japan Series 22 times and are considered their country's equivalent of the New York Yankees. But the Tigers bucked the trend this year, beating the defending champion Buffaloes in seven games to claim the title. "Each one of them has a role to play, and they all do it well," said Tigers fan Yoko Sakai. "They play a very connected style of baseball." — AFP

Durant leads Suns to NBA win, Cavs end Warriors' mastery

WASHINGTON: Kevin Durant scored 41 points to lead the Phoenix Suns over Detroit and former Suns coach Monty Williams on Sunday while Britain's O.G. Anunoby sparked Toronto's stunning NBA rally at San Antonio. Toronto made a 22-point fightback to beat the Spurs 123-116 in overtime while the Cleveland Cavaliers sparkled as well, snapping a 12-game regular-season losing streak to Golden State dating to Christmas 2016. Durant added five assists, four rebounds, three blocked shots and a steal to power the Suns past the host Pistons 120-106. "He was terrific, scored the ball every way you can, really wants it," Suns coach Frank Vogel said. "Just a really terrific performance. He's really good at basketball and he showed it tonight." The Suns outscored Detroit in every quarter as Eric Gordon contributed 21 points and eight assists for Phoenix, which snapped a three-game losing skid. "We're excited because we finally got a win," Durant said. Cade Cunningham led Detroit with 26 points in the first regular-season matchup between the Suns and their former coach Williams. After Williams was fired as the Suns' coach following a second-round playoff exit last season, Detroit signed him to a six-year deal worth \$78.5 million. The Suns were without Bradley Beal, sidelined by back spasms, and Devin Booker, out with a calf strain.

Raptors rally

At Cleveland, Donovan Mitchell scored 31 points and Darius Garland added 24 to power the Cavaliers over Golden State 115-104. "The biggest thing for us is that we put together a full game," Mitchell said. "We fought hard. That's a tough team. They have a lot of guys who have won championship rings and we're trying to get to that level. We've got to continue this momentum."

Evan Mobley added a game-high 16 rebounds for the Cavs. "He was dominant," Mitchell said. Stephen Curry led the Warriors with 28 points, hitting 7-of-11 shots from 3-point range, while Draymond Green



DETROIT: Jalen Duren #0 of the Detroit Pistons loses control of the ball between Drew Eubanks #14 and Yuta Watanabe #18 of the Phoenix Suns during the second half at Little Caesars Arena. — AFP

added 18 points for Golden State, which saw a five-game win streak ended. At San Antonio, 26-year-old English forward Anunoby scored 24 points for the Raptors, hitting a career-best seven 3-pointers to spark a shocking comeback over star French rookie Victor Wembanyama's Spurs. Scottie Barnes sparkled for Toronto with a game-high 30 points, 11 rebounds, six assists, three steals and three blocked shots. Anunoby sank the tying basket off a rebound with one second remaining to send the game into overtime at 110-110. His 3-point-er in the extra session game Toronto a 118-112 edge. German guard Dennis Schroder added 24 points for the Raptors. Keldon Johnson led San Antonio with 26 points while Zach Collins added 21 points and 11 rebounds and Wembanyama contributed 20 points, nine rebounds, five blocked shots and four assists for the Spurs.

Memphis finally wins

Desmond Bane scored 30 points and Jaren Jackson added 27 to spark previously winless Memphis to victory, the Grizzlies improving to 1-6 with a 112-100 triumph at Portland. At Dallas, Slovenian guard Luka Doncic had 23 points, 12 rebounds and nine assists to spark the Dallas Mavericks over Charlotte 124-118.

Kyrie Irving had 18 points and 10 assists for the Mavs, 5-1 overall and 3-0 at home, while Grant Williams scored 18 points and Dereck Lively added 15 points and 14 rebounds. LaMelo Ball led the Hornets with a triple double of 30 points, 13 assists and 10 rebounds. — AFP

Eagles hold off Dallas while Chiefs, Ravens grab NFL wins

LOS ANGELES: Jalen Hurts threw for two touchdowns and ran for another to lead Philadelphia's dramatic 28-23 NFL victory over Dallas on Sunday while Kansas City and Baltimore notched impressive triumphs. Hurts completed 17-of-23 passes for 207 yards and two touchdowns and ran 10 times for 36 yards and a touchdown while the Eagles defenders denied Cowboys star Dak Prescott in the dying seconds for the victory. "How about that defense? They played a hell of a game," Hurts said. "Had some adversity but the way they showed up for us in the end... we found a way to win. That's all that matters." Hurts was limping after being sacked by Micah Parsons late in the second quarter, but he answered any worries about a left knee injury by driving the Eagles for two scores in the third quarter, his touchdown throws of 29 yards to DeVonta Smith and four yards to A.J. Brown.

"For this team, for this city, I'll do anything," Hurts said. "I'm just happy we were able to get a win. That's all that matters in the end." Prescott, who threw for 374 yards and three touchdowns, threw a seven-yard touchdown pass to Jalen Tolbert in the fourth quarter but stepped out of bounds on a two-point conversion run to create the final margin. Prescott drove Dallas 11 yards seeking a go-ahead touchdown in the last seconds but a sack, incompleting and penalty set up a last-play throw to CeeDee Lamb short of the end zone to give the Eagles a victory that improved their NFL-best mark to 8-1.

"We just want to continue to build momentum, continue to clean things up, continue to press forward — continue to grow into the team we know we can be," Hurts said. Red-hot Baltimore steam-rolled visiting Seattle 37-3, improving to 7-2 as Keaton Mitchell ran for 138 yards and Gus Edwards ran for two touchdowns.

In Frankfurt, Germany, Patrick Mahomes threw

for two touchdowns as the Kansas City Chiefs beat the Miami Dolphins 21-14. The Chiefs raced ahead 21-0 before holding off a late Miami fight-back. Patrick Mahomes found Rashee Rice for an 11-yard touchdown pass and hit Jerick McKinnon for a touchdown to cap a 13-play, 95-yard drive for a 14-0 lead.

The Chiefs forced a fumble from former Chiefs receiver Tyreek Hill of Miami and recovered the ball, with Chiefs safety Mike Edwards tossing a lateral to Bryan Cook, who sprinted 59 yards for a touchdown and a 21-0 lead.

Touchdowns from Cedrick Wilson Jr. and Raheem Mostert in the third quarter lifted the Dolphins within the final margin but Miami turned the ball over on downs when quarterback Tua Tagovailoa fumbled a wayward snap. "I'm always going to blame myself — I've got to catch the ball," Tagovailoa said. "Can't end the game like that when you have an opportunity against a really good team." Mahomes, who went 20-for-30 for 185 yards, saluted the Chiefs' defense. "When we've got a defense like that, I can trust we'll find a way to win football games," Mahomes said. The AFC West division-leading Chiefs improved to 7-2 while Miami slid to 6-3.

Bengals beat Bills

Cincinnati's Joe Burrow threw for 348 yards and two touchdowns and Joe Mixon ran for another touchdown as the host Bengals beat Buffalo 24-18. "We played great in the first half," Burrow said. "Had our moments in the second half. Defense stepped up in big spots. Big team win." Josh Allen's 17-yard touchdown pass to Stefon Diggs and a two-point conversion pass to Diggs with 3:32 remaining lifted the Bills within the final margin. Mixon, however, ran for a first down in the final minutes to secure the victory.

Buffalo's Damar Hamlin, who suffered a cardiac arrest when hit during a game at Cincinnati in January, was not activated for the Bills for the team's first game back in the venue. Houston rookie C.J. Stroud threw for 470 yards and five touchdowns, including the late game winner as the host Texans beat Tampa Bay 39-37. Minnesota took a dramatic 31-28 road triumph over the Falcons behind stand-in Joshua Dobbs, replacing injured quarterback Kirk Cousins. — AFP