

**2** 80 new ambulances to reinforce Kuwait health system by 2024



**3** Zain fosters environmental awareness and action



**7** British minister condemned for comments on Palestinian protests



**16** New Zealand on brink of World Cup semi-finals



## MP Mudhaf to grill PM

Govt positive over raising pensions, cost of living



By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** MP Muhaf Al-Mudhaf said on Thursday that he will file a grilling motion against His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah next week for refusing to answer questions and also over public policy of the government.

The lawmaker said in a statement that he has sent a question to the prime minister over the implementation of the policies outlined in the historical address delivered by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah in June last year on behalf of His Highness the Amir. Mudhaf said that he received a message from the Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs stating that the question is unconstitutional and accordingly will not be answered. The lawmaker said that he asked the Prime Minister about the policies he will adopt in implementing the content of the address.

Mudhaf accused HH the Prime Minister of abandoning the policies included in the address, adding that those policies would have transformed Kuwait

politics in a very big way. The lawmaker said that despite massive parliamentary support, HH the Prime Minister formed a very weak Cabinet following the June elections. This shows that HH the Prime Minister cannot run the affairs of the country.

MP Mudhaf also charged that HH the Prime Minister did not live up to expectations regarding foreign policy, especially regarding the Iraqi court ruling on the Khor Abdullah waterway and the dispute with Iran over the Dorra gas field.

In the meantime, head of the financial and economic affairs committee MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri said on Thursday that the government was positive regarding draft laws to raise pensions and the cost of living. The committee meeting was attended by Finance Minister Fahad Al-Jarallah who "almost agreed to raise the minimum pension for thousands of retired Kuwaitis to at least KD 1,000 monthly".

Muwaizri also said that the Finance Minister was very positive towards raising the cost of living for Kuwaiti citizens, adding that the issue will be left to the National Assembly to debate next Tuesday.

### Kuwait: Zionist entity joining NPT imperative

**NEW YORK:** The State of Kuwait calls on the international community to pressure the Zionist entity into joining the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), a step imperative for the security of the world, said a Kuwaiti diplomat. Delivering a speech at the UN headquarters in New York during a discussion on a report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), member of the Kuwait's permanent delegation, diplomatic attaché Abdulaziz Al-Saeedi, reflected on Kuwait's bewilderment on the IAEA's lack of response towards the Zionist entity minister's statements in regards to using nuclear weapons as an "option" against the Gaza Strip. He said the statement reflected the occupation's "bloodthirsty" attitude, "ethnic cleansing" tendencies, and lack of respect towards international laws and norms.

Al-Saeedi called on the global community to hold countries in the Middle East responsible for their action, stressing that respect of international laws concerning nuclear security matters was necessary. He reiterated Kuwait's stance on clearing the Middle East from Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) in line with the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Kuwait had received experts from the IAEA last May, revealed Al-Saeedi, who affirmed that the agency's delegation commended Kuwait's efforts setting measures to secure facilities from radioactive materials.

In line with the IAEA's slogan—"Atoms for Peace and Development"—Kuwait reaffirms its stance to cooperate with the global community to prevent all sorts of crises, said Al-Saeedi. The diplomat revealed that Kuwait had several projects utilizing nuclear technologies in the medical, environmental, and power-generating fields. — KUNA

### Saudi to host Arab summits on Gaza as fears mount

**RIYADH:** Arab Foreign Ministers held on Thursday a preparatory meeting for the extraordinary Arab Summit, due in Riyadh on Saturday, with Kuwait represented by Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The top diplomats would discuss means of ending the Zionist entity's aggression on Gaza Strip, which killed over 10,000 people and injured many

more. The meeting aims at preparing one draft resolution about the Zionist entity's aggression on Gaza and would be submitted to the Arab leaders, Husam Zaki, Arab League Assistant Secretary General, said in a statement. He said Arab leaders would have a united position regarding the Zionist entity's aggression, and how the Arab countries act to stop it, as well as condemning the Zionist entity's crimes against the Palestinian people.

Thursday's meeting was chaired by Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan and attended by Arab Foreign Ministers, and Arab League Secretary General Ahmad Abul Gheit. Meanwhile, Foreign Affairs Minister Sheikh Salem stressed on Thursday the importance of immediate end of Zionist entity's crimes in Gaza.

Continued on Page 6



RIYADH: Foreign Affairs Minister Sheikh Salem receives his British counterpart James Cleverly on Thursday. — KUNA

### Thousands flee as Zionist entity pounds Gaza City

**WASHINGTON/GAZA CITY:** Zionist entity has agreed to begin daily four-hour military pauses in northern Gaza to allow people in the area to flee the war, the White House said on Thursday. "Zionist entity will begin to implement four-hour pauses in areas of northern Gaza each day, with an announcement to be made three hours beforehand," National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told reporters.

Meanwhile, Zionist air strikes pounded Gaza City on Thursday as soldiers battled street-by-street and tens of thousands of Palestinians desperate for safety fled their homes southwards in the besieged territory. After more than a month of intense bombardment, hundreds of thousands of people remain trapped in a "dire humanitarian situation" in urban battle zones without enough food and water, the United Nations said. Broken palm trees, distorted road signs and twisted lampposts marked the ruins of what was once north Gaza's main arterial route, an AFP journalist saw while embedded with Zionist entity

Continued on Page 6



GAZA CITY: Palestinians fleeing Gaza City and other parts of northern Gaza towards the southern areas walk along a highway on November 9, 2023 amid the ongoing attacks by Zionist entity in Gaza. — AFP

### Climate policy must not 'crush' less powerful: Saudi

**RIYADH:** Saudi Arabia said on Thursday that policies to address climate change should not "crush the bones" of countries grappling with energy poverty, ahead of the COP28 climate talks in Dubai. Speaking

at a conference on economic cooperation with Africa, the Gulf kingdom's energy minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said more must be done to help the estimated 800 million people globally who don't have steady access to electricity.

Climate change is "relevant and important" but "should not be attended to by crushing the bones and the future of the less (powerful) people," Prince Abdulaziz said. "Why do we sit on our hands and do nothing about this population?"

Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest crude oil exporter, announced in 2021 that it was targeting net

zero emissions by 2060. However Saudi officials also argue that continued new investments in hydrocarbons are necessary for energy stability.

Prince Abdulaziz said on Thursday that attempts to provide financial support to countries affected by climate change had so far delivered poor results. The agreement to set up a dedicated fund to help vulnerable countries cope with climate "loss and damage" was a flagship achievement of last year's COP27 talks in Egypt. But countries left the details to be worked out later. Richer countries promised in 2009

Continued on Page 6



## Local

# 80 new ambulances to reinforce health system by 2024: Al-Awadhi

## Minister inaugurates emergency response center in Al-Mutlaa



Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi inaugurates the emergency response center in Al-Mutlaa area. — KUNA photos



The health minister during the inauguration of the emergency response center in Al-Mutlaa area.

KUWAIT: Eighty newly acquired ambulances will be in service by 2024, as part of government's efforts to reinforce the national health system as a whole and the emergency medical services in particular, stated Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi on Thursday. The minister's statement came after the inauguration of emergency response center in Al-Mutlaa area. The center will be operating at capacity of six ambulances and six technicians, working round-the-clock in sup-

port of Al-Jahraa medical area, and new Jahraa Hospital, explained Dr Al-Awadhi adding that four new medical centers are to be inaugurated in the area.

The minister further asserted that they are determined to expedite execution process as life begins to grow in the area housing some 28,000 residential plots. He added that they are working on developing emergency response via air and sea as well.

Dr Ahmad Al-Shatti, chief of emergency re-

sponse services, mentioned that nine emergency response centers had been inaugurated within a year, taking total to 86 centers as part of developmental expansion plan. The center will also extend services to Al-Abdali Road, to provide rapid response and alleviate part of the load. The director of the newly inaugurated center, Abdulrahman Al-Yousef, took time to explain the layout and the sanitization measures of the center. — KUNA

## Exploring Kuwait's position in sustainable farming, biodiversity

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: "The question confronting the world by the end of the 21st century would be food security and conservation." This is what horticulturalist Athari Al-Mutawaa told Kuwait Times in an interview when she spoke about Kuwait's challenges of finding harmony between sustainable farming practices that protect biodiversity and the importance to enhance agricultural productivity.



Athari Al-Mutawaa

**Kuwait Times:** What are some of the challenges faced by the agriculture sector in Kuwait in relation to biodiversity conservation?

**Al-Mutawaa:** Agriculture in itself affects biodiversity because of population growth. Especially with new urban development there is more pressure to change natural landscapes into farming areas to



meet the increasing consumption demands. Also, these agricultural areas or farms may use chemical pesticides or soil additives (hydrogels/chemical fertilizers) that may have a lasting impact on the natural biota affecting the balance of our ecosystem. The greatest challenge I would have to say in terms of agriculture in relation to biodiversity is human needs. Feeding the masses would take precedent over biodiversity conservation especially in the wake of climate change where Kuwait's greatest limitation is that there are little natural water resources. The cardinal question by the end of the 21st century would be food security or conservation. Although native plants may hold the answer to this dilemma as if they have the ability to withstand

high temperatures and low water, they may be used to create genetically modified produces that can cater to the masses.

**KT:** Are there any governmental policies or regulations in place to protect biodiversity and agriculture in Kuwait?

**Al-Mutawaa:** There are regulations: Executive regulations of the Seeds and Seedlings Law (Regulation) for the Gulf Cooperation Council countries approved by Law No (3) of 2013 of the State of Kuwait. This law protects native wildlife in terms of seeds collection and resale of native plants.

**KT:** How can farmers and agricultural stakeholders in Kuwait contribute to the conservation of biodiversity?

**Al-Mutawaa:** Farmers and agricultural stakeholders can help through a variety of methods, such as: Educating farmers on better farming practices to optimize resources, better monitoring of safe farming practices and food quality (pesticide), providing subsidies to create smart greenhouses (technology towards precision farming), using forecasts for agricultural production based on consumer demands, applying a farm to fork strategy, supporting more local produce when it comes to market prices. There should be a shift towards reducing waste loss by recycling and reusing organic material, maybe through creating a circular agricultural food system. By creating factories to produce food products that can be exported, we can also expand the food industry in Kuwait and provide storage facilities that can be rented out for storing long-term perishables.

## KNPC and Abdullah Al-Salem University to boost cooperation

KUWAIT: Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) and Abdullah Al-Salem University seek to join hands to exchange know-how, scientific research and development, after the two sides signed a memorandum of understanding.

"This MoU sets the foundation for an important partnership with Abdullah Al-Salem University and plays a positive role in scientific research and development," Wadha Al-Khateeb, KNPC CEO, said in a

statement on Thursday.

Scientific and Technological development required specialized academic expertise, she noted. Dr. Moudhi Al-Humoud, Chairperson of Abdullah Al-Salem University's Constituent Board, said cooperation with KNPC would serve common aspirations at different levels. The MoU, signed by Al-Khateeb and Al-Humoud, would include field training for students, supervising post-graduate students, encourage innovation, register patents, holding conferences and workshops and visiting refineries.

The memorandum was signed at KNPC headquarters in Ahmadi by the company's CEO Wadha Al-Khateeb and by the university's founding board chair Dr Al-Humoud. The MoU seeks to establish a framework for cooperation between the two sides that includes several areas and activities, such as



KUWAIT: Officials of KNPC and Abdullah Al-Salem University during the signing of the MoU on Thursday. — KUNA

field training for students, providing the expertise of faculty members to the company, and joint supervision of graduate students in terms of evaluation. The memorandum would also encourage innovation, register patents, host visiting delegations, exchange

information and research and academic resources, and coordinate joint seminars, lectures, conferences, and workshops. The company will also seek the help of specialized researchers from the university to visit the refining sites. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The members of IWG pose for a photo during the event.

## IWG holds stress management event for its members

KUWAIT: The International Women's Group Kuwait (IWG) held a 'Stress-Management and Tranquility' event for its members and honored guests on Nov 5, 2023 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Farwaniya.

In her opening speech, Antonia Dimitrova, President of the IWG and wife of the ambassador of Bulgaria, welcomed the attendees saying she hoped everyone would benefit from incorporating the event's stress-management techniques in their daily lives.

Layla Boulos, IWG public relations coordinator, introduced the guest speaker, Darine Jabra, 'Transurfing & TFT Thought Field Therapy Coach, who spoke of the nature, types and causes of stress and



gave examples of its signs and symptoms. Jabra then shared specific TFT tapping techniques to help in relaxation and anxiety reduction; members were guided through specific routines which could be easily used in times of stress and anxiety.

The event then continued with a presentation by Mohammed Al-Hasan, co-founder of Caffiene Coffee Company and a Black belt & practicing

martial arts specialist since 2000, spoke of the physical and psychological benefits of exercise.

Al-Hasan also demonstrated special martial art breathing techniques in which the entire audience participated. The event was highly appreciated by all attendees, with many saying that anxiety and stress had become a major part of life and stress-management an absolute necessity. On be-

half of the executive board, IWG's two Vice-Presidents, Saia Beridbay, spouse of the Ambassador of Kazakhstan and Polina Dalmini, spouse of the Ambassador of Eswatini, joined President Dimitrova in presenting shields of appreciation to the honored guest speakers. A raffle was then followed with a specially prepared healthy buffet by the chefs of the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

## Vietnam Ambassador visits Dasman Diabetes Institute

KUWAIT: Vietnamese Ambassador to Kuwait Thang Toan NGO paid a field visit to Dasman Diabetes Institute, which was established by Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences. The Ambassador was met by Dr Qais Saleh Al-Duwairi, Director General of Dasman Diabetes Institute. The Ambassador's visit aimed at getting to know closely the important institutions in Kuwait and strengthening scientific cooperation.

During his visit to the institute, many scientific and research topics, and issues of common interest between the two sides, were discussed.

The Ambassador was briefed about the institute's scientific progress, its importance and its role in the service of scientific research in Kuwait. They also discussed ways to enhance joint research and scientific cooperation. In turn, the Ambassador praised the institute's impressive developments and achievements.



Ambassador Thang Toan (second left) with Dr Qais Saleh Al-Duwairi (second right) and other officials.

# Zain fosters environmental awareness and action

## Company joins Kuwait Dive Team's beach cleanup campaign for schoolchildren



KUWAIT: Waleed Al-Khashti, Waleed Al-Fadhel and Waleed Al-Ansari at the press conference.



From the campaign kick-off.

**KUWAIT:** Under its strategic partnership with the Kuwait Dive Team, and in a step to foster more environmental awareness and action, Zain has joined the team's recently launched 9th beach cleanup campaign. The weekly initiative targets schoolchildren from the elementary and middle school levels, and is held in partnership with the Youth Public Authority.

The company recently participated in a press conference to announce the campaign's kick-off, attended by Zain Kuwait Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti, Kuwait Dive Team Director Waleed Al-Fadhel, and Volunteer Work Department Manager at the Youth Public Authority Waleed Al-Ansari.

Zain was present at the campaign's debut session at Sulaibikhat beach, joined by enthusiastic girls from a local elementary school. Before the cleanup, the girls were introduced to the Kuwait Dive Team's mission, goals, and achievements, then shown an outline of the day's plan. The productive session was supervised by the school's teachers, Kuwait Dive Team's members, and Zain's team.

This campaign continues weekly and is joined by hundreds of schoolchildren who are eager to make

positive change. It aims to introduce young people to volunteer work from an early age, while fostering a sense of environmental sustainability through action. The campaign covers key local beaches, and is joined by companies, nonprofits, and government agencies. This initiative falls under Zain's long-term strategic partnership with the Kuwait Dive Team, which continues this year for over 25 years. As part of this partnership, the company recently presented a fully equipped boat to aid the team's marine protection operations in Kuwait. This was the fourth boat presented by Zain to the team during their partnership that started back in 1997.

Zain's boat is used by the team's volunteers to run and maintain hundreds of marine protection missions, resulting in the removal of thousands of tons of harmful waste, and the protection of tens of thousands of sea creatures. Operations conducted using the boat include installing and maintaining marine cleats, removing discarded fishing nets, debris, and other harmful waste, and protecting sea creatures, shipping lanes, and coasts from pollution. The boat is also used to monitor coral reefs, preserve and rehabilitate coastlines, and document



Initiative aims to foster positive change.

Kuwait's rich marine environment.

Zain puts environmental sustainability at the forefront of its priorities. The company's social message seeks to create a culture of sustainability

within the community by advocating practices like reducing consumption, recycling, using renewable sources of energy, preserving the marine environment, and more.

## Kuwait University hosts Bulgarian ambassador

**KUWAIT:** Acting President of Kuwait University Prof Dr Meshari Al-Harbi received the Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria to Kuwait Dimitar Dimitrov on Tuesday at the office of the Rector of Kuwait University in Sabah Al-Salem University City. The meeting sought to strengthen cultural and academic relations between the Kuwait and Bulgaria.

Welcoming the Ambassador, Prof Al-Harbi expressed Kuwait University's keenness to exchange experiences as well as cultures between the universities and educational institutions in the world.

Prof Al-Harbi stressed the readiness of Kuwait University to provide services and academic cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Bulgaria, and discussed the conclusion of agreements between Kuwait University and the University of Sofia. The discussion centered around the Arabic language department at the Sofia University in addition to re-



KUWAIT: Acting President of Kuwait University Prof Dr Meshari Al-Harbi receives the Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria to Kuwait Dimitar Dimitrov on Tuesday.

search cooperation and student exchange programs between the two countries.

Dimitrov thanked Prof Al-Harbi for hosting him at Kuwait University and the university administration for its proposals and submitting a memorandum of understanding to expand research cooperation between the countries.

## Expert explains how spreading awareness can prevent child abuse

By Abdulaziz Makhseed

**KUWAIT:** Children, the most valuable members of our society, constitute nearly 21 percent of Kuwait's population, underscoring their pivotal role in shaping our nation's future. Nevertheless, a grave concern looms over this reality: The prevalence of child abuse in all its forms — physical, emotional, and sexual. A private study conducted by the Kuwait Medical Society recently shed light on the harrowing extent of this issue, revealing that an alarming 12 percent of the 2,508 students surveyed had experienced mild exposure to sexual content at a young age, 7 percent had experienced direct inappropriate sexual violations by adults, and a distressing 2 percent had endured the trauma of rape.

However, a troubling question arises: Why is this critical issue not receiving the attention it deserves in mainstream media or authorized studies? The answer lies in the absence of a state-defined definition of child sexual abuse, which has led independent researchers to follow World Health Organization guidelines. Furthermore, the lack of official record-keeping places this serious matter in the hands of isolated professional experts, creating a gap between abuse victims and the appropriate authorities, including the police.

Kuwait Times spoke with Shaima Namavar, a certified child abuse prevention specialist, who emphasized that "child sexual abuse is a deeply entrenched problem that requires a united effort. Our progress in protecting our children is hampered by the lack of awareness in that matter. We need to educate parents, educators, and children about recognizing and reporting abuse."

Another significant impediment to addressing this crisis is the fear ingrained in family structures and societal stigmatization, which frequently stifles the reporting of abuse cases. "The fear of tarnishing the family's reputation often leads to a silence that perpetuates the abuse cycle," Namavar explained. "Our society must shift its focus from shame to support so that victims can speak up without fear of retaliation," she said.

However, there are rays of hope among these



difficulties, as she emphasized the progress made. "Over the last few years, Kuwaiti society has taken steps toward addressing this issue. We've seen an increase in child protection discussions in schools and community gatherings. It's heartening to see our community gradually recognize the significance of providing a safe environment for our children."

A solution to this heinous problem requires increased awareness and comprehensive education on this sensitive subject. A recent study of 121 children found that, while many could recognize examples of abuse, their methods of identification varied significantly. This emphasizes the significance of a broad and approachable educational approach to foster collective understanding.

Every individual, family and community bears a responsibility to protect our children. Parents and caregivers must be educated on the signs of abuse and must report any suspicious activity to the appropriate authorities immediately. By supporting organizations dedicated to child protection, the community can also provide invaluable assistance. Recognizing child protection as a critical concern, it is incumbent on both authorities and the community to focus their collective efforts on ensuring the well-being of our children.

Despite numerous challenges, Kuwaiti society has made commendable progress in addressing this issue in a relatively short period of time. However, continued collaborative efforts are required to ensure the safety and holistic development of all children in Kuwait. We have the power to reshape the narrative and ensure a brighter future for our children by raising awareness, destigmatizing reporting and providing unwavering support to victims.



Kuwait Dive Team and NBK volunteers lifted 30 tons sunken boat from Fahaheel Waters.

## NBK supports Kuwait Dive Team project for marine environment

**KUWAIT:** As part of its corporate social responsibility and corporate sustainability strategy, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continues its supports to the Kuwait Dive Team project. Kuwait Dive Team and NBK volunteers lifted 30 tons sunken boat from Fahaheel Waters.

It was an occasion to call on boat owners and fishermen to preserve the environment of the area and call for tightening relevant laws against violators to protect the marine environment of Kuwait.

NBK Public Relations Senior Manager, Yaqoub Al-Baqer, said: "The environment is a major priority for NBK. Protecting and preserving the environment are pivotal elements of our social commit-

ment for the aim of realizing overall sustainability in Kuwait." Al Baqer added: "NBK is proud to join Kuwait Dive Team in these initiatives to clean up and preserve the marine environment of the Kuwait Bay, which is one of the main drivers of the national economy." "NBK is committed to promoting the adoption of socially impactful and accountable practices in Kuwait.

This initiative is in-line with our commitment to raise awareness on the best practices of social responsibility as well as increase awareness to reduce harm and preserve the environment," he noted. NBK is keen on supporting programs that serve the community and spread awareness in efforts to keep the environment safe and clean. NBK remains the largest contributor to society, NBK confirmed its commitment to corporate social responsibility through its tireless community development efforts. The Kuwait diving team has been participating in the protection and rehabilitation of Kuwait's aquatic world through a host of activities that runs the spectrum of positive interaction with the environment.

## Kuwait Int'l Airport handled one million passengers in Oct

**KUWAIT:** The General Administration of Civil Aviation reported on Wednesday that the total number of passengers traveling to and from Kuwait International Airport in October reached 1,013,505. Acting Director General Imad Al-Jalawi told KUNA that in October, Kuwait International Airport experienced an 11 percent increase in passenger traffic and a 27 percent rise in aircraft movement, while air cargo traffic also saw a 10 percent increase compared to the same period the previous year.

Jalawi further revealed that the incoming passenger count for October was 447,013, while departing passengers numbered 566,492. The total number of transit passengers stood at 186,359, marking a 38 percent increase compared to October of the previous year.

Regarding aircraft movements, there were a total of 11,169 flights to and from Kuwait International Airport in October, a notable increase compared to the 8,807 flights during the same period the previous year. As for air freight, Jalawi reported that the total volume of freight movement in October was approximately 19.4 million kg, with incoming freight totaling around 15.2 million kg and outgoing freight amounting to about 4.1 million kg.

Jalawi also noted that the most popular destinations during this period included Dubai, Cairo, Jeddah, Istanbul and Doha. — KUNA

## Local

Kuwait Times  
Established 1961THE LEADING INDEPENDENT  
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF  
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher

YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN

Editor-in-Chief

ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432

ADVERTISING : 24833199 Extn. 301

CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 220

ACCOUNTS : 24833199 Extn. 125

P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.

Email: info@kuwaittimes.com

Website: www.kuwaittimes.com

KUNA launches  
competition for  
its journalists

KUWAIT: Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) officially on Wednesday launched its competition for journalistic excellence, aiming to motivate its employees to foster creativity, innovation and professional development. This competition offers annual recognition and rewards for outstanding achievements in journalism, including the best journalistic investigation, the best news report and the best interview.

These awards are open to employees working within KUNA's editorial sector and those from other divisions of the agency who are interested in participating. The submitted works must address topics of local significance within Kuwait or pertain to Arab countries. It is essential that the entries have not been previously published in KUNA or any other media outlets.

Eligible participants should not have previously entered similar competitions, either within Kuwait or elsewhere. Additionally, the submitted work must be in the Arabic language and have a minimum word count of 400 words. Each employee is allowed to submit only one piece of work, and it should not breach any legal regulations. Submissions should be in PDF format and sent to the email address awards@kuna.net.kw. Works that do not meet the specified criteria will be disqualified.

All entries, whether they be reports, investigations, or interviews, must address important local and Arab developments. This can include areas such as economics, technology, sports, culture and various awareness campaigns, with a particular emphasis on the dangers of drugs and their adverse effects on society. It is crucial that the submitted work does not promote any particular party or ideology and aligns with KUNA's general editorial policy.

The awards for the best journalistic investigation, news report, and interview will be determined by a jury assembled by KUNA's administration. Submissions should be sent to the aforementioned email address, with the deadline for participation being Jan 31, 2024.

Kuwait's 17th aid plane to Gaza  
takes off with 32 tons of supplies

Kuwait reiterates commitment to assist suffering Palestinians



An Ambulance being loaded into the relief plane.



KUWAIT: Kuwait's 17th plane is being loaded with relief supplies for Gaza ready to take off on Thursday. — KUNA

KUWAIT: The 17th plane within the Kuwaiti relief air bridge took off on Thursday heading to the Egyptian city Al-Arish, carrying 32 tons of necessities for delivering in Gaza Strip. The aid plane is part of a campaign launched to aid Palestinians in Gaza initiated by the Kuwait Society for Relief (KSR), General Secretariat of Endowments, Kuwait Zakat House, the Public Authority for Minor Affairs and MyFatoorah company. Dr Ibrahim Al-Saleh, chairman of Board of Kuwait Society for Relief told KUNA prior to departure that (KSR) is continuing its humanitarian aid to the people of Palestine in Gaza after the heinous and relentless bombardment by the Zionist entity.

The plane contains 32 tons of supplies and medical necessities in addition to three ambulances, two of which are equipped with intensive care unit (ICU) equipment, Al-Saleh added. Director General of the Zakat House of Kuwait Dr Majed Al-Azmi said that Kuwait is striving to prevent any harm to the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip

and will continue assisting them as long as it needed.

Meanwhile, official at the Public Authority for Minor Affairs Bashayer Al-Idan said that the authority's role is to aid all those in need especially in Gaza in these difficult times. She added that the authority held many aid campaigns before to help the needy as it did after the earthquakes in Turkey and Morocco in addition to the floods in Libya and Pakistan.

Acting director of the Public Authority for Minor Affairs Nasser Al-Hamad said that the authority's assistance to aid Palestine campaign reached KD 500,000 most of which is in medical assistance, ambulances and food supplies. Abdullah Al-Dabous, founder and managing director of MyFatoorah said that his company's \$250,000 participation is the first in this campaign and expressed his appreciation and gratitude to all those who helped in delivering aid to the people of Palestine.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's 16th relief plane for Gazans loaded with 10 tons of



medical supplies arrived on Wednesday at Egypt's Al-Arish Airport. Director of the Volunteer Department at the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, Ahmad Al-Faqaan, told KUNA that the 16th plane from the Kuwaiti Air Bridge was carrying 10 tons of medical aid to the Gaza Strip, provided by the Kuwaiti

Red Crescent Society. The Kuwaiti humanitarian relief aid that has arrived at Al-Arish Airport since the beginning of the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip until Wednesday amounts to 399 tons, including food aid, medical equipment and supplies, 16 ambulances and drilling equipment. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Fajr Al-Sabah National School organized a unique artistic activity titled "Palestine is Our Cause" at the Scientific Center, Salmiya beach on Wednesday

Fajr Al-Sabah School  
holds artistic event  
for Palestinian cause

KUWAIT: Fajr Al-Sabah National School organized a unique artistic activity titled "Palestine is Our Cause" at the Scientific Center, Salmiya beach on Wednesday to generate awareness among the students and the public about the worsening humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip.

The awareness campaign, undertaken by the school in accordance with the direction of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, also underscores the school administra-

tion's strong belief in the need to create awareness about the Palestinian cause among the students.

The awareness was organized under the supervision of teachers in the Art Education Department, Nihal Kamel and Marian Younan. The students participated in the campaign with distinct creative paintings using a variety of materials. The paintings of the students suggested their high-level artistic capabilities and the deep understanding of the harrowing condition of the Palestinian people.

In order to inspire students, School Principal Dr Amal Al-Shehri, along with two assistant directors, Dalal Al-Sarheed and Lara Shawareb, oversaw their painting activity and followed up on their works. The school thanked the students who participated in the campaign and their families who are the first sponsors of these outstanding talents.

Scan & Subscribe  
KD 20 a year

For Individuals Only



Scan Now

Kuwait Times  
Established 1961  
The First English Daily in the Arabian Gulf

Tel: 24833199 Ext: 220



UK minister slammed for calling Palestine protests 'hate marches'

## Republican presidential hopefuls spar as Trump rallies nearby

Page 6

Page 7



RAFAH: Palestinians bury the bodies of members of the same family killed in Zionist bombing, during their funeral in the southern Gaza Strip, on Oct 31, 2023. — AFP

# Gazans bury their dead in orchards and football fields

## Gazans forced to improvise with cemeteries full or inaccessible due to bombardment

**GAZA:** Before he fled his home in northern Gaza, where intense fighting now rages between the Zionist occupation forces and Hamas, Mahmud al-Masri had a grim job to do: Bury his three brothers and their five children in a nearby citrus orchard.

With his home area turned into a war zone, the bereaved 60-year-old farmer had no choice but to dig makeshift graves and hastily bid farewell to his relatives killed in a Zionist strike. "We had to bury them there in the orchard because the cemetery is in the border zone where tanks are coming in, and it's very dangerous," Masri said. "I will transfer the bodies when the war is over."

Masri, who is now holed up with his family in a hospital in southern Gaza, lived

in a two-storey house in Beit Hanoun in the semi-rural northeast of the Gaza Strip, not far from the border fence with the Zionist entity. Masri decided initially to ignore Zionist warnings to flee south when they began relentlessly bombing the besieged strip in retaliation to the Oct 7 Hamas attack, which left 1,400 dead in the Zionist entity.

Two weeks of heavy bombardment changed his mind and he resolved to get his wife and children out when the fighting intensified and fears of a massive ground invasion grew day by day. Now — more than four weeks into the brutal war — upwards of 10,500 people, mostly women and children, have been killed in the Zionist bombardments of Gaza, according to the Gaza health ministry.

Masri told his story to AFP as he and his immediate family sheltered in an overcrowded hospital in the south. He recalled that he was forced to bury his brothers and nephews in the orchard because the incessant bombing and incursions by Zionist soldiers meant his family could not reach Beit Hanoun's cemetery. He put bricks on the ground to mark where his relatives lay. But he added that he had since learned that the Zionist military bulldozers had destroyed his house and said: "I don't know if the graves are still there as nothing is being spared."

### Mass graves

Since the Zionist entity launched its brutal attack, bodies have piled up outside

hospitals, on roads and in parks, in refrigerated trucks and even in a repurposed ice cream van. Most cemeteries are either full or inaccessible because of Zionist strikes, and so families of the dead have to improvise when burying their loved ones.

When dozens of people were killed in a bombardment at the Jabalia refugee camp in early November, around 50 bodies were stacked up in the rear of a pick-up truck and taken to a local hospital. From there they were transported, some in donkey-drawn carts, towards a cemetery for burial. But because of a lack of space there, relatives had to dig a communal mass grave at a dirt football field where local teams used to play, an AFP photographer said.

The sports ground is bordered on three sides by schools run by the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, which are now shelters for internally displaced Gazans. Men using picks and shovels dug a rectangular pit in the football field before burying the bodies, AFPPTV footage showed.

In the hole, men were laid on one side and women on the other. Corrugated iron sheeting was placed on top and then covered with a layer of earth. Shihteh Nasser, 48, helped in the burial. "We bury the dead in football fields and other vacant lots because the proper burial grounds are full," he said. "Sometimes the bodies are taken there in carts because there's no fuel anymore for cars." — AFP

## US raises pressure on Zionist entity as crisis deepens

**TOKYO:** The United States has given the Zionist entity its unequivocal support in its war with Hamas, though it wants its ally not to besiege or reoccupy Gaza, and to mitigate the deepening humanitarian crisis.

Washington has backed the entity's rejection of a ceasefire in the war, and also stands with it in its determination to crush Hamas following the Oct 7 attacks. "Ultimately, the only way to ensure that this crisis never happens again is to begin setting the conditions for durable peace and security, and to frame our diplomatic efforts now with that in mind," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Wednesday after a Group of 7 meeting in Japan.

While several countries around the world and UN agencies have called for a ceasefire, the G7 foreign ministers called in their joint statement for "humanitarian pauses and corridors" — in line with US policy on the conflict. Speaking to reporters after the G7 foreign ministers' meeting, Blinken also said Gaza should not be used "as a platform for terrorism or other violent attacks".

At the same time, Blinken laid out the United States' clearest boundaries on the war since Oct 7, telling the Zionist entity that Washington believes there should be "no forcible displacement of Palestinians from Gaza — not now, not after the war". He also said: "No reoccupation of Gaza after the conflict ends. No attempt to blockade or besiege Gaza. No reduction in the territory of Gaza." His comments appeared to indicate that Amer-

ican officials may be growing more concerned over the entity's conduct of the war — even as Washington denies that it is seeking to influence its ally on its conduct. It will also be necessary to "include the Palestinian people's voices and aspirations at the center of post-crisis governance in Gaza" after the war, and see the territory "unified with the West Bank under the Palestinian Authority", Blinken said.

### Two states

Since the start of the war, the top US diplomat has been on a whirlwind offensive in the region. Last Sunday he made a surprise visit to Ramallah for talks with President Mahmoud Abbas after visiting the Zionist entity on Friday and Jordan on Saturday, as well as Iraq and Turkey.

In Tokyo, Blinken urged "a sustained mechanism for reconstruction in Gaza", which has been devastated by the conflict, and "a pathway to (Zionists) and Palestinians living side by side in states of their own, with equal measures of security, freedom, opportunity, and dignity".

Blinken's comments contrast with Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's recent vow that the Zionist entity would take "overall security responsibility" of the Gaza Strip for an indefinite period after the war. Blinken, who arrived in Seoul on Thursday, acknowledged the entity's remarks on security.

"It's also clear that (the Zionist entity) cannot occupy Gaza. Now, the reality is that there may be a need for some transition period at the end of the conflict, but it is imperative that the Palestinian people be central to governance in Gaza and in the West Bank," Blinken said. But according to him, the Zionists have "no intent to reoccupy Gaza".

Meanwhile, the United States has joined the Zionist entity in rejecting calls for a ceasefire,



pushing instead for a "humanitarian pauses" to allow aid deliveries, free movement of civilians trapped by the fighting, and the release of hostages held by Hamas.

While Washington is engaged in intense talks with Zionist leaders, with President Joe Biden in daily contact with Netanyahu, the contours of such pauses have yet to be defined. It is unclear whether they would apply to the whole of the Gaza Strip or just the south of the territory, as the Zionist military focuses its offensive on the north and on Gaza City. — AFP

## Emergency doctor finds own family dead while working

**GAZA:** Iyad Shaqura, a doctor of pharmacy turned by war into an emergency physician, had become used to the flow of dead and wounded streaming into the hospital in Khan Yunis. But on Monday evening, he fainted when he saw the bodies of his two children, his mother and his two brothers arrive at the emergency room.

His family had been killed by a Zionist strike that hit their home in Khan Yunis, in the south of the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian territory is under heavy bombardment by the Zionist entity, which aims to destroy Hamas after the militant group's bloody Oct 7 attack on the Zionist entity.

On Tuesday morning, his eyes filling with tears, Shaqura took a last look at his loved ones, draped in white shrouds and placed on the mortuary tables in the emergency room of Nasser Hospital. AFPPTV footage showed. Pointing at the bodies, one after the other, he listed their names: "My mother, Zeinab Abu Dayya, my brothers Mahmud and Hussein Shaqura, my sister Israa and her two children Nabil and Nur, and my two children, the apple of my eye, Abdelrahman, seven, and Omar, five".

"I have five children, but he was my favorite," said Shaqura, resting his forehead on the bloodied one of Abdelrahman. His shroud and that of his brother were open at the face. "What did they do to have tons of bombs and explosives dropped on their heads in their home?" he said, before adding with resignation, "God called them back to him like many other children before them". — AFP

## International

# Republican presidential hopefuls spar as Trump rallies nearby

## Candidates united in voicing unconditional support for the Zionist entity

MIAMI: Five Republican presidential candidates clashed on the debate stage Wednesday over Ukraine, China, abortion, and the future path of the party, while saving some of their ire for the absent frontrunner, Donald Trump.

While the challengers appeared united in their support of the Zionist entity and its war against Hamas, tensions flared — including fierce personal attacks — in the debate barely two months before the all-important first votes in the White House nomination battle. The third televised debate occurred a day after Democrats snatched key election victories in conservative and swing states, particularly over abortion rights, but the perennially thorny issue was not discussed until more than 90 minutes into the two-hour event.

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis and entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy voiced fury about their party's recent political losses, while Trump's onetime UN envoy Nikki Haley, who is enjoying growing momentum in the race, urged Americans to "find consensus" over reproductive rights. The ex-president, leading in every major Republican nomination poll, snubbed the Miami event and instead held a rally just a few miles away, maintaining his strategy of refusing to debate challengers.

The remaining candidates in a thinning field have little prospect for meaningful breakthroughs against the populist leader of the hard-right Make America Great Again movement — even though Trump faces multiple criminal indictments and will spend considerable time ahead of the 2024 election in courtrooms. But DeSantis, currently polling in second, swiftly pointed out Trump's absence and delivered a glancing blow, telling viewers: "He said Republicans were going to get tired of winning. Well, we saw last night. I'm sick of Republicans losing." Trump "owes it to you to be on this stage and explain why he should get another chance."

### 'Party of losers'

Former New Jersey governor Chris Christie, the only pretender to the Republican crown willing to mount harsh attacks on Trump, delivered fresh criticism. "Anybody who's going to be spending the next year and a half of their life focusing on keeping themselves out of jail and courtrooms cannot lead this party," Christie said.

Ramaswamy offered a devastating assessment of the Republican Party's recent performances including Tuesday, when conservative-leaning Ohio voted to enshrine abortion rights in the state's constitution. "We've become a party of losers," he fumed. "We have lost 2018, 2020, 2022 — no red wave that ever came. We got trounced last night, in 2023," he said. "And I think that we have to have accountability in our party."

After an initially brisk start to his campaign, DeSantis is struggling to become the new face for Republicans — casting himself as an equally hard-right but more youthful and scandal-free version of the 77-year-old Trump. But he lags behind Trump by nearly 45 percentage points, according to polling aggregator RealClearPolitics.

Closing in is Haley, who has benefited from DeSantis' decline and promotes a more centrist view on abortion. While describing herself as "unapologetically pro-life", Haley said it was unrealistic to seek a nationwide ban on abortion. "So let's find consensus" on ending late-term abortions and making contraception more available, she said. "Let's make sure that none of these state laws put a woman in jail or give her the death penalty for getting an abortion."

### 'Dick Cheney in three-inch heels'

In the foreign policy discussion, all five displayed unconditional support for the Zionist entity. Haley declared she would "finish" Hamas and that "the last thing we need to do is to tell (the Zionist entity) what to do" in its war. Fireworks erupted between



MIAMI: (From left) Former Governor of New Jersey Chris Christie, former Governor from South Carolina and UN ambassador Nikki Haley, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy and US Senator from South Carolina Tim Scott attend the third Republican presidential primary debate on Nov 8, 2023. — AFP

Haley and political novice Ramaswamy who, in a bid to denounce the party establishment, branded Haley "Dick Cheney in three-inch heels," referring to the Republican former vice president.

At one point Haley called Ramaswamy "scum" for mentioning her daughter as the candidates clashed over TikTok. At his rally in Hialeah, Trump declared the debates "not watchable," and sought to present himself as a protective commander-in-chief. "I kept America safe. I kept (the Zionist entity) safe, I kept Ukraine safe, and I kept the world safe," he told his

supporters. "The Zionist entity, Ukraine would have never happened under the Trump administration."

Ramaswamy slammed Ukraine as "not a paragon of democracy," and said the country has "celebrated a Nazi" in its President Volodymyr Zelensky — who is Jewish. His position earned rebukes from Haley and Christie, who said Washington should support Kyiv. The Republican primaries kick off on January 15 in Iowa. The eventual nominee is expected to face President Joe Biden in next November's presidential election. — AFP

## Brazil arrests 2 for alleged 'terror' plot involving Hezbollah

SAO PAULO: Brazilian police said Wednesday they arrested two people for involvement in plotting "terrorist attacks" in the country, which the Zionist entity's Mossad spy agency said were backed by Lebanese militant group Hezbollah against Zionist and Jewish targets. Federal police said they had detained two suspects in Sao Paulo in an operation to "disrupt the preparation of terrorist attacks and secure evidence on the possible recruitment of Brazilians to carry out extremist acts in the country."

Police also executed 11 search and seizure raids in Sao Paulo, Brasilia and the southeastern state of Minas Gerais, they said in a statement. The Mossad said in a statement it had worked with Brazilian security services and international agencies to "foil a terrorist attack in Brazil," which it said was "planned by the Hezbollah terrorist organization, directed and financed by the Iranian regime." It said the planned would have been executed by "an extensive network that operated in additional countries," it added. It did not specify which countries. Security experts have long tracked alleged Hezbollah operations in South America's "tri-border area" between Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay. — AFP

## Diplomatic snub? Washington's pandas head home to China

WASHINGTON: All three giant pandas in the Washington zoo began a one-way trip back to China on Wednesday, leaving only a few of the cuddly creatures in the United States at a time of tense diplomatic relations with Beijing. Now in their mid-20s, pandas Mei Xiang and Tian Tian arrived at the Smithsonian National Zoo in 2000 and quickly became a much-loved star attraction.

But the duo and their three-year-old cub Xiao Qi Ji — "Little Miracle" in English — were carefully put aboard a special cargo plane to begin the 19-hour journey to Chengdu, China. The aircraft, adorned with a large image of a panda chewing on a bamboo shoot, took off shortly after midday.

Earlier the pandas were carried out of the zoo in ventilated crates, along with boxes of apples and piles of bamboo, and driven under escort to the airport. While the pandas' departure had been expected due to a long-standing contract agreement, the animals' return was seen as a symbol of worsening US-Chinese ties.

A first pair of black-and-white furballs arrived from China in 1972 as a gift, following then-president Richard Nixon's historic visit to the Communist nation. Recognizing the species' uncanny ability to attract fans — and a source of income for its conservation program — China continued to loan pandas to Washington and other zoos around the world in a program since dubbed "Panda Diplomacy."

The Chinese government tends to "bestow" pandas on "nations with whom China's relations are on the upswing, as a form of soft power projection," Kurt Tong, a former high-ranking US diplomat and managing partner of the Asia Group consultancy, told AFP. Relations between Washington and Beijing have hit dramatic lows in the last few years over trade, human rights, export controls, and the status of US-backed Taiwan. Given the strains between Washington and China, especially over Taiwan, "it is not surprising that Chinese authorities are allowing panda contracts with US zoos to expire," Tong said.

At the Smithsonian zoo in Washington,



WASHINGTON: Giant Panda Xiao Qi Ji hangs upside down from a tree in its enclosure at the Smithsonian's National Zoo on Nov 7, 2023, on the panda's final day of viewing before returning to China. — AFP

millions of dollars have been spent on the pandas' enclosure and research into the species, especially related to breeding. This includes a popular 24-hour "Panda Cam" to monitor their behavior and health. The zoo also said it paid \$500,000 annually to its Chinese conservation group partner under its most recent contract.

Ahead of the departure, thousands of devoted fans from around the country flocked to the zoo to say final farewells, many during a weeklong "Panda Palooza" event in late September. Jane Christensen, from the northern US state of Michigan, told AFP during the event that she had driven over 500 miles (800 kilometers) to catch a final glimpse. — AFP

## Saudi to host Arab summits on Gaza...

Continued from Page 1

During his meeting with his British counterpart James Cleverly, on the sidelines of the preparatory meeting ahead of extraordinary Arab Summit Saturday, Sheikh Salem also called for joining international efforts to deliver humanitarian aid into Gaza without escalating the situation. Both sides tackled latest alarming developments in the Gaza Strip and ways to end crimes committed against the Palestinian people. The top diplomat affirmed Kuwait's strong position in supporting the Palestinian people and their right of having their independence, as well as reaching a fair and permanent solution to the issue.

Saudi Arabia is hosting Arab leaders and Iran's president for two summits this weekend on the ongoing war in Gaza, which is raising fears of a regional escalation. The emergency meetings of the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation come after over one month of Zionist entity's bombardment that has killed more than 10,000 people in Gaza, many of them children, according to the Hamas-run health ministry.

With Zionist entity's leaders rebuffing talk of a ceasefire, anger in Saudi Arabia over the Palestinian death toll comes amid worries the war could destabilize the wider region and fears this could thwart the kingdom's attempts to transition the economy away from oil.

Saudi analysts said the Arab League meeting Saturday would do well to go beyond statements condemning attacks on Gaza's civilians, though it was unclear how the bloc might

shape events on the ground. "This (Arab League) meeting will be a success if it leads to any framework to pressure Zionist entity to stop the war. Otherwise it will not be a success," said Saudi analyst Sulaiman Al-Oqaifi.

Saudi Arabia, home to the holiest sites in Islam, has voiced support for the Palestinian cause while denouncing incidents like the Zionist entity bombing last week of Gaza's largest refugee camp which killed dozens of people.

The back-to-back summits in Riyadh could signal the start of a higher-profile diplomatic push, with Saudi Arabia taking advantage of its position as a historic champion of Palestinians combined with its interest in potentially recognizing Zionist entity one day.

Saudi Arabia is "trying to strategically position itself above the fray", said Bader Al-Saif at Kuwait University. "I think it's very smartly trying to position itself for the day after - how are we going to use this to the best advantage not only for Saudi national interests, which is front-and-center, but also to advance a sane Palestinian-Zionist entity peace process."

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's expected attendance at the OIC summit on Sunday will bring an unusual level of attention to the 57-member bloc of Muslim-majority countries. It will be Raisi's first trip to Saudi Arabia since a surprise, China-brokered rapprochement deal announced in March ended seven years of severed bilateral ties. Because the OIC's membership extends from Africa to Asia, any statement coming out of Sunday's summit could also underscore how support for Palestinians is growing well beyond the Middle East, said Saudi analyst Aziz Alghashiani.

"Non-Western countries are not accepting this any longer and not buying the American narrative, the Western narrative" of the conflict, he said. — Agencies

Prince Abdulaziz said Saudi Arabia was "choosing a different approach" to climate finance.

"We have our own tools... We want to do it bilaterally," he said. "We want to make sure that we become accountable for what we promise and we want to see the deliverables of what we have promised." Saudi Finance Minister Mohammed Al-Jadaan said agreements signed at Thursday's conference would exceed 2 billion Saudi riyals (roughly \$533 million).

The conference featured signing ceremonies on energy agreements with Nigeria, Ethiopia, Senegal and Chad, though no details were provided. — AFP

## Thousands flee as Zionist entity...

Continued from Page 1

soldiers. Zionist entity flags were flying over buildings at beach resorts in northern Gaza and there was little sign of any human presence amid the destruction.

The intense combat and the densely-populated coastal territory being effectively sealed off have led to increasingly dire conditions for civilians. Tom Potokar, chief surgeon at the International Committee of the Red Cross, described the scene at the European hospital in Khan Yunis in southern Gaza as "catastrophic". "In the last 24 hours, I've seen three patients with maggots in their wounds," Potokar told AFP. A rare delivery of emergency medical supplies reached Gaza City's main Al-Shifa hospital on Wednesday, just the second since the war began, the UN and World Health Organization said, warning it "far from sufficient to respond to the immense needs".

According to a source close to Hamas, talks are underway for the release of 12 hostages, including six Americans, in return for a three-day ceasefire. US National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said Washington "have a way to communicate with Hamas", but that giving details could jeopardize the process.

France hosted a conference on Thursday on humanitarian aid for Gaza calling for a "humanitarian pause" so countries can "work towards a ceasefire". "In the immediate term, we need to work on protecting civilians. To do that, we need a humanitarian pause very quickly and we must work towards a ceasefire," President Emmanuel Macron told delegates in Paris.

Zionist entity has stayed away from the talks on aid for civilians in the enclave of 2.4 million people, where the Hamas-run health ministry said Thursday Zionist entity's military campaign has killed more than 10,800 people, many of them children, and wounded almost 27,000 more.

Thursday's aid conference was put together in a hurry on the sidelines of the annual Paris Peace Forum on November 10-11. Although representatives from many European countries, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority and a slew of aid groups joined, no heads of government from the Arab world attended.

Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry accused

Zionist entity of "violations of international humanitarian law". "How many Palestinians must die for this war to stop? Is it enough to kill six children and four women every hour?" Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyeh asked delegates, urging them to "end the double standard" he said existed between Palestinian and Zionist entity casualties.

The UN estimates that \$1.2 billion in aid will be needed for the populations of Gaza and the West Bank from now until the end of the year. "We don't know what humanitarian pauses would really mean," said Isabelle Dufoury, president of the French section of Doctors Without Borders (MSF). "If we only get one or two days of truce, it's not enough. We can't set up medical aid on a battlefield," she added.

Independent UN expert Balakrishnan Rajagopal said on Wednesday that Zionist entity's widespread and systematic bombardment of housing and civilian infrastructure in Gaza was a "war crime", as were indiscriminate Hamas rocket attacks that hit Zionist entity dwellings. Zionist entity has for now remained firm in keeping up its offensive, with the stated objective of destroying Hamas — which has governed Gaza since 2007. As the war intensifies, discussions on the possible future of Gaza once the conflict ends have also grown, after Netanyahu this week said that Zionist entity would assume "overall security" of the territory.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) confirmed the figure, and warned that conditions were "dire" in battle zones north of the central Wadi Gaza district.

"Hundreds of thousands of people remaining north of Wadi Gaza, including IDPs (internally displaced people), are facing a dire humanitarian situation and are struggling to secure the minimum amounts of water and food to survive." In the Indonesian hospital in Beit Lahia, in the northern Gaza Strip, a weeping father cradled the body of his two-year-old son Mohammed Abu Qamar, who died after an air strike.

"Please don't put him in the morgue, let me take him home and I will bury him tomorrow", his father Nidal said, as his wife screamed in grief alongside him. UN rights chief Volker Turk condemned Zionist entity over its bombardment and its orders for Gazans to flee. "The collective punishment by Zionist entity of Palestinian civilians amounts also to a war crime, as does the unlawful forcible evacuation of civilians," he told reporters at the Rafah border crossing with Egypt, the only route out of Gaza not controlled by Zionist entity. — AFP

## Climate policy must not 'crush' less...

Continued from Page 1

to provide \$100 billion a year to finance both adaptation and emissions cuts in developing countries by 2020. It only reached \$83 billion that year, according to the most recent figures available from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. Failure to meet the target on time has damaged trust in international climate negotiations.

## International

# UK minister slammed for calling Palestine protests 'hate marches'

## Protest falling on Armistice Day to move ahead despite concerns from government

LONDON: UK interior minister Suella Braverman's position looked increasingly precarious on Thursday after she criticized policing of pro-Palestinian marches in comments made without Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's approval. Sunak was facing mounting calls to sack his home secretary after she suggested officers "play favorites" when policing protests and claimed they largely ignored "pro-Palestinian mobs" during recent demonstrations against the Zionist war on Gaza.



MANCHESTER: Home Secretary Suella Braverman addresses delegates at the annual Conservative Party Conference in this file photo.

The comments, seen as red meat to the right wing of the governing Conservative party, come after she described the rallies calling for a ceasefire in Gaza as "hate marches", days after claiming some people were homeless as a "lifestyle choice".

Downing Street insisted it had full confidence in Braverman but said it was investigating how her comments in an opinion piece in *The Times* were published without its consent, as required by the ministerial code. "The content was not agreed with Number 10," a spokesman for Sunak told reporters, referring to his Downing Street residence.

According to people familiar with the matter, the speech was sent to Sunak's office, which requested changes that were not made. Braverman's words have heightened speculation she is positioning herself for a future Tory leadership contest or that they are a deliberate ploy by Sunak's party to appeal to right-wingers before the next general election.

Sunak has described a planned march in London on Saturday — Armistice Day, when Britain honours its war dead — as "provocative and disrespectful" and suggested London's Metropolitan Police ban it. Police have said the march in support of Palestinians does not meet the legal threshold for requesting a government order to stop it going ahead.

### Scathing

Tensions between London's Met Police and Sunak appeared to ease on Wednesday after an emergency meeting at which the force's chief, Mark Rowley, confirmed the march would not clash with remembrance events for the country's war dead. But Braverman's article was scathing about the Met's policing.

"Right-wing and nationalist protesters who engage in aggression are rightly met with a stern response yet pro-Palestinian mobs displaying almost identical behavior are largely ignored, even when clearly breaking the law," she wrote. The outspoken Braverman added she did not believe the protests were "merely a cry for help for Gaza" but were more an "assertion of primacy by certain groups — particularly Islamists". Tom Winsor, a former police watchdog chief, said the home secretary's claim that the police were softer on left-wing groups went too far and were contrary to the principle of police independence.

### 'Crosses the line'

"By applying pressure to the commissioner of the Met in this way, I think that crosses the line," Winsor told BBC radio. The main opposition Labour party's home affairs spokeswoman, Yvette Cooper, said



LONDON: People take part in a "March For Palestine", in London on Oct 21, 2023, to "demand an end to the war on Gaza". — AFP photos

Braverman was "out of control" and "encouraging extremists on all sides."

London has seen large demonstrations on four successive weekends since the Zionist entity launched a deadly military campaign on Gaza, in retaliation for an attack staged by Hamas in the Zionist entity which left 1,400 people dead. Zionist forces have relentlessly bombed Gaza, killing more than 10,000 people, according to the besieged strip's health ministry.

The Met police have made almost 200 arrests since the Hamas attacks, either for hate crimes or in-

cidents linked to the protests. Braverman's fondness for stoking culture wars may prove useful to the Tories as they try to overhaul huge deficits to Labour in opinion polls before an election that must be held by January 2025. Braverman, whose Indian-origin parents emigrated to Britain in the 1960s, recently described multiculturalism as a "misguided dogma". She has attacked the United Nations Refugee Convention and warned that Britain faces a "hurricane" of immigration, and once called liberals the "to-fu-eating wokerati". — AFP

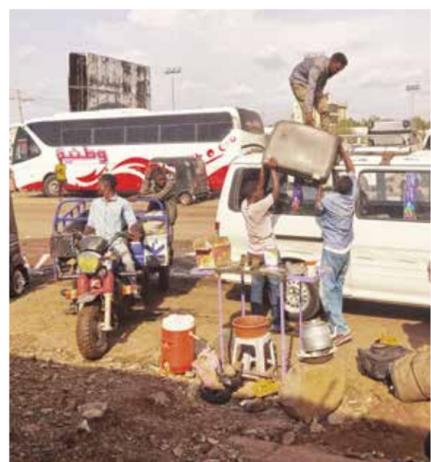
## Hundreds forcibly evicted as Sudan war rages

PORT SUDAN: Sudanese police on Wednesday forcibly evicted hundreds of civilians sheltering at a school in the eastern state of Gedaref, eyewitnesses said, as the army and paramilitaries battled in Khartoum. One resident, Amal Hussein, said she saw "police cars surround" the school and heard people screaming. "Police came and ordered us to leave the school, based on a decision from the governor, and fired tear gas at us," Hussein Gomma, who had been displaced from the capital, told AFP. "We are 770 people who had fled the war in Khartoum and were sheltering in this school," Gomma said after fleeing the makeshift displacement camp, where he said hundreds of people "had been receiving aid". "We don't understand why we were driven out," he said. "Now we're out in the open with women and children, and we don't know where to go."

Gedaref currently hosts 273,000 people uprooted in the conflict between the Sudanese army and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). According to the United Nations, thousands are being housed in makeshift camps such as schools where food, clean water and health care are in short supply. Barely two hours after they were forced out, Suleiman Mohammed, who had also been sheltering at the school, said they were again "evacuated from the dormitories" of Gedaref University's medical school. "Police said the decision was issued by the governor," he added.

In Khartoum, a committee of volunteers reported "intensified clashes" in a densely populated northern neighborhood. Since April, forces loyal to army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan — Sudan's de facto head of state — have been at war with the RSF commanded by his former deputy, Mohamed Hamdan Daglo.

More than 10,000 people have been killed, according to a conservative estimate from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data project. The warring sides failed to agree on a ceasefire in a new round of Saudi- and US-brokered talks this week in Jeddah. In the vast western region of Darfur, where some of the worst fighting has taken place, the RSF has claimed control of all but one major city. Their advance amid a communications blackout has triggered renewed fears of ethnically motivated mass killings. In Washington, State Department spokesman Vedant Patel voiced concern about "extreme fighting" in parts of Sudan. — AFP



GEDAREF: Sudanese fleeing violence arrive in Gedaref, the capital of Sudan's eastern state of Gedaref, on July 3, 2023. — AFP



NEW DELHI: A mother assists her child to breathe with the help of a nebulizer at the emergency ward of the government-run Chacha Nehru Bal Chikitsalaya children hospital. — AFP photos

## 'Breathing poison': Delhi children hardest hit by smog

NEW DELHI: Crying in a hospital bed with a nebulizer mask on his tiny face, one-month-old Ayansh Tiwari has a thick, hacking cough. His doctors blame the acrid air that blights New Delhi every year. The spartan emergency room of the government-run Chacha Nehru Bal Chikitsalaya hospital in the Indian capital is crowded with children struggling to breathe — many with asthma and pneumonia, which spike as air pollution peaks each winter in the megacity of 30 million people.

Delhi regularly ranks among the most polluted major cities on the planet, with a melange of factory and vehicle emissions exacerbated by seasonal agricultural fires. "Wherever you see there is poisonous smog," said Ayansh's mother Julie Tiwari, 26, as she rocked the baby on her lap, attempting to calm him. "I try to keep the doors and windows closed as much as possible. But it's like breathing poison all the time. I feel so helpless," she told AFP, fighting back tears.

On Thursday, the level of PM2.5 particles — the smallest and most harmful, which can enter the bloodstream — topped 390 micrograms per cubic meter, according to monitoring firm IQAir, more than 25 times the daily maximum recommended by the World Health Organization. Government efforts have so far failed to solve the country's air quality problem, and a study in the *Lancet* medical journal attributed 1.67 million premature deaths to air pollution in the world's most populous country in 2019.

### 'Maddening rush'

"It's a maddening rush in our emergency room during this time," said Dhulika Dhingra, a pediatric pulmonologist at the hospital, which serves poor neighborhoods in one of Delhi's most polluted areas. The foul air severely impacts children, with devastating effects on their health and development.

Scientific evidence shows children who breathe polluted air are at higher risk of developing acute respiratory infections, a UNICEF report said last year. A study published in the *Lung India* journal in 2021 found nearly one out of every three schoolchildren in Delhi had asthma and airflow obstruction. Children are more vulnerable to air pollution than adults because they breathe more quickly and their brains, lungs and other organs are not fully developed.

"They can't sit in one place, they keep running and

with that, the respiratory rate increases even more. That is why they are more prone to the effects of pollution," said Dhingra. "This season is very difficult for them because they can hardly breathe."

Vegetable vendor Intiaz Qureshi's 11-month-old son Mohammad Arsalan was admitted to the hospital overnight with breathing issues. "We have to live day in and day out in this air," said the distraught 40-year-old, who pulls his cart through the streets every day. "If I go out, the air will kill me. If I don't, poverty will kill me."

### 'Toxic environment'

The hospital provides treatment and medicine free of cost — none of its patients can afford private healthcare, and many cannot buy even a single air purifier for their one-room homes in the city's sprawling slums. Pediatrician Seema Kapoor, the hospital's director, said patient inflows had risen steadily since the weather cooled, trapping pollutants closer to the ground. "About 30-40 percent of the total attendance is primarily because of respiratory illnesses," she said.



NEW DELHI: A boy with breathing difficulties reacts as his mother assists him to breathe with the help of

Pulmonologist Dhingra said the only advice they can offer parents is to restrict their children's outdoor activities as much as possible. "Imagine telling a parent not to let the child go out and play in this toxic environment." The Delhi government has announced emergency school closures, stopped construction and banned diesel vehicles from entering the city in a bid to bring down pollution levels.

But stubble burning by farmers in the neighboring agrarian states, which contributes significantly to Delhi's pollution, continues unabated, drawing a rebuke from the Supreme Court on Tuesday. Delhi's choked air is resulting in the "complete murder of our young people," said the court. Housewife Arshi Wasim, 28, brought her 18-month-old younger daughter Nida Wasim to the hospital with pneumonia. "She coughs non-stop," she said. "She doesn't take milk or even water because her lungs are choked." — AFP

## Turkey sidelined as EU prepares to open door to others

BRUSSELS: When figures in the EU talk about the new members that might join the union by 2030, there is no mention of Turkey. It is a glaring omission noticed by Ankara. As when the European Union published its annual reports on candidate countries' progress towards EU norms on Wednesday, all eyes were on Ukraine and Moldova. Turkey, a formal candidate for membership since 1999, was barely discussed — but it hasn't always been the case.

After EU leaders approved the start of accession talks with Turkey in 2004, the then British premier Tony Blair hailed it as a historic event that showed there was no clash of civilizations. But European leaders at the time found themselves stuck in a tussle with Ankara over the divided island of Cyprus, a crisis that proved to be only a foretaste of the turbulent relationship. Today, ties are more transactional than a path towards partnership, even if neither side will openly admit this.

Experts nevertheless still point to limited areas in which the relationship can improve. For many EU member states, the long-stalled accession talks are dead in all but name. In September, Austria — long opposed to Turkey's membership — even called for the process to end. EU officials privately say this would be more honest, but no one wants to make the first move.

After Turkey's elections in May, EU leaders revived hopes for improvement. They ordered the EU's executive arm and its foreign policy chief to prepare a report on how to develop the relationship. The report is due before December's next summit gathering of EU leaders, but experts and EU officials warn against expecting any real improvement in ties. "I'm not expecting any meaningful revitalization of the relationship because there are limited areas where progress can really be made," said Senem Aydin-Duzgit, an international relations professor at Istanbul's Sabanci University.

### 'Turkey fatigue'

There is "Turkish fatigue" in Europe, as Austria's comments show, said the European Parliament's Turkey rapporteur, Nacho Sanchez Amor. "We are tired of maintaining the accession process alive when apparently there is no real political will from the other side to advance on democratic standards," the MEP said.

The EU accuses Turkey of backsliding on democracy and the rule of law, particularly after the failed 2016 coup and the subsequent crackdown on its perceived supporters and government opponents. The relationship's transactional nature deepened after the two sides agreed a deal in 2016 under which the EU threw billions of euros at Ankara to stop migrants coming to Europe after the 2015 refugee crisis. "Transactional is not a derogatory term," Amor said. "Don't mix the accession process, which has its own rules based on values and principles, with the rest of the relationship."

The report due later this year will likely recommend updating the customs union, for which Turkey's trade minister was in Brussels in October to drum up support. "If the customs union talks could start with this current government, I don't think they would lead anywhere," Aydin-Duzgit said, since Ankara would have to make unappealing reforms. — AFP

## Business

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2023

# European stocks climb up as investors await Fed guidance

## HK dip, Shanghai flatlined on renewed concerns over Chinese economy

**LONDON:** European stock markets rose Thursday as investors awaited fresh signals from the Federal Reserve about the direction of US interest rates, but Hong Kong dipped and Shanghai flatlined on renewed concerns over the Chinese economy.

Oil prices enjoyed a small bounce but made little impact on the losses of nearly seven percent seen in the previous two days caused by slowing demand expectations and easing fears over the Zionist entity-Hamas war turning into a conflict across the crude-rich Middle East.

The dollar advanced before Thursday's key speech from the head of the US Federal Reserve, while bitcoin neared \$37,000 on hopes of US approval for a so-called exchange-traded fund that would directly track the price of the world's most popular cryptocurrency.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell will appear on a panel to talk about monetary policy challenges, while Atlanta chief Raphael Bostic and his Richmond counterpart Tom Barkin are due to speak elsewhere. The Fed voted earlier this month to hold

its benchmark lending rate at its current 22-year high for the second consecutive meeting.

### Waiting on Powell

"European markets booked some muted gains on Thursday with the majority of investors waiting for news from the Fed, with Powell scheduled to speak later this evening," said XTB analyst Walid Koudmani. "Whether this pause for breath triggers profit-taking and a broader sell-off in stocks or not will likely be dictated by the tone of Powell's comments."

Last week's hint by the US central bank at an end to its interest rate-hiking cycle, followed by data showing a softer labour market, has provided traders with some much-needed confidence as a tough year draws to a close.

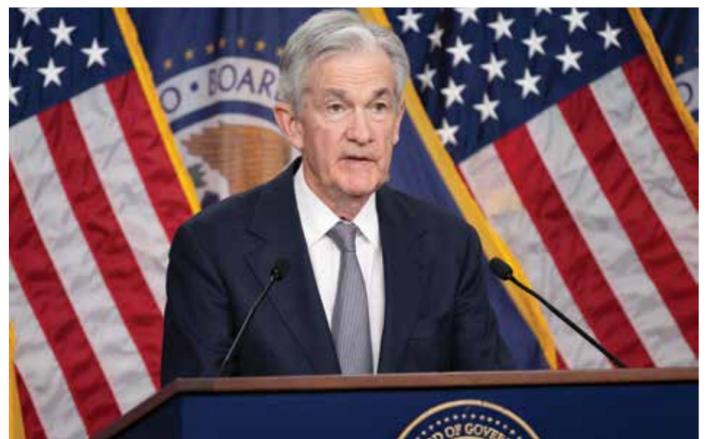
But after a healthy run-up across global markets, some have run out of steam as the possibility of more tightening casts a shadow owing to stubbornly high inflation.

Comments from Fed decision-makers ramming home their determination to

slay prices have also kept the euphoria in check, with many keeping their options open for another rate hike if needed.

Earlier this week, Minneapolis Fed chief Neel Kashkari insisted on seeing more data before deciding whether more work was needed, while Chicago counterpart Austan Goolsbee played his cards close to his chest, saying only that inflation was "the number-one thing". Hopes that rates have peaked and could come down next year provided support to US stocks, as did another drop in 10-year Treasury yields, while the VIX index—or so-called fear gauge—fell to its lowest level since September.

The European Central Bank also paused its rate-hike campaign last month following 10-straight increases. French central bank chief Francois Villeroy de Galhau, a member of the ECB's governing council, said Thursday the Frankfurt-based institution would not hike rates again unless there was a "surprise" or "shock". But he added that it was "too early" to talk about cutting rates. — AFP



**WASHINGTON:** US Federal Reserve Board Chairman Jerome Powell holds a news conference after a Federal Open Market Committee meeting at the Federal Reserve in Washington, DC. The Federal Reserve voted on November 1, 2023, to hold interest rates at a 22-year high for the second straight meeting, as it moves to slow stubborn inflation without damaging the strong economy. — AFP

## Disney+ adds new subscribers amid cost-cutting drive

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Disney's streaming service has attracted nearly seven million new subscribers, the company said Wednesday, reversing a period of decline that had raised doubts about its rivalry with industry leader Netflix.

Disney has been under significant pressure ever since CEO Bob Iger left the company only to be brought out of semi-retirement a year ago after his replacement no longer had the confidence of executives and the company board. Upon his return, Iger embarked on a cost-cutting campaign that saw major cuts to the lavish spending to get Disney+ off the ground.

Those efforts saw Disney's streaming losses contract to \$387 million in the most recent quarter, down from \$1.47 billion a year earlier. Disney Plus clients rose to 112.6 million at the end of September from 105.7 million at the end of June.

If subscriptions to a Hotstar Disney+ bundle offered in India and elsewhere are added, the overall number of subscribers tallies 150.2 million. "Our results this quarter reflect the significant progress we've made over the past year," Iger said, pointing to the success of Disney+'s recently added ad-supported tier.

"While we still have work to do, these efforts have allowed us to move beyond this period of fixing and begin building our businesses again," Iger said. The solid quarter may bring back confidence in Iger who



**ANAHEIM:** (Files) Fans are reflected in the Disney+ logo during the Walt Disney D23 Expo in Anaheim, California, on September 9, 2022. Disney said on November 8, 2023, its streaming service had attracted seven million new subscribers, reversing several quarters of decline that had raised doubts about its rivalry with industry leader Netflix. — AFP

had begun to face criticism for his once celebrated decisions such as paying massively in 2019 to buy 21st Century Fox from Rupert Murdoch.

### Cutting costs

In the past year, the Disney share price has slumped to multi-year lows. Activist investor Nelson Peltz has turned the heat on Iger asking him to cut costs. In the results released Wednesday, Disney said the company was pushing to cut costs by \$7.5 billion, an increase from a previous pledge of \$5.5 billion.

In all, the entertainment giant posted sales of \$21.24 billion for the period, up slightly on the previous year, according to its earnings release on

Wednesday. Disney last month said it will become the sole owner of Hulu, which it already markets in subscriptions that include its own Disney+ service and the ESPN+ sports content streaming platform.

Hulu is Disney's arm for adult-focused programs such as The Handmaid's Tale, while family content falls under Disney+, launched four years ago. Both services, like their competitors, were hit by a historic writers' and actors' strike this summer.

Hollywood actors and studios reached a tentative deal late Wednesday to end a months-long strike that has crippled the entertainment industry, delayed hundreds of popular shows and films, and cost billions to the US economy.

The Screen Actors Guild (SAG-AFTRA) called off its 118-day strike after finally reaching an agreement with the likes of Disney and Netflix for a new contract including higher pay, and protections against the use of artificial intelligence.

The announcement paves the way for actors to head back to movie sets, an end to picket lines outside studios, and a return to employment for thousands of other jobs linked to the entertainment industry. The deal still needs to be ratified, but is widely expected to pass.

Hollywood script-writers have already signed a deal with the studios and are back on the job. In addition to content and subscriber numbers, Disney is trying to improve its profitability. The Burbank, California-based group posted net earnings of \$264 million. Disney rival Netflix last month said subscriber numbers grew nearly 11 percent to 247 million as it cracked down on password sharing and refined an ad-supported tier. The leading streaming service increased prices on some of its plans, perhaps creating an opportunity for competitors such as Disney. — AFP

## Germany unveils huge electricity price relief for industry

**BERLIN:** Germany announced on Thursday a huge relief package including tax cuts on electricity for the manufacturing sector, in a bid to shore up an economy that many fear could end the year in recession. "Alone in the coming year, the relief will reach up to 12 billion euros (\$12.8 billion)," said Chancellor Olaf Scholz in a statement.

In 2024 and 2025, electricity tax will be slashed from the current 1.537 cents per kilowatt to the European Union minimum of 0.05 cents per kilowatt for the manufacturing sector. The lowered tax could be extended for a further three years, said the government in a statement.

The most energy-intensive companies most vulnerable to international competition will also have costs related to their emissions trading reimbursed under the package. The agreement on the help package for manufacturers came after weeks of hefty discussions between the industry and the German government. German companies, especially in sectors such as chemical and metal manufacturing, have struggled with a surge in power prices triggered by Russian energy supply cuts in the wake of Moscow's war in Ukraine.

The higher electricity costs have undercut German exporters' price competitiveness on the global stage. For months, the economy ministry has been pushing for a cap for industrial power prices—essentially a subsidy on electricity. But the finance ministry had balked at the huge costs and warned against market distortion. Peter Adrian, the head of Germany's association of chambers of industry and commerce, called the package "overdue" but said it was "doubtful if the package will be enough to ensure competitive electricity prices for the entire industry". — AFP

## EU court advisor deals blow to Apple in Ireland tax case

**BRUSSELS:** The European Court of Justice's top legal advisor recommended Thursday scrapping a previous Apple victory against Brussels in a 13-billion-euro (\$14-billion) tax case, a blow to the iPhone-maker in a long-running legal saga. One of the landmark battles between the European Commission and big tech, it dates back to 2016 when the EU's executive arm accused Ireland of allowing Apple to escape billions of euros in taxes.

The EU's executive arm claimed that between 2003 and 2014, Apple parked untaxed revenue earned in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and India in Ireland, which is the European hub for big tech. Brussels alleged that this amounted to illegal "state aid" from Ireland to firms it was trying to attract.

Apple has pushed back against claims the company has sought to avoid paying taxes that it owes, while Ireland has always rejected claims of giving Apple a hidden subsidy. The bloc's highest court heard the commission's appeal this year against a 2020 decision by the EU's lower General Court to annul its order that Apple repay the money.

Advocate General Giovanni Pitruzzella said on Thursday that the 2020 decision was peppered with legal errors and recommended that it was "set

aside" for a new ruling. The opinion is not binding on the court, but it will be influential and taken as a sign of the direction the case is taking.

"In the Advocate General's opinion, it is therefore necessary for the General Court to carry out a new assessment," the ECJ said in a statement. A final decision by the ECJ is expected within a few months but the judges are not bound by Thursday's opinion. The 13 billion euros are currently held in an escrow account and will only be released after the final ruling.

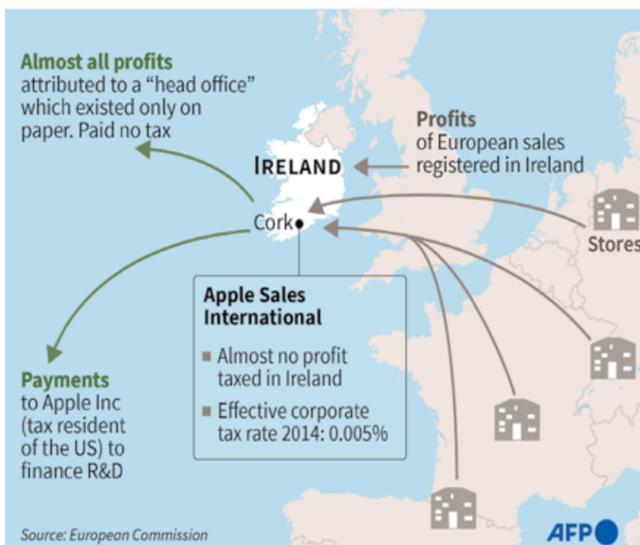
### 'Correct tax paid'

Apple dismissed Pitruzzella's opinion, pointing to the lower court's decision. "The General Court's ruling was very clear that Apple received no selective advantage and no state aid, and we believe that should be upheld," Apple said in a statement.

Irish Finance Minister Michael McGrath insisted Dublin had done nothing wrong. "It has always been, and remains, Ireland's position that the correct amount of Irish tax was paid and that Ireland provided no state aid to Apple. We now await the judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union on this matter," he said. The commission said it would not comment on the legal opinion.

## Apple wins court battle with EU

EU court annuls order for Apple to repay Ireland 13 bn euros in back taxes



The issue over potential legal errors was raised during the hearing in May. The commission's lawyer, Paul John Loewenthal, told the ECJ there had been a "breach of procedure" and "numerous other legal errors" when the lower court heard the case.

Apple's lawyer Daniel Beard pushed

back against Loewenthal's claims at the time. "Apple has paid the taxes that were due under the Irish tax code," Beard said. Apple has been present in Ireland since the 1980s. The EU has faced difficulty justifying its tax decisions in recent years with previous court losses against Amazon and Starbucks. — AFP

## Oil slumps below \$80, stocks wobble

**NEW YORK:** Brent crude fell below \$80 per barrel for the first time since July on Wednesday, while stocks struggled, as concerns about the economic outlook weighed on investors. Brent crude, the main international contract, dropped more than two percent to hit \$79.54, amid fears about global demand.

Meanwhile the main US contract, WTI, slumped as far as \$75.33 per barrel, also hitting its lowest level since July. The slide comes as weaker economic expectations continue to weigh on the outlook, said market analyst Craig Erlam at OANDA.

Crude had already plunged about four percent the previous day on news that China's exports fell at a faster pace than predicted in October. That stoked fresh concern over its appetite for energy. "The focus is clearly shifting from undersupply to weak demand and central banks insisting that rates must remain high could further exacerbate that," Erlam added.

The drop in oil prices provided some support to stocks, but they still struggled. Wall Street's main indices ended the day without major movement, with the Dow edging down 0.1 percent, while the S&P 500 and Nasdaq both crept up 0.1 percent.

"The market had a significant bounce last week. This is a week where we are looking for new catalysts to build on that gain or to retrace some of that gain, and we really had neither," said Art Hogan of B Riley Wealth Management. — AFP



# Indonesia inaugurates Southeast Asia's largest floating solar farm

## Indonesian govt will attempt to reach net-zero emissions by 2060

**CIRATA:** Indonesia inaugurated a \$100 million floating solar farm on Thursday, the largest in Southeast Asia, as it seeks more opportunities to transition to green, renewable energy. The Cirata floating solar farm, which is expected to generate enough electricity to power 50,000 households, is built on a 200-hectare (500-acre) reservoir in West Java, about 130 kilometres (80 miles) from the capital, Jakarta.

"Today is a historical day, because our big dream to build a renewable energy plant on a big scale is finally achieved," President Joko Widodo said in a speech to mark the occasion. "We managed to build the largest floating solar farm in Southeast Asia, and the third biggest in the world," he said.

The project, a collaboration between Indonesia's national electricity company Perusahaan Listrik Negara (PLN) and the Abu Dhabi-based renewable energy company Masdar, took three years to complete and cost roughly \$100 million. Situated in a lush, green area surrounded by rice fields, the solar farm, funded by Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation,

Societe Generale and Standard Chartered, consists of 340,000 panels.

At 192 megawatt peak (MWp), the farm currently generates enough power to supply electricity for the Cirata area. Widodo said the project would be expanded to 500 MWp, while PLN said it could eventually generate as much as 1,000 MWp.

The Indonesian government has said it will attempt to reach net-zero emissions by 2060. It is also attempting to reach net-zero power sector emissions by 2050 in return for financing for its \$20 billion Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) plan.

Under the plan, Jakarta has pledged to cut its power sector carbon emissions to a peak of 250 million metric tonnes by 2030, down from a previous cap of 290 million. "We hope there will be more renewable energy built in our country such as solar, hydropower, geothermal and wind," Widodo said.

But solar and wind power each account for less than one percent of Indonesia's power mix, with Southeast Asia's largest economy still relying heavily

on fossil fuels to generate electricity. Indonesia set a target to expand renewable energy to 23 percent of its energy mix by 2025, although Widodo acknowledged it might not be able to reach that target because of delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The country has pledged to stop building new coal-fired power plants but it has gone ahead with the construction of those that were already planned despite an outcry from activists. Indonesia is also trying to position itself as a key player in the electric vehicle market as the world's largest producer of nickel — a crucial component of lithium-ion batteries — but some industrial parks that host energy-guzzling nickel smelters are powered by coal.

Environmentalists welcomed the project but urged local involvement in the construction and management of the projects. "Building floating solar farms by making use of vacant land or reservoirs should be the main generator of energy transition in Indonesia," Greenpeace Indonesia campaigner Didit Haryo Wicaksono told AFP. — AFP

## Swiss watchdog monitors UBS-Credit Suisse merger

**ZURICH:** Switzerland's banking watchdog said Thursday it was closely monitoring UBS' integration of fallen rival Credit Suisse, warning of "multidimensional risks" involved in the mega-merger. The Swiss Financial Market Supervisory Authority added the item "liquidity and funding risk" in its annual "Risk Monitor" for the sector, an issue at the heart of the crisis that led to Credit Suisse's demise.

The regulator, known as FINMA, said a "global crisis of confidence" that was triggered by banking turmoil in the United States spread rapidly in mid-March, hitting Credit Suisse as clients withdrew funds.

Measures taken by Swiss authorities and the government-engineered sale of Credit Suisse to UBS for \$3.25 billion "stabilized" the situation, the watchdog said. But it warned of risks around the mega-merger. "The merger has not only increased UBS' global importance, but also its relative size compared to Switzerland's GDP," it said.

"This first merger of two global systemically important banks ... poses multidimensional risks," the monitor said. "UBS must ensure that the integration takes place in line with its risk appetite and culture," it added.

The merger also faces operational risks due to job cuts and the integration of technological systems. "The risks of IT disruptions, cyberattacks or fraud are significantly increased during the integration process," it said. "FINMA will continue to supervise the merged bank intensively during the integration." UBS reported on Tuesday its first quarterly loss since 2017 - \$785 million - as it absorbs Credit Suisse. But Switzerland's biggest bank added that it had "now stabilized Credit Suisse" as it raked in \$22 billion in net new money into its wealth management business in the July-to-September period. — AFP



**CIRATA:** This aerial picture shows the newly built floating solar power plant on the water that can generate 192 mega watts of peak electricity in cooperation between the Indonesian government and Masdar from the UAE, at Cirata Reservoir, West Java, on November 9, 2023, shortly before being inaugurated by President Joko Widodo. — AFP



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار  
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

## KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 9 NOVEMBER 2023

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

No.	Ticker	Sector	Price Movement & Performance										Valuation Multiples *				
			Open Price	Close Price	Week High	Week Low	Range	Volume	WTD Change	WTD %	YTD %	Support Level	Resistance Level	P/E	P/B	Yield	Beta
101	National Bank of Kuwait	Banking	888	890	895	884	11	20,906,523	9	1.02%	-13.31%	860	895	12.9	1.68	3.8%	1.02
102	Gulf Bank	Banking	245	242	248	239	9	17,949,041	-2	-0.82%	-18.56%	240	245	11.6	1.10	3.9%	1.31
106	Kuwait International Bank	Banking	144	145	147	143	4	18,926,102	2	1.40%	-19.06%	141	147	15.1	0.55	2.5%	1.11
107	Burgan Bank	Banking	165	164	167	162	5	3,147,240	0	0.00%	-21.37%	158	165	17.2	0.62	4.6%	1.35
108	Kuwait Finance House	Banking	697	694	709	687	22	67,634,201	4	0.58%	-7.24%	689	704	17.0	1.77	2.4%	1.17
109	Boubyan Bank	Banking	586	599	602	586	16	12,183,856	18	3.10%	-20.43%	593	616	36.4	2.37	1.0%	1.20
201	Kuwait Investment	Financial Services	122	124	128	121	7	3,807,413	4	3.33%	-18.42%	123	129	8.9	0.57	4.0%	1.82
204	National Investments	Financial Services	190	195	206	190	16	7,589,078	4	2.09%	-17.72%	188	195	153.9	0.89	14.2%	2.03
205	Kuwait Projects	Financial Services	109	108	112	108	4	8,847,135	0	0.00%	-3.57%	101	110	27.5	0.64	0.0%	1.01
212	Arzan Financial Group	Financial Services	159	163	165	159	6	9,865,173	4	2.52%	44.57%	162	172	24.1	1.13	2.4%	1.16
222	Aayan Leasing and Investment	Financial Services	160	166	167	160	7	53,740,561	6	3.75%	24.81%	158	166	8.5	1.14	4.5%	1.64
252	Al Imtiaz Investment	Financial Services	53.0	55	55.9	53	3.2	3,482,487	2.3	4.35%	-26.30%	53.0	55.5	-	0.34	16.7%	1.35
401	Kuwait Real Estate	Real Estate	159	172	173	158	15	61,925,484	15	9.55%	64.04%	170	174	15.7	1.21	1.7%	1.07
413	Mabaneer	Real Estate	800	834	840	800	40	3,494,999	34	4.25%	4.25E-02	825	838	17.2	1.84	1.6%	1.05
418	The Commercial Real Estate	Real Estate	95	95.3	97	95.0	2.2	18,304,787	-0.1	-0.10%	-0.75%	94	96	17.5	0.60	3.0%	0.61
501	National Industries	Financial Services	187	189	194	186	8	27,988,159	6	3.28%	-8.55%	186	194	17.2	0.89	2.5%	1.62
505	Gulf Cable	Industrials	1,190	1,302	1,315	1,190	125	4,965,558	112	9.41%	7.16%	1,290	1,319	14.5	1.21	4.6%	1.04
506	HEISCO	Industrials	777	825	832	772	60	11,553,072	49	6.31%	34.58%	793	832	24.5	2.15	2.4%	0.91
514	Boubyan Petrochemical	Basic Materials	610	617	635	610	25	3,414,722	10	1.65%	-22.88%	604	633	11.6	1.32	9.7%	0.96
603	Agility	Industrials	527	523	532	520	12	9,891,444	3	0.58%	-27.36%	520	536	19.4	0.70	0.0%	1.53
605	Zain	Telecommunications	485	481	491	475	16	10,177,033	-2	-0.41%	-14.56%	480	487	9.8	1.67	7.3%	0.63
623	Human Soft Holding	Industrials	3,170	3,056	3,170	3,040	130	494,073	-122	-3.84%	-8.84%	3,000	3,065	9.0	3.75	12.4%	0.65
642	ALAFCO	Industrials	166	165	170	164	6	1,949,904	0	0.00%	-18.72%	162	167	-	0.74	0.0%	1.16
654	JAZEERA	Consumer Discretionary	1,448	1,193	1,496	1,190	306	2,553,632	-256	-17.67%	-37.21%	1,100	1,205	21.6	8.15	6.3%	1.46
813	GFH Financial Group	Financial Services	77.5	77	77.7	75.6	2.1	10,901,336	-0.4	-0.52%	1.05%	76.6	79.0	8.4	0.90	6.4%	1.37
821	Warba Bank	Banking	172	172	175	171	4	13,963,032	0	0.00%	-24.61%	169	188	23.8	0.93	1.7%	1.14
823	Mezzan Holding	Consumer Staples	501	501	508	494	14	3,100,655	-4	-0.79%	27.48%	490	519	74.5	1.49	2.4%	0.46
824	Integrated Holding	Industrials	438	435	449	435	14	3,337,891	-3	-0.68%	17.57%	435	445	35.5	1.82	3.4%	0.67
826	Shamal Az-Zour	Utilities	176	175	179	173	6	866,983	-2	-1.13%	-6.91%	173	176	14.3	1.60	6.8%	0.43
827	Boursa Kuwait	Financial Services	1,730	1,736	1,825	1,726	99	1,075,139	4	0.23%	-15.40%	1,700	1,770	22.7	5.76	4.9%	0.90
830	AL GHANIM	Consumer Discretionary	1,082	1,150	1,155	1,076	79	2,193,193	71	6.58%	42.86%	1,140	1,175	12.8	3.96	6.2%	0.66

\* As of end of week closing

## Business

# Bangladesh police clash with 25,000 protesting garment workers

## Protests reject govt-offered pay rise forced closure of at least 100 factories

**GAZIPUR:** Up to 25,000 garment workers clashed with police in Bangladesh on Thursday, officials said, as protests rejecting a government-offered pay rise forced the closure of at least 100 factories outside Dhaka. A government-appointed panel raised wages on Tuesday by 56.25 percent for the South Asian nation's four million garment factory workers, who are seeking a near-tripling of their monthly wage.

Bangladesh's 3,500 garment factories account for around 85 percent of its \$55 billion in annual exports, supplying many of the world's top brands including Levi's, Zara and H&M. But conditions are dire for many of the sector's four million workers, the vast majority of whom are women whose monthly pay starts at 8,300 taka (\$75).

Police said violence broke out in the industrial towns of Gazipur and Ashulia outside the capital after more than 10,000 workers staged protests in factories and along highways to reject the panel's offer. "There were 10,000 (protesting) workers at several spots. They threw bricks and stones at our officers and factories, which were open," Mahmud Naser, Ashulia's deputy industrial police chief, told AFP.

"One of our officers was injured. We fired rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse the workers," Naser said. He said more than 100 factories were shut down in Ashulia and surrounding areas. Thousands of workers also clashed with the elite Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and police at Konabari and Naujore in Gazipur, with police using batons and tear gas to drive them into alleys, AFP correspondents at the scene said.

"Some 15,000 workers blocked the road at Konabari, and vandalized vehicles and other properties.

"We had to disperse them to maintain law and order," Gazipur municipality administrator Sayed Murad Ali told AFP. At least two injured workers were taken to hospital, police said.

### 'Intimidation'

The workers are seeking a wage rise to 23,000 taka and unions representing them have rejected the panel's increase as "farfical". Police say at least three workers have been killed since the wage protests broke out in key industrial towns last week, including a 23-year-old woman shot dead on Wednesday.

At least six police officers have also been injured in the protests. Unions say the panel's wage increase fails to match soaring prices of food, house rents and schooling and healthcare costs. They have also accused the government and police of arresting and intimidating organizers.

"Police arrested Mohammad Jewel Miya, one of the organizers of our unions. A grass-roots leader... was also arrested," Rashedul Alam Raju, the general secretary of the Bangladesh Independent Garment Workers Federation (BIGWUF), told AFP. Another union leader, speaking on condition of anonymity, said at least six union leaders had been arrested and unions were being threatened by police to call off the protests and accept the wage offer. There was no immediate comment from police about the arrests.

The United States has condemned violence against protesting Bangladeshi garment workers and "the criminalization of legitimate worker and trade union activities". In a statement, State Department spokesman Matthew Miller urged the panel "to revisit the minimum wage decision to ensure that it addresses the growing economic pressures faced by



**GAZIPUR:** Garment workers clash with police personnel during a rally in Gazipur on November 9, 2023. Up to 25,000 garment workers clashed with police in Bangladesh on November 9, officials said, as protests rejecting a government-offered pay rise forced the closure of at least 100 factories outside Dhaka. — AFP

workers and their families".

Thea Lee, the US Department of Labor's deputy undersecretary for international affairs, called for the release of BIGWUF organizer Miya. The Netherlands-based Clean Clothes Campaign, a textile

workers' rights group, has also dismissed the new pay level as a "poverty wage".

The minimum wage is fixed by a state-appointed board that includes representatives from the manufacturers, unions and wage experts. — AFP

## Mastercard, Otu ink MoU to boost payment access across GCC

**DUBAI:** Mastercard, a global technology company in the payments industry, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Otu, a prominent fintech player in the Middle East region. This pioneering partnership is primarily focused on Otu's integration of Mastercard Gateway, enabling a range of local payment methods in Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman.

Mastercard Gateway offers advanced payment processing and fraud prevention technology to acquiring banks, merchants, micro-merchants, and technology partners. It provides its partners with the reach, security, and innovation to compete in the world of digital payments.

Otu provides an Online Payments Management Solution (OPMS) designed to streamline online payments, crafted to optimize online payment processes for enterprises across a wide spectrum of industries. Otu's solution also seamlessly connects various online sales channels and payment methods, harnessing Otu's expertise in building an efficient ecosystem.

Through this partnership, Otu merchants can tap into these local payment methods through a streamlined integration, thereby



bridging the gap between international payment networks.

Talal AlAwadhi, CEO of Otu, stated, "Our partnership with Mastercard Gateway is more than a strategic alliance. It's a vision for integrating global technological might with regional transactional traditions, ensuring the Gulf's payment ecosystem is robust and resonant with its users."

Maria Parpou, Executive Vice President, Mastercard Gateway, said: "At Mastercard, we are committed to partnering with innovative fintech companies such as Otu to bring advanced payment solutions to the region with the aim of fueling the growth of the digital economy. Mastercard Gateway offers a single connection to help local merchants accept payments globally, facilitating secure and seamless transactions that surpass customer expectations."

## Philippines' economy beats forecasts in third quarter

**MANILA:** The Philippines' economy grew faster than expected in the third quarter, official data showed Thursday, but the government warned inflation remained a "major challenge". The 5.9 percent on-year expansion was well up from the 4.3 percent in the previous three months and was far better than the 4.7 percent predicted in a Bloomberg survey.

A sharp pick up in government spending was a key driver in the latest bump, the Philippine Statistics Authority data showed. However, elevated inflation and a string of interest rate hikes—the central bank has lifted rates 450 basis points since May 2022 -- weighed on growth in household spending, which slowed for a second straight quarter, to five percent.

"Inflation is still a major challenge," Economic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan told reporters, adding that October's slowdown in prices to 4.9 percent was still above the government's 2-4 percent target.

Harvests boosted the supply of rice and vegetables last month, taking the steam out of food costs but Balisacan hoped the reduced rate would help consumer spending in the fourth quarter and "in the quarters ahead".

The acceleration in July-September followed three straight quarters of slowing growth and Balisacan said the government's annual target of 6-7 percent was "still doable". But the economy would need to grow 7.2 percent in the current period to reach the lower end of that range.

While the third-quarter showed a strong rebound, Capital Economics senior Asia economist Gareth Leather warned "we don't expect this strength to last". He said high interest rates and weaker global growth would sap the Philippine economy of strength in the new year. — AFP

## Sony raises forecast despite Hollywood strikes, PS5 woes

**TOKYO:** Japanese electronics titan Sony lifted its full-year net profit and sales forecasts on Thursday, citing strength in the company's gaming, music and image-sensor sectors.

But the firm admitted it faced headwinds and some observers said there were concerns about the hit to the bottom line caused by Hollywood strikes and underwhelming PlayStation 5 sales.

Sony said it saw net profit hitting 880 billion yen (\$5.8 billion) in the year to March 2024, up from the previous projection of 860 billion yen. Annual sales were seen at 12.4 trillion yen, compared with a previous estimate of 12.2 trillion yen.

"Sales are expected to be higher than the August forecast mainly due to higher-than-expected sales in the Game & Network Services, Music and Imaging & Sensing Solutions segments," Sony said in a financial statement.

A weaker yen helped boost the gaming and music sectors, with the latter also buoyed by "an increase in revenues from streaming services", it said.

Gaming has consistently been one of Sony's main driving forces, with the firm aiming to sell 25 million units of its new PlayStation 5.

While partially offset by an expected decrease in demand among automotive and industrial infrastructures, sales in the image-sensor sector were projected to be robust thanks to favourable foreign exchange rates, the firm said.

Still, Sony's net profit for July-September sank 29 percent from a year earlier to 200 billion yen. For the six months to September, net profit dropped 23 percent year-on-year to 417 billion yen.

Going forward, Sony pins its hopes partly on the profitability of image sensors. While the sluggish smartphone market is squeezing profits, "we believe the improvement will progress slowly", Sony CEO Hiroki Totoki told a news conference after the results were released.

## Japan's SoftBank Group logs \$6.2 billion loss in July-Sept quarter

**TOKYO:** Japanese investment giant SoftBank Group said Thursday it logged a net loss worth \$6.2 billion in the three months to September, as its bets on start-ups continue to struggle. The company's Vision Funds meanwhile saw a quarterly pre-tax loss worth 258.9 billion yen (\$1.71 billion), after seeing a profit of 61 billion yen in the April-June quarter.

SoftBank also had to account in anticipation for the bankruptcy of WeWork, an office-space start-up that had left expensive lessons for SoftBank founder Masayoshi Son who invested heavily in the firm. Overall, SoftBank Group said its quarterly loss came to 931 billion yen (\$6.2 billion), compared with a 3.0 trillion yen profit seen a year ago, when the company benefited from sales of shares in Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba.

Its quarterly sales were 1.67 trillion yen, compared with 1.6 trillion yen of the same period last year. The company raised \$4.6 billion when it listed British chip designer ARM on Nasdaq in September. But ARM remains a SoftBank subsidiary and the transaction did not impact the immediate loss or profit figures, although it reinforced the overall financial position of the group, the company said.

SoftBank Group did not issue annual forecasts. Despite tough figures, SoftBank chief financial officer



**TOKYO:** File picture shows people walking past a mobile shop for Japan's SoftBank in Tokyo. The Japanese investment giant was expected to release second quarter earnings later in the day on November 9, 2023. — AFP

Yoshimitsu Goto kept an optimistic tone, insisting that the performance of Vision Funds is steadily improving since eye-watering falls seen during the pandemic that caused global economic disruptions. "I hope you see once again that the worst is over for our company," Goto told a press conference. But "the environment remains severe," he said. He reiterated SoftBank's commitment to artificial intelligence development.

He added that the bankruptcy of WeWork will not have any new material impacts on SoftBank's financial report, but acknowledged that it has been a costly lesson after pouring roughly \$14 billion. "It was very unfortunate. We as a company accept this outcome and we have to learn from this lesson," he said. — AFP



**TOKYO:** File photo shows a man walking past the Sony logo outside the company's headquarters in Tokyo. The entertainment giant was expected to release second quarter earnings later in the day. — AFP

"There is no change to our view that the trend toward larger... mobile sensors will drive the overall growth of the image sensor market in the mid to long term," he said.

It also wants to prioritise "increasing the market penetration" of PS5, which it once described as "on course to become (the Sony gaming unit's) most successful console yet".

Totoki said while the firm intended to maintain its PS5 sales target, it admitted it was "not something that we can attain very easily". The firm blamed recent strikes in Hollywood for dragging down the conglomerate's movie performance.

The action caused "date changes for some theatrical releases and restrictions on promotional activities in motion pictures", it said, forecasting "lower revenues" for films.

Industrial action by actors and screenwriters this year has seen work on numerous films and TV shows paused for months. But writers have

come to an agreement with studios and actors on Wednesday reached a tentative deal to return to filming.

Even after the protracted strikes end, "it will take time for business activities to normalise due to the concentration of productions and theatrical releases", Totoki said. "So we expect this to have a negative impact on next fiscal year's results."

Sony is "undergoing something of a rough patch", Hideki Yasuda, an analyst at Toyo Securities, told AFP ahead of results, citing the strike and lacklustre progress in PS5 sales. "Sales of the CMOS image sensors seem fine, but overall, the situation doesn't appear too good for Sony," he said.

Still, Kazunori Ito, at Morningstar, said: "The result is overall a tad weak. It raised the fiscal outlook, but since operating profit remained unchanged, the outlook hike was due mostly to a weak yen." Sony's shares ended 0.8 percent lower in Tokyo, ahead of the earnings release.

## Lifestyle



Koyo Kouoh, a Cameroonian-born curator who has been serving as Executive Director and Chief Curator of the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (MOCAA) in Cape Town since 2019, poses for a portrait at the museum in Cape Town. — AFP photos



A general view of the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (MOCAA) in Cape Town.



Koyo Kouoh poses for a portrait at the museum in Cape Town.

## CAPE TOWN ART MUSEUM ON MISSION TO RECLAIM AFRICAN IDENTITY

Since Koyo Kouoh took over the reins of the Zeitz MOCAA, the Cape Town museum has been making waves in the contemporary art world by putting Africa front and centre. Under the ambitious Cameroonian-born curator, the museum in the city's port district has built its identity around Pan-Africanism, showcasing the work of artists from the continent and its diaspora. "Africa is for me an idea that goes beyond borders. It's a history that goes beyond borders," Kouoh told AFP, cutting an elegant figure in a white dress topped by long green braids.

"Americans don't like to hear this but I always tell them that America is another African country." A country is an aggregation of cultural expressions and

influences, she said, adding that using these parameters Brazil, Cuba and Haiti could also be considered part of the African continent. "That's how I look at them," she said, with a serious smile.

More than 40 million people in the United States, or about 12 percent of the population, are African American, while more than half of Brazil's about 200 million people are of African descent. "The African diasporic influence in the US is undeniable. That's why I like to talk about black geographies, more than African diasporas. Where black culture, black bodies, black people have influenced society," she said.

Energetic and with bright, lively eyes, 56-year-old Kouoh grew up between Douala in her native Camer-

oon and Zurich in Switzerland. After setting up a cutting-edge art centre in Dakar, Senegal, she took over the MOCAA — housed in an old grain silo that has been renovated with square windows evoking a beehive of glass and concrete — four years ago. Having inherited a "broken" and "dysfunctional" institution, she set out to give it new meaning.

### 'Own the space'

Focusing on Pan-Africanism was a "no brainer" and "necessary" since, even decades after the end of colonialism, the narrative around the continent was largely still "defined by others", Kouoh said. "SEEKERS, SEERS, SOOTHSAYERS," an exhibition currently on show explores the

spiritual and supernatural through photo and video projections on the walls as well as textile installations. "There is a strong need to bring other stories to the table and not as a means of correcting," she said.

"I don't own and don't internalize the wrong story. But own the space." MOCAA is now recognized worldwide for its approach and is sought after for collaborations by major New York and European institutions. Its recent exhibition "When We See Us", which presents a century of African figurative painting, is soon due to leave Cape Town to be shown in the Swiss city of Basel.

Kouoh said she initially focused on group exhibitions, displaying the works of several artists on a specific subject

but has since moved towards single artist shows. "When you conceptualize a group show, you hope that you create a symphony but most of the time you create a cacophony because there are too many voices," she said, speaking from the building's panoramic elevator which offers a bird's-eye view of the imposing entrance hall.

"With the solo show, you have a real symphony. Of experience and of universe." Going forward, Kouoh said she wants to pursue three priorities: showcasing emerging talents, underrated practices and female artists. "I am not an activist about it. I am just decidedly and very forcefully promoting African women artists," she said. — AFP

Does beauty lie in the eye of the consumer? That may be the impression many tourists have of Paris, where a host of city landmarks — from the Opera Garnier to the Obelisk of Luxor on the Place de la Concorde and part of the Louvre Museum — have been covered by giant billboards in recent years. The environmentalist Greens party — long a thorn in the side of the French capital's Socialist mayor Anne Hidalgo — are kicking up a stink over a giant hoarding on a new Louis Vuitton store soon to open on the famed Champs-Elysees avenue.



This photograph shows a building under construction covered with LaDuree advertisement.

The building, owned by luxury giant LVMH, is draped in a protective covering that resembles a Louis Vuitton trunk, one of the brand's flagship products. Ecologist councilors have written to Hidalgo, questioning the legality of the hoarding. Billboards are allowed on listed historical buildings to finance facade work, but the law says adverts must not make up more than half of the protective covering, the Greens insist. "In this case, we're talking about more than 50 percent, since they are covering the roof as well," Green politician Emile Meunier, co-sponsor of the question, told AFP.

In a written statement to AFP, Paris authorities responded that in this case,



## Greens see red over giant Paris billboards

"the tarpaulin is not considered to be advertising because the building belongs to LVMH." The authorities "will ask the owner to pay a tax of 1.7 million euros (\$1.8 million) for the duration of its installation, which is scheduled to run until 2027," the statement said.

It added that Architectes des Batiments de France, the official body overseeing planning for historic buildings, has given "approval". Contacted by AFP, neither LVMH nor the Ministry of Culture — which is responsible for heritage issues — were willing to comment. LVMH's founder and chief executive Bernard Arnault is currently the world's second-richest person after Elon Musk, according to Forbes.

### Boost to consumerism?

But the Louis Vuitton store is one of many examples. For a number of years, a number of listed Parisian buildings have been hidden behind huge advertising tarpaulins while work was carried

out: the Museum of Decorative Arts in a wing of the Louvre; the famous obelisk on the Place de la Concorde; the Opera Garnier, the Madeleine church with its majestic Greek columns; and some facades of the Place des Vosges.

"At some point, people have to be able to enjoy the beauty of their city without being assaulted by injunctions to consume more and more," said Meunier, who said he opposed "the principle of advertising altogether". "As an ecologist, I'm against advertising, particularly in the public space; I see it as an aggression and a boost to over-consumption", he said.

Nevertheless, Jeanne d'Hauteterre, the right-wing mayor of the eighth arrondissement where the Champs-Elysees, said that as soon as she took office in 2014, she gave the green light to billboard advertising on churches undergoing renovation in order to cut costs and speed up the refurbishment. A former advertising exec-

utive, the district mayor hit back at critics, saying that buildings allowed to fall into disrepair would become a danger. "The day they get something falling on their heads, they'll be happy!" she said.

As for the LVMH project, "either we get an ugly tarpaulin, or we get a pretty, improved tarpaulin", she said. "From the moment restoration work is needed, there has to be one." Passers-by on the Champs-Elysees expressed mixed feelings about the Louis Vuitton billboards.

"I think it's nicer than rotting scaffolding", Beatrice Boue, a resident of Antony, in the southern suburbs, told AFP. "I don't particularly like (it)," said Lucyna Milosz, a Polish tourist. "I understand they have to cover it, but I don't like when there are pictures. As long as there is no commercial it's fine. They should have it covered and hurry up!" she laughed. — AFP

## French star Isabelle Adjani on battling shyness for new pop album

She may be one of France's biggest film stars, but Isabelle Adjani admits she was too shy to record in the same room as celebrity collaborators like Seal and Simon Le Bon as she returned to music with her first album in 40 years. The Oscar-nominated star of "Possession" and "Queen Margot" has won many awards for her film roles. But she is also remembered fondly for her collaboration with late troubadour Serge Gainsbourg on the 1983 album "Pull Marine", which spawned a strange and unsettling hit single of the same name.

Her new album "Bande Originale", which is out Friday, has been in the works for no less than 17 years, and features a packed line-up of big name guests, including international stars like Seal, Le Bon (of Duran Duran) and Senegalese legend Youssou N'Dour. But Adjani, who modestly refers to herself as merely "an actress who sings", says she was too "intimidated" to actually perform alongside them, and recorded her parts separately.



French actress Isabelle Adjani poses during the photocall prior to the Chanel Women's Fall-Winter 2020-2021 Ready-to-Wear collection fashion show at the Grand Palais in Paris. - AFP

"I was afraid of wasting the time of these professionals who have better things to do than help an amateur find her voice," the 68-year-old told AFP with a laugh. The playful, often self-mocking lyrics on "Bande Originale" carry several winks to Gainsbourg and she mentioned his name often during the interview with AFP. She was happy Gainsbourg's daughter Charlotte has recently opened his Paris home to the public. But she won't be visiting. "I can't go into that house which I knew when it was so alive," she said. "I prefer to go to the Montparnasse cemetery and tell him: 'I've made another album, I hope that's ok!'"

The lyrics also include a reference to hiding behind her ever-present sunglasses. "I've been wearing them since I was 16," she said. "I was raised with the idea that you should never look people in the eye. — AFP

## Miss Universe owner files for bankruptcy in Thailand

The Thai media company that owns the Miss Universe beauty pageant brand said on Thursday it has filed for bankruptcy while it tries to resolve a "liquidity problem". JKN Global Group made the announcement in a statement to the Thai Stock Exchange two months after it missed a deadline to repay bonds worth around \$12 million. The company, owned by media mogul and transgender rights campaigner Anne Jakapong Jakrajut-

atip, bought the pageant — previously owned by former US president Donald Trump — in 2022 for \$20 million.

JKN's statement said its board of directors agreed on Tuesday to submit a business rehabilitation plan to the kingdom's bankruptcy court. "Submitting the rehabilitation petition will effectively solve the Company's liquidity problem under legal mechanism and provide fair protection to all stakeholders," the statement said. Operations will contin-

ue under the plan, it added. JKN's share price has dropped by nearly 80 percent over the past 12 months, standing at 0.77 baht on Thursday. — AFP

Thai businesswoman and owner of Miss Universe pageant Anne Jakapong Jakrajutatip arrives on stage during the Miss Universe Extravaganza, after JKN's acquisition of the Miss Universe franchise, in Bangkok. — AFP



## Lifestyle



Historical garments are on display at The Metropolitan Museum of Art's announcement of the Costume Institute's spring 2024 exhibition, "Sleeping Beauties: Reawakening Fashion" in New York. - AFP photos



Head curator of the Anna Wintour Costume Center at the Metropolitan Museum of Art Andrew Bolton speaks at The Metropolitan Museum of Art's announcement of the Costume Institute's spring 2024 exhibition, "Sleeping Beauties: Reawakening Fashion" in New York.

## MET UNVEILS 'SLEEPING BEAUTIES' GALA, EXHIBIT THEME FOR 2024

The Metropolitan Museum of Art on Wednesday unveiled the theme for the Costume Institute's 2024 exhibition and gala, the fashion world's party of the year — "Sleeping Beauties: Reawakening Fashion." Every year, the Met Gala draws a who's who of A-listers from the worlds of fashion, film, politics and sports — a list tightly curated by Vogue editor-in-chief Anna Wintour. Next year, the party will take place in Manhattan on May 6 to celebrate the opening of the exhibition, which the public can view from May 10 through September 2. Both are cosponsored by popular video sharing app TikTok.

The sweeping and immersive exhibition will feature about 250 garments

and accessories spanning four centuries, from the Costume Institute's vast archives of 33,000 pieces — from a 17th century embroidered jacket to an Alexander McQueen gown from spring-summer 2001 made of shells. "Using the natural world as a unifying visual metaphor for the transience of fashion, the show will explore cyclical themes of rebirth and renewal, breathing new life into these storied objects," the Met said.

Costume Institute curator Andrew Bolton explained that when items enter the museum's collection, "it can't be worn, obviously. So you don't see the movement. You can't smell it, you can't hear it, you can't touch it." With

the exhibition, he said he hopes to "reawaken the sort of sensorial capacities within fashions in the Costume Institute, through various technologies." Fanned out on a large table in a room resembling a laboratory was a full silk satin House of Worth ball gown from the late 19th century, its embroidery, beads and sequins still resplendent despite the years.

The 1887 dress is now too fragile and damaged to be placed on a mannequin. So it will be displayed flat, but also restored to its original magnificence thanks to computer imaging and the use of a hologram — a nod to immersive exhibitions that are all the rage today. Bolton said the museum

approached Chinese-owned TikTok to cosponsor the event because of the platform's "accessibility."

"We really wanted to have the biggest, broadest sort of platform possible in terms of how the show is actually disseminated more globally," he said when asked if he feared backlash over choosing TikTok, given its alleged links to China's ruling Communist Party. The Met Gala is the primary source of funding for the Costume Institute. Wintour took over the charity gala in the 1990s and transformed it into one of the world's buzziest fetes. — AFP



Andrew Bolton explains about the garments at The Metropolitan Museum of Art's announcement of the Costume Institute's spring 2024 exhibition.



Historical garments are displayed at The Metropolitan Museum of Art's announcement of the Costume Institute's spring 2024 exhibition.

## Spinal implant allows Parkinson's patient to walk again

A man with advanced Parkinson's disease is now able to walk almost normally again thanks to electrodes implanted in his spinal cord, researchers said on Monday. The medical first was achieved by Swiss researchers who had previously pioneered similar breakthroughs to help paraplegic people walk again. "This could be a game-changing technology to help restore movement in people with advanced Parkinson's," said David Dexter, research director at Parkinson's UK, emphasizing that the procedure is invasive and more research was needed.

Marc, the 62-year-old patient who lives in France, has suffered from the debilitating brain disorder for about 30 years. Like more than 90 percent of people with advanced Parkinson's,

Marc has had great difficulty walking. What are known as "freezing" episodes — during which patients are temporarily unable to move, putting them at risk of falling — are particularly "awful", Marc told AFP.

"If you have an obstacle or if someone passes in front of you unexpectedly, you start to 'freeze' and you fall," said Marc, who asked not to reveal his last name. Much remains unknown about Parkinson's disease, making treatment difficult. But the symptoms can seriously affect the lives of patients, sometimes confining them to bed or a wheelchair. When the opportunity arose to undergo surgery in Switzerland, Marc leapt at the chance.

### 'I can go do whatever I want'

"Now I can walk from one point to another without worrying about how I'm going to get there," he said. "I can go for a walk, go out shopping by myself — I can go do whatever I want." The Swiss team, led by surgeon Jocelyne Bloch and neuroscientist Gregoire Courtine, implanted a complex system of electrodes called a "neuroprosthesis" at crucial points along Marc's spinal cord.



Project manager and head of Parkinson's activities at NeuroRestore Eduardo Martin Moraud (right), talks with France's Marc, a French patient suffering from Parkinson's disease, fitted with a new neuroprosthesis in Lausanne.

The pair had previously introduced the use of spinal cord implants to enable paraplegic patients to walk again. The latest research, published in the journal Nature Medicine, works roughly along the same principle. For Marc and other Parkinson's patients, communication between the brain and the spinal cord has been impaired by the progressive disappearance of neurons which generate the neurotransmitter dopamine. Therefore, the neuroprosthesis has to

not only send electrical stimulation to prompt walking, but also assume the role of the brain by properly timing the stimulation, so the resulting movements correspond to the patient's wishes.

"The idea is that we are going to measure residual movements — so, the intention to walk — with small sensors which are located in the legs," Courtine told AFP. "Thanks to this, we know if the person wants to oscillate or stop, and we can adjust the stimu-

lation accordingly," said Courtine, a researcher at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne.

### 'Major potential advance'

The neuroprosthesis was first tested on primates, then implanted in Marc, who has used it for roughly eight hours a day over nearly two years. Marc said he can now walk much more easily — he is even planning a trip to Brazil — but emphasized that it still requires concentration, particularly when climbing up stairs.

The Swiss team has expanded their experiment to a group of six Parkinson's patients, aiming to know how it could help others, given the disease affects people in different ways. Treatment using the invasive implant could be quite expensive, potentially limiting how many patients would have access. Bloch and Courtine have launched a startup called Onward looking at future marketing. But even reaching this point represents "a major potential advance," Dexter said. — AFP



Swiss neurosurgeon, professor and co-director of NeuroRestore Jocelyne Bloch (left) and Swiss professor of neuroscience and co-director of NeuroRestore, Gregoire Courtine (right), walk with Marc (center) a French patient suffering from Parkinson's disease fitted with a new neuroprosthesis during the presentation.



(From left) Project manager Tomislav Milekovic, Swiss professor of neuroscience at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL) Lausanne University Hospital (CHUV) and Lausanne University (UNIL) and co-director of NeuroRestore, Gregoire Courtine, Marc, a French patient suffering from Parkinson's disease fitted with a new neuroprosthesis, Swiss neurosurgeon professor and co-director of NeuroRestore Jocelyne Bloch, project manager and head of Parkinson's activities at NeuroRestore Eduardo Martin Moraud, and Swiss clinical Research Engineer Camille Varescon, pose during the presentation of a new neuroprosthesis that restores fluid walking to a patient suffering from Parkinson's disease in Lausanne. - AFP photos



Swiss professor of neuroscience holds a new neuroprosthesis that restores fluid walking to a patient suffering from Parkinson's disease in Lausanne.

Lifestyle



A couple pose for photos next to the statue of "Hachiko" in front of Shibuya station in central Tokyo ahead of the 100th anniversary of the legendary dog's birth this month.



People posing for photos next to the statue of "Hachiko". — AFP photos



A woman posing for photos next to the statue of "Hachiko".

## Japan's ever-faithful dog turns 100

In the hurly-burly outside one of Tokyo's main train stations stands a statue of a dog whose true story of loyalty has made him a beloved mascot for generations. Hachiko, whose birth centenary is this week, belonged to university professor Hidesaburo Ueno. The faithful hound would wait at Shibuya station for his master to come home every day. Ueno died unexpectedly in 1925, but Hachiko con-

tinued to come to the train station to wait forlornly for Ueno for nearly 10 years until passing away in March 1935.

The story, similar to that of "Greyfriars Bobby" in 19th-century Scotland, touched the hearts of many locals, who pitched in money to build its statue in 1934, shortly before the dog's death. In World War II, the statue was melted down for the metal, but a new one was installed

in 1948 and became a popular meeting spot. Today, locals and foreigners alike queue up to snap photos with the statue of the Japanese Akita dog, a popular breed with its own museum in Hachiko's birthplace of Odate.

"I would like my dog to be waiting for me as long a time as he did," Spanish honeymooner Omar Sanchez, 33, said as he snapped selfies with his wife and

the statue. "The story is sweet. And we need nice stories," said US businessman Daniel Callahan, 62. "The world is fractured... Anything that can bring people together is nice." Hachiko's legend inspired a 2009 Hollywood movie starring Richard Gere as well as an Indian film in 2015, while also featuring in a Japanese video game.

Not all Tokyoites know the story

though. Raisa Abe, a 20-year-old college student, standing next to the statue to wait for her friend, said she didn't know why it attracts so many tourists. "This is the first time I heard the story," she said. "This is a spot that you hear about all the time, even if you don't know Shibuya," Abe said. "Everybody knows where this is. I hope this will remain here." —AFP



A picture taken on March 14, 2023 shows "Irene Cahen d'Anvers" 1880 a masterpiece by Auguste Renoir, part of the Emil Bührle Collection exhibited at the Kunsthau Zurich.



A picture shows "The Boy in the Red Waistcoat" 1888 a masterpiece by Paul Cezanne, part of the Emil Bührle Collection exhibited at the Kunsthau Zurich.

## SWISS MUSEUM SHOWS CONTROVERSIAL NAZI-ERA ART COLLECTION

A top Swiss museum has run into trouble showing an art collection acquired in questionable circumstances during World War II, with some saying its attempt to put it "in context" does not focus enough on the fate of the art's former Jewish owners. There has long been suspicion around the Nazi-era origins of one of Europe's most prestigious private art collections, acquired by arms dealer Emil Bührle, who made his fortune during the war.

The German-born industrialist became a naturalized Swiss citizen in 1937 and died in 1956, having amassed around 600 artworks, including masterpieces by Cezanne, Degas, Manet, Monet, Renoir, Rembrandt, Picasso and Van Gogh. Some had previously been looted from their Jewish owners, or sold cheaply and in haste as their owners fled the Nazis. The Kunsthau Zurich faced criticism in 2021 when it opened a new building to house around 170 pieces from the collection.

The museum's new show, "A future for the past—the Bührle Collection: art, context, war and conflict", tries to broaden the focus to examine what happened to the Jewish collectors. But some say it has not gone far enough, with hackers attacking its website earlier this year, branding Bührle a "Nazi sympathizer".

### Artworks 'not guilty'

Even before the show opened on November 3, an advisory committee of external experts quit in protest at the lack of space given to the former



A man walks past the entrance of the Kunsthau Zurich art museum. — AFP photos

Jewish owners. "Despite our repeated recommendations to provide the necessary space to the fates of the collectors who were persecuted, looted and murdered, only a small portion is dedicated" to them, an unnamed committee representative told the Swiss daily Le Temps. Given that "Emil Bührle profited from the historical context to assemble his collection, it is problematic to have the impression that the (Nazi's) victims are being marginalized," she added.

"We're aware of the fact that this collection entails a lot of discussions, and we felt that we need to show the work, but also with a context," muse-

um director Ann Demeester told AFP. The Bührle Foundation, which owns the collection, admitted that 13 paintings the arms dealer bought during the war had been looted by the Nazis from Jews in France. After court cases in the late 1940s, Bührle returned all 13 pieces to their rightful owners and then repurchased nine of them, the foundation said. "The artwork themselves are not guilty," Demeester said, "but they are a testimony to this history of horror". She said the aim of the new exhibition is "to address the historical issues but also to make sure that the artworks are still seen and don't disappear from view."

la montre" had been valued at over \$120 million before going on the block, according to Sotheby's.

It was part of the house's special sale this week of the collection of New York arts patron Emily Fisher Landau, who died this year at age 102. Julian Dawes, Sotheby's head of impressionist and modern art, called the Picasso canvas—which hung in Landau's living room—"a masterpiece by every measure." "Painted in 1932 -- Picasso's 'annus mirabilis'—it is full of joyful, passionate abandon yet at the same time it is utterly considered and resolved," he said. Walter was regarded as Picasso's "golden muse," and features in another of his works going under the hammer on Thursday at Christie's: "Femme endormie," or "Sleeping Woman," estimated to sell for \$25-\$35 million.

She also featured in "Femme assise pres d'une fenetre (Marie-Therese)," or

### 'Problematic'

The collection was long displayed at a private museum on the outskirts of Zurich until four masterpieces were stolen in one of the world's biggest art heists in 2008. Although two works were recovered, a Cezanne painting worth around \$110 million and a Degas are still missing. The Kunsthau tasked experts with tracing the provenance of some of the works for the new show. "We thought that it was important to openly address the problematic issues that have been discussed in the media... but never here in our house," Demeester said.

One of the pieces on display is a Renoir masterpiece from 1880, "Portrait of Irene Cahen d'Anvers", which was confiscated by the Nazis and later returned by Bührle to its Jewish owners, who then sold it back to him. As well as explanatory texts with works known to have been looted, the museum has added videos of experts and historians debating the provenance, and also asking visitors for their opinions. "We don't like controversy but we do like discussions," Demeester said.

"A museum is a sanctuary for beautiful pictures, but it's also... a platform where conversations take place," she said. The Kunsthau said it "regretted" the disagreement with experts over how the exhibition was put together, but urged a continuation of the "precious and interesting" debate. —AFP

"Woman Sitting Near a Window," which was sold in 2021 for \$103.4 million. Walter met Picasso in Paris in 1927, when she was just 17 and the Spanish artist was still married to Russian-Ukrainian ballet dancer Olga Khokhlova. The couple had a daughter, who died last year. Another Picasso from 1932 was sold for \$106 million in 2010.

The record sale for one of his works was of "The Women of Algiers (Version O)," a 1955 oil painting which sold for \$179.4 million. When it went under the hammer at Christie's New York in 2015, it was also the record for any work of art sold at auction. It was dethroned in November 2017 by the sale of "Salvator Mundi" attributed to Leonardo da Vinci, which went for \$450 million and holds the record to this day. —AFP

## Female superhero team battles uncertain times in 'The Marvels'

Hollywood is no stranger to sequels. But few recent films have come saddled with as much backstory—on and off the screen—as "The Marvels." The first all-female ensemble movie in Disney's sprawling superhero franchise, out Friday, not only takes place after the events of the 32 previous Marvel films, but also picks up the plot of two television series. Brie Larson's Carol Danvers, first seen in the film "Captain Marvel," is joined by Monica Rambeau and Kamala Khan, two sidekicks who were introduced to audiences in Disney+ TV spin-offs "WandaVision" and "Ms Marvel."

The three women are forced to team up after a glitch results in them involuntarily swapping bodies every time they use their superpowers. Such complexities are not exactly new to the Marvel movies, but feed into growing fears of audience "superhero fatigue," with one Variety critic describing the challenge of keeping up with the franchise these days as "homework." Director Nia DaCosta said the challenge of the movie came in striking a balance between exploring the women's backstories, and moving forward to their new, wacky, outer space-hopping adventures.



"We tried to focus on honoring their stories," she said. "Like, what do we need to see in this next stage for all the characters, and how do we balance it out?" But off the screen too, "The Marvels" faced an uphill climb. The movie underwent four weeks of reshoots, and its release was delayed multiple times. This led to claims that Marvel studio boss Kevin Feige had taken over the reins, with one Variety report even claiming DaCosta had left the film during post-production.

DaCosta has denied those reports, and told AFP that "we" figured out how to balance the film's many story elements while "developing the film" and "going through the process" in post-production. "Just like any other movie, that perhaps doesn't have TV shows and films that come before it, at the core of the story, it's about three characters coming together and meeting and reconnecting for the first time," said producer Mary Livanos. "So I think people will be able to follow along and enjoy the experience of the story."

Meanwhile, the long Hollywood actors' strike—which finally appeared to have been resolved Wednesday—had prevented stars like Larson and Samuel L. Jackson from promoting the film. And while Larson's 2019 film "Captain Marvel" grossed more than \$1 billion, it suffered from sexist trolling and "review-bombing" online—patterns that have sadly been repeated and amplified with "The Marvels" and its three female leads. Analysts predict it will make around \$60 million at the US box office on its opening weekend, which would be low for a Marvel film. —AFP



Sotheby's employees take phone bids during the "The Emily Fisher Landau Collection: An Era Defined" auction for Pablo Picasso's "Femme a la Montre" at Sotheby's in New York City. — AFP

## Picasso's 'Woman with a Watch' fetches \$139 million at NY auction

One of Pablo Picasso's masterpieces, "Woman with a Watch," was sold at auction Wednesday night for \$139.3 million by Sotheby's in New York, the second-highest price ever achieved for the artist. In a jam-packed room at the venerable auction house, it only took a few minutes of telephone bidding for the 1932 painting depicting one of the Spanish artist's companions and muses, the French painter Marie-Therese Walter, to be sold. "Femme a

## Sports

# Canada beat hosts Spain, Italy defeat France in BJK Cup finals

'That was extremely tough, I tried to stay focused on just one point at a time'

SEVILLE: Canada swept hosts Spain 3-0 in the Billie Jean King Cup finals on Wednesday, to get off to a strong start in Group C. Earlier, Italy scored an impressive 2-1 win over France in their opening Group D tie, winning both singles rubbers.

Canadian rookie Marina Stakusic, 18, beat Rebeka Masarova 6-3, 6-1 in a brilliant display, before Leylah Fernandez edged Sara Sorribes 7-6 (10/8), 7-6 (9/7) to clinch the tie. Stakusic, ranked 258th in the world, made light work of Masarova, who is 65th for her first victory over a top 100 player.

"I feel amazing, I'm super happy with my performance today, I just tried to have great energy from the beginning and just show I belong here," said Stakusic. "It's my best victory for sure... the Canadian fans motivated me so much today, and the Spanish fans too, I like any noise. For me it was very motivating." As impressive as Stakusic was, Masarova made 33 unforced errors and was far from her best. It left the pressure on team-mate Sorribes' shoulders and perhaps that told as she spurned three set points in the tie-break before Fernandez eventually snatched an exciting first set.

Sorribes failed to convert two more set points in the second set tie-break and Fernandez triumphed. "There are something that I need to work on but my Canadian team-mates and my Canadian cheering squad here did what they had to do, gave me positivity and helped me in the tough moments," said Fernandez.

"That was extremely tough, I tried to stay focused on just one point at a time." Eugenie Bouchard and Gabriela Dabrowski polished off the sweep with a 6-2,

7-5 doubles win over Sorribes and Masarova.

Canada face Poland on Thursday, while Italy are also in action against Germany. France clawed back a point in the doubles against Italy, who also won both their singles rubbers. Jasmine Paolini beat France's Caroline Garcia 7-6 (8/6), 5-7, 6-4 in a thrilling battle after Martina Trevisan beat Alize Cornet 2-6, 6-2, 6-2, earning Italy the tie.

Garcia and Kristina Mladenovic then earned a 5-7, 6-2, 10-6 win over Trevisan and Elisabetta Cocciaretto. Four-time winners Italy have now beaten France in five of their last seven meetings, edging this battle between two of the four ever-present countries at the tournament, along with Australia and Great Britain.

Trevisan came back forcefully from a set down to triumph in the first singles rubber. "I'm very happy to bring the point to my team, when I play for Italy, for my country, it's always special," she said. Cornet said she was unwell in the second set. "I was feeling pretty good before and during the first set," she explained. "Then my form dropped, I started to feel a bit dizzy, and I think she changed her strategy and she played much smarter from the second set."

Paolini and world number 20 Garcia played out a consistent first set with just one break point, which the Italian saved, eventually triumphing in the tie-break. In the second set Garcia blew two set points at 5-4 up but immediately recovered Paolini's break and made no mistake at the third time of asking, forcing a decider. However, it was Paolini who emerged victorious in a tense finale, winning the final four games to clinch victory. — AFP



SEVILLE: US tennis star Billie Jean King (R) reacts to being presented a jersey, signed by the Spain's women football team, by the world champion footballer Maria Perez on the day 2 of the Billie Jean King Cup Finals 2023 in La Cartuja stadium in Seville. — AFP



MUMBAI: Australia's Glenn Maxwell celebrates after winning the 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup one-day international (ODI) match between Australia and Afghanistan at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai. — AFP

## Big-hitter Maxwell has key World Cup bowling role: Coach

PUNE: Glenn Maxwell's extraordinary batting exploits may have made headlines but coach Andrew McDonald believes the all-rounder's bowling could be just as vital to Australia's hopes of winning the World Cup.

Maxwell assured Australia of a semi-final spot thanks to a stunning unbeaten double century against Afghanistan in Mumbai on Tuesday that secured a three-wicket win after his side had collapsed to 91-7 chasing a target of 292.

Earlier in the tournament, the 35-year-old scored the fastest century at any World Cup, off 40 balls, against the Netherlands. Yet even though the off-spinner has taken only five wickets at an expensive average of 52 he boasts the best economy rate of any Australian bowler, conceding just 4.95 runs per over at this World Cup.

Australia still have one group game, against Bangladesh in Pune on Saturday, before a semi-final against South Africa—the last team to defeat them in pool play in India before they went on a six-game winning streak—in either Mumbai or Kolkata next week. McDonald has no doubts about Maxwell's role in support of in-form leg-spinner Adam Zampa. "Him (Maxwell) as the second spinner has been really pivotal in the role that he's played," McDonald told Australian on Thursday.

"We talk about him and his batting in one space, but I think his bowling has allowed us to function as a team differently to potentially how we saw it coming in and potentially how everyone else saw it coming in." Steve Smith missed the Afghanistan game following a bout of vertigo, a condition that has troubled the star batsman several times in recent years. "He feels pretty good today, I saw him in the corridor," McDonald said of the 34-year-old Smith, who was ruled out shortly before the toss after training on the outfield.

"I feel like it (the game) just happened at the wrong time for him not to play, whereas if it had been 24 hours later, then it might have been a different decision." McDonald added: "He was battling with his balance on certain shots. He went through some running between the wickets as well which probably aggravated it a little bit more."

With a place in the last four guaranteed, Australia do have the option to rest key players against Bangladesh. But that could mean they have over a week's break before the South Africa match. "Is that ideal?" said McDonald. "It might be for some but for others you want that continuity of playing to get ready for what will be a great challenge that is South Africa." — AFP

## S Lanka's parliament asks 'corrupt' cricket board to resign

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's parliament unanimously asked the country's cricket board to resign on Thursday after accusing it of unprecedented corruption involving millions of dollars. It was the latest development in a crisis involving the cricket board—the richest sporting organisation in the bankrupt island country—that came to a head after Sri Lanka's humiliating World Cup defeat by India last week.

The move is not binding but adds to pressure on the board, which the sports minister sacked on Monday only for the Court of Appeal to restore it the following day. Opposition leader Sajith Premadasa moved a resolution asking Sri Lanka Cricket to step down immediately and the government agreed in a rare show of unity in the fractured legislature.

"This is a historic resolution that sends a message to the world that Sri Lankan legislators have united to defend cricket and restore the integrity of the game," Premadasa told the cricket-mad country's parliament. "We want the corrupt board to go."

A board source said they would seek legal opinion before reacting to the resolution. Sports minister Roshan Ranasinghe has accused the board of widespread corruption. He sacked the elected members on Monday and replaced them with an interim committee headed by former skipper Arjuna Ranatunga. The appeal court restored the original



COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's former cricket captain and Chairman of a new interim national cricket board Arjuna Ranatunga, looks on before a press conference at the Sri Lanka cricket board office in Colombo. — AFP

board for two weeks on Tuesday pending a full hearing. Ranasinghe told parliament on Tuesday that fraud at the board ran into millions of dollars. He said he would rather resign than go back on his decision to sack the board, accusing President Ranil Wickremesinghe of trying to defend corrupt officials.

There has been no reaction to the deepening

crisis so far this week from the International Cricket Council (ICC), the world governing body. The ICC has rules against political interference and has previously suspended Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka have not won the World Cup since 1996, with Ranasinghe blaming the board for the "deterioration" of standards. — AFP



SEPANG: (L-R) Mooney VR46 Racing's Italian rider Marco Bezzecchi, Ducati Lenovo Team's Italian rider Francesco Bagnaia, Prima Pramac's Spanish rider Jorge Martin and Red Bull KTM Factory Racing's South African rider Brad Binder attend a press conference at the Sepang International Circuit in Sepang on November 9, 2023, ahead of the practice sessions for the MotoGP Malaysia Grand Prix. — AFP

## MotoGP champ Bagnaia thrives on pressure ahead of Malaysian GP

SEPANG: Reigning world MotoGP champion Francesco Bagnaia has said he thrives on the pressure of leading the championship, with Jorge Martin in hot pursuit ahead of the Malaysian Grand Prix in Sepang on Sunday.

Italy's Bagnaia tops the standings on 389 points, while Martin lurks 13 points behind on 376 after the Spaniard gave himself a massive boost by claiming a priceless fourth win of the season in Thailand last month.

The Ducati rider welcomed the intensity of defending his crown, in the circuit where he won last year en route to claiming his maiden MotoGP title. "It's a pleasure to have this kind of pressure as we are fighting for the title. Without pressure, perhaps you don't care too much. I think pressure is normal, it's a great fuel in my point of view," Bagnaia said.

"We have to use it to improve and feel the anger of being a champion again." Martin ensured this third final race of the season will be a captivating affair after the Spaniard expertly kept

Bagnaia and KTM's Brad Binder at bay to win the Thailand Grand Prix.

The 25-year-old Pramac rider is adamant to settle unfinished business at Sepang which saw him crash during last year's race while leading the chasing pack. "I could have made it last year, but unfortunately it did not happen because of the crash. I think with the new asphalt we can improve because the bounce is less and the turns are faster. I am looking forward to this race," he said.

Martin, who has racked up seven sprint race victories this season, chose to remain coy when asked about the possibility of him being team-mates with Bagnaia next year. "I cannot say a lot. I would be proud to continue with Pramac, but if Ducati wants me to join with the red bike, I would be happy too," he said.

Martin holidayed in Bali, Indonesia, as part of his preparations to acclimatize to the steamy conditions in Malaysia that are forecasted to push to 33 degree Celsius (91 Fahrenheit), coupled with the threat of tropical thunderstorms.

The Sepang International Circuit near Kuala Lumpur used to host Formula One and provides plenty of opportunities for high-speed racing and overtaking. The action starts on Friday with practice, followed by more practice, qualifying and a 10-lap sprint race on Saturday. — AFP

## All Blacks star Codie to miss most of Super Rugby season

WELLINGTON: All Blacks hooker Codie Taylor will only play the tail end of the 2024 Super Rugby season because of an extended post-World Cup break, defending champions Canterbury Crusaders said Thursday as they unveiled their squad.

Wales full-back Leigh Halfpenny and former All Blacks centre Ryan Crotty are key additions for the Crusaders when the new campaign begins in February. But the 32-year-old Taylor, who started the World Cup final when New Zealand lost 12-11 to South Africa last month, has opted to take a non-playing sabbatical.

After a decade with the Crusaders, the veteran forward is only expected to return from round 10 of the competition in late April. "Codie has been here a long time. For his longevity, it's important for him to have a wee break and he's earned that right," said Crusaders coach Rob Penney.

"He's due back about three weeks before the play-offs." The Christchurch-based Crusaders are chasing an eighth straight Super Rugby title and will do so under Penney, who replaces All Blacks-bound Scott Robertson as head coach. Crotty, 35, returns to the Crusaders on a one-year contract after four years in Japan. Former British & Irish Lions star Halfpenny joins having retired from international rugby following his final appearance for Wales last weekend in a win over the Barbarians. "It's a very exciting addition to our group. Leigh has been world class for a number of years," Penney said.

Scott Barrett captains the Crusaders, who have lost the experience of his All Blacks team-mates Sam Whitelock, Richie Mo'unga and Leicester Fainga'anuku after they signed for overseas clubs.

All 12 Super Rugby Pacific teams announced their squads on Thursday. Among the New Zealand sides, All Blacks prop Angus Ta'avao has rejoined the Auckland Blues, where he started his Super Rugby career in 2012, from the Waikato Chiefs.

Former Wales fly-half Rhys Patchell will join the Otago Highlanders and Argentina fullback Martin Bogado returns for his second season with the Dunedin-based team. New Zealand-born England loose forward Brad Shields has returned to the Wellington Hurricanes after a spell in Europe with Wasps, then Perpignan. — AFP

Sports

# Real, Bayern qualify for Champions League last 16, Man Utd stunned

## Inter Milan, Real Sociedad secure their tickets for knockout phase

PARIS: Real Madrid and Bayern Munich were among the clubs to qualify for the last 16 of the Champions League with two group games to spare on Wednesday, while Manchester United's poor form continued as they slipped to a stunning 4-3 defeat against FC Copenhagen. Last season's runners-up Inter Milan and Real Sociedad also secured their tickets for the knockout phase, joining holders Manchester City and RB Leipzig in advancing to the last 16.

Madrid, the record 14-time European champions, made sure of their progress from Group C with a 3-0 home win over Braga after surviving an injury setback just before kick-off. Goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga pulled out hurt in the warm-up, but his replacement Andriy Lunin excelled by saving Alvaro Djaló's sixth-minute penalty.

With Jude Bellingham rested, Brahim Diaz gave Real a 27th-minute lead before Brazilian duo Vinicius Junior and Rodrygo both scored in the second half. Napoli are poised to go through from the group alongside Real despite being held to a 1-1 draw at home by Union Berlin.

### 'Phenomenon' Kane

Matteo Politano put Napoli ahead late in the first half but David Datro Fofana, on loan from Chelsea, equalized soon after the restart. The result allowed Union to end a 12-game losing run but they cannot now qualify for the last 16.

Their Bundesliga rivals Bayern qualified with a 2-1 victory at home to Galatasaray, their 17th consecutive win in the Champions League group stage. Thomas Tuchel's side saw Galatasaray have a goal disallowed for offside before Harry Kane headed in the opener with just 10 minutes left.

Kane then added another, his 19th goal already for Bayern in just 15 appearances, before Cedric Bakambu pulled one back in stoppage time for Galatasaray.

"He's a phenomenon and we're proud that he's playing in the team," Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer told broadcaster DAZN of Kane. Galatasaray still stand every chance of going through from Group A after United lost in a remarkable game in Denmark.

### Copenhagen stun United

Erik ten Hag's team appeared to be cruising thanks to two goals in the first half an hour by their Danish striker Rasmus Hojlund. Yet they suffered a blow when Marcus Rashford was controversially sent off in the 42nd minute for a foul on Elias Jelert, and Copenhagen took full advantage to haul themselves level by the break.

Mohamed Elyounoussi pulled one back before Diogo Goncalves equalized from the spot in the ninth minute of stoppage time. Still United got back in front via a Bruno Fernandes penalty midway through the second half, but Lukas Lerager made it 3-3 seven minutes from time and Rooney Bardghji, the 17-year-old Kuwait-born Swedish Under-21 international, got Copenhagen's winner in the 87th minute.

Ten Hag's team have now lost three of their four Champions League matches this season and have been beaten in nine of their 17 games in all competitions. "I think first we played very good until the red card. The red card changed everything. Then it becomes a different game," Ten Hag told broadcaster TNT Sports. "I saw lots of positives, but in the end we lose some focus. It's hard when you play so long with 10 men."

### Arsenal almost through

Meanwhile, Arsenal are on the brink of progressing from Group B after a 2-0 home win over Sevilla, in which Bukayo Saka set up Leandro Trossard for the opener in the first half, and then added the second after the break.



COPENHAGEN: Manchester United's Portuguese midfielder #08 Bruno Fernandes and FC Copenhagen's Danish midfielder #33 Rasmus Falk Jensen vie for the ball during the UEFA Champions League Group A football match between FC Copenhagen and Manchester United FC in Copenhagen, Denmark. — AFP

"I'm really happy with the performance from the team. They showed aggression and commitment," Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta told TNT Sports. The Gunners are four points ahead of both Lens and PSV Eindhoven, with the Dutch side boosting their own hopes by beating the French side 1-0 thanks to Luuk de Jong's early header.

Lens had substitute Morgan Guilavogui sent off late on. In Group D, Inter secured their progress

with a 1-0 win away to Red Bull Salzburg in Austria, a game settled by a late Lautaro Martinez penalty.

That result also allowed Real Sociedad to qualify after their earlier 3-1 defeat of Portuguese giants Benfica, who have lost all four matches in the group. Mikel Merino, Mikel Oyarzabal and Ander Barrenetxea all scored in the first 21 minutes for the hosts, before Brais Mendez hit the post with a penalty. Rafa Silva pulled one back for Benfica. — AFP

## PSG kid Zaire-Emery is French football's next big thing

PARIS: France's never-ending conveyor belt of footballing talent appears to have thrown up its next superstar in Paris Saint-Germain's midfield prodigy Warren Zaire-Emery, who earned a call-up to the full national team on Thursday.

Zaire-Emery is just 17 years and eight months old, and if he plays for Didier Deschamps' side in either of their final Euro 2024 qualifiers against Gibraltar and Greece, he will become the youngest France player since before World War I.

That record is held by Real Madrid midfielder Eduardo Camavinga, who broke into the French team aged 17 years and nine months in September 2020. Even Kylian Mbappe was 18 when he made his debut.

Zaire-Emery's rise has been remarkable and vertigo-inducing, since he made his first-team debut for PSG on the opening day of last season in August 2022 at the age of 16 years and five months.

That night in Clermont-Ferrand, as he appeared off the bench to join Neymar and Lionel Messi on the pitch, he became the youngest player to represent PSG.

By the end of last season he was starting regularly for the Qatar-backed side. He has hardly missed a game in this campaign under new coach Luis Enrique. The French champions are reportedly hopeful of getting their starlet to extend his contract, which currently runs until 2025.

"Warren is aggressive, good technically, has good vision, can score goals and set up goals. He is the perfect example for all young kids in the PSG academy who want to be footballers and want to get to the highest level," said Luis Enrique after Zaire-Emery's



MILAN: AC Milan's US midfielder #80 Yunus Musah fights for the ball with Paris Saint-Germain's French midfielder #33 Warren Zaire-Emery during the UEFA Champions League 1st round group F football match between AC Milan and Paris Saint-Germain at the San Siro stadium in Milan. — AFP

man-of-the-match display against AC Milan in the Champions League last month.

Deschamps, who does not regularly attend club matches, was in the stands at the Parc des Princes that night and from that point on it seemed inevitable that Zaire-Emery would earn a call-up to the France squad. His driving runs forward from midfield set up two goals that night. He has since scored in successive Ligue 1 matches for PSG and there are no fears of the full national team being too big a step up.

"I reckon it's an objective for everyone, but I am

not necessarily thinking about it. I am just playing my football and working hard to get there," he told broadcaster TF1 recently when asked about the prospect of a call-up.

Born in Montreuil in the eastern Paris suburbs, Zaire-Emery is the son of a footballer — his father, Franck Emery, played for local side Red Star before going into coaching.

Zaire-Emery started playing at the age of four. It was not long before he was picked up by PSG, the club he supported as a little boy. — AFP

man-of-the-match display against AC Milan in the Champions League last month.

Deschamps, who does not regularly attend club matches, was in the stands at the Parc des Princes that night and from that point on it seemed inevitable that Zaire-Emery would earn a call-up to the France squad. His driving runs forward from midfield set up two goals that night. He has since scored in successive Ligue 1 matches for PSG and there are no fears of the full national team being too big a step up.

"I reckon it's an objective for everyone, but I am



LE PLESSIS-ROBINSON: Racing Metro 92 newly recruited South-African player Siya Kolisi (C) poses with his jersey next to Racing Metro 92 president Laurent Travers (L), and head coach Stuart Lancaster (R) after his official presentation at the headquarters of the French top 14 rugby union club, in Le Plessis-Robinson, outside Paris, on November 9, 2023. — AFP

## Girona visit Rayo aiming to extend surprise Liga lead

BARCELONA: Surprise La Liga leaders Girona face Rayo Vallecano on Saturday looking to accomplish what giants Real Madrid could not. The Catalan minnows visit Rayo's ramshackle Vallecas stadium, less than a week after Carlo Ancelotti's side were held to a goalless draw at the Santiago Bernabeu by their neighbours.

Girona have the chance to extend their lead at the top of the table to five points on Real Madrid, second, and seven above Barcelona, third, before the traditional Spanish giants are in action. Real Madrid host Valencia on Saturday night, while Barcelona, still reeling from their defeat by Shakhtar Donetsk in the Champions League, welcome Alaves on Sunday. Some are starting to wonder in Spain if Girona can repeat the miracle English club Leicester City pulled off in the Premier League in 2016, when they astonishingly lifted the title. Girona were promoted in 2022 and are in only their fourth ever season in Spain's top flight.

They have an advantage on some of the league's other teams, because they form part of the City Football Group, the UAE-based parent company of Manchester City, who bought the club in 2017. However at Girona, key figures including coach Michel Sanchez and sporting director Quique Carcel are keeping their feet on the ground.

"Internally, we are very clear that what Leicester did is a very big feat and obviously these are very nice situations," Carcel told AFP this week. "But we don't think about that. We know the reality that we are in. We know that here, Barca, Madrid and Atletico Madrid are clubs that are very big and have a very high budget."

Michel previously said Girona are not competing with the big three, and instead fighting with the teams behind them — the likes of Real Sociedad and Real Betis. "When the league starts, you never know which teams are going to be at the top," Carcel continued. "Obviously, Barca, Madrid and Atletico Madrid, but for example Sevilla or Villarreal are teams that you thought would be at the top and now they are at the bottom."

"We have to take it game by game. Now we play against Rayo and we don't have to think much beyond that. I think it's a tough, difficult game against a team that drew at Madrid." Girona have outscored every other team in the top flight with 29 goals in 12 matches - 10 wins and just one defeat - but Rayo are solid at the back. — AFP

## World Cup winner Kolisi 'excited' at new chapter in France

LE PLESSIS-ROBINSON: South Africa's double World Cup-winning captain Siya Kolisi made his first public appearance as a Racing 92 player on Thursday and admitted that it felt like "the first day back at school".

Kolisi, who led the Springboks to the 2019 and 2023 World Cups, has joined the Top 14 club from South African franchise Sharks on a three-year deal. "I'm excited," he told reporters on Thursday, adding that he will make his debut for the club against La Rochelle in Paris on November 26.

"I started training on Tuesday and it's exciting. It felt like the first day back at school. I've got a repu-

tion, but it's not my reputation that's going to count on the pitch. I need to prove myself, learn a new language and get to grips with a new culture.

"The day I leave the club, I want people to be able to say that I gave it my all." Kolisi, 32, lifted the Webb Ellis Cup for the second time after a dramatic 12-11 win over New Zealand at the Stade de France in the final on October 28, after which the Boks were given a massive reception at home.

"It was amazing, way bigger than 2019," he said. "People expected us to win this time and were following us the whole time. "We won this for the people at home. When we were there (in South Africa), we could see why we sacrificed 20 weeks together."

"It was great to see how the people appreciated it. It made it all worthwhile." Kolisi said Racing coach Stuart Lancaster had wanted him to rest but "I really wanted to get to know my new team-mates". "I feel like a child," he said. "My achievements don't mean anything. I still have a lot to learn. — AFP

# Classifieds

### Clinics & Hospitals

#### Clinics

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

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

#### Hospitals

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

### Change of Name

I, **ALI ASGHAR** holder of Indian Passport No. - Z4826769, having permanent address-14, Street G, Kharol Colony, Dewali (Rural), Udaipur, Rajasthan, India-313001, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as **ALI ASGHAR** (Given Name) and **HITA** (Surname). #4554 - 10-11-2023

I, **ABIDAH RAJU** holder of Indian Passport No. V3747806 having permanent address Atchanta Peddapet, West Godavari, Pin: 534123, Andhra Pradesh, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) **ABIDAH RAJU** and (surname) **PATHAGOLUSU**.

## Jokic leads Nuggets past Warriors

Blockbuster showdown between two NBA heavyweights



DENVER: Zeke Nnaji #22 of the Denver Nuggets drives to the basket during the game against the Golden State Warriors on November 8, 2023 at the Ball Arena in Denver, Colorado. — AFP

LOS ANGELES: Nikola Jokic scored 35 points as the Denver Nuggets defeated the Golden State Warriors 108-105 in a blockbuster showdown between the two NBA heavyweights on Wednesday. A pulsating clash featuring the last two NBA champions lived up to the billing, with the Western Conference rivals going toe-to-toe in a game that saw the lead change hands nine times.

After trailing for almost the entire game at Denver's Ball Arena, the Warriors edged in front heading into the fourth quarter after outscoring Denver 31-23 in the third. But Denver recovered from a five-point deficit early in the fourth to snatch victory, clinching the win after Klay Thompson's attempted game-tying buzzer-beater drifted wide.

The victory cemented Denver's place at the top of the Western Conference, with the reigning NBA champions improving to 8-1. "We don't have the pressure of being a champion, we're just trying to enjoy the moment," Jokic told ESPN.

"I'm just trying to play the game the right way. And as long as we're winning I think I'm doing a good job," added Jokic, who also had 13 rebounds and five assists. Reggie Jackson backed Jokic with

20 points while Michael Porter Jr. had 17. Steph Curry's 23 points led the scoring for the Warriors, the 2022 champions who fell to 6-3 after the loss.

Elsewhere, Joel Embiid posted 27 points with 10 rebounds and four assists as the Philadelphia 76ers secured a sixth straight win of the season with a 106-103 defeat of the Boston Celtics. Embiid received offensive support from Tyrese Maxey, who finished with 25 points from 11-of-27 shooting, including three from beyond the arc.

The victory leaves Philadelphia in first place in the Eastern Conference on 6-1, with the Milwaukee Bucks second at 5-2. Kristaps Porzingis led Boston's scoring with 29 points while Derrick White finished with 19 points and Jayson Tatum 16.

Sixers head coach Nick Nurse paid tribute to the contributions of Maxey and Embiid. "We've got an emerging young star in Tyrese, we've got an unbelievable player in Joel, and we've got a lot of talented athletes around them who give us some depth," Nurse said.

In other games, Victor Wembanyama gave a low-key display in his Madison Square Garden debut, where the San Antonio Spurs succumbed 126-

105 to the New York Knicks. Wembanyama, the No.1 Draft pick from France, struggled to find his shooting range, making just 4-of-14 from the field before finishing with 14 points.

Jalen Brunson led the Knicks scorers with 25 points, while RJ Barrett had 24 and Julius Randle 23. The Spurs loss marked the team's fourth straight game where they have conceded 120 points or more, and came after Monday's 152-111 mauling by the Indiana Pacers. Asked what he had seen from his team in recent performances, Spurs coach Gregg Popovich replied: "What am I seeing? I'm seeing teams score 120 or 130 against us—that's what I'm seeing."

### Clippers, Lakers stumble

Also in New York, James Harden was left looking for his first win since joining the Los Angeles Clippers after slumping to a 100-93 defeat to former club the Brooklyn Nets. Harden was held to just 12 points by the Brooklyn defense. Paul George top-scored for the Clippers with 24 points but was unable to stop Los Angeles slipping to defeat. The Clippers fell to 3-4 for the season.

In Oklahoma City, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander

poured in 43 points from 15-of-22 shooting as the Thunder rolled to a 128-120 win over the Cleveland Cavaliers. Caris LeVert led the Cleveland scorers with 29 points.

In Milwaukee, the Bucks edged past the Detroit Pistons 120-118 thanks to 34 points from new recruit Damian Lillard and 15 from Giannis Antetokounmpo. Seven of the Milwaukee line-up finished with double-digit points totals.

The Los Angeles Lakers' dismal form on the road continued in Texas, with the Houston Rockets thrashing their visitors 128-94. Rui Hachimura led the injury-hit Lakers scoring with 24 points, but Los Angeles were always chasing the game after being overrun 32-19 in the first quarter.

The Lakers—who have lost all five of their road games this season—went into Wednesday's match missing the injured Anthony Davis, Jarred Vanderbilt, Gabe Vincent and Jaxson Hayes.

"It's tough, we're juggling different circumstances with guys being in and out of the line-up," Lakers coach Darvin Ham said. "But at the end of the day, no one's gonna feel sorry for you, especially when you're a Los Angeles Laker." — AFP



Kuwait Karate National Team displaying their medals.

## Kuwait Karate Team wins 5 medals in Asian tourney

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Karate National Team won five medals—one gold, two silver, and two bronze—in the Asian Junior and youth Championship, which concluded Thursday in Kazakhstan, said Head of Kuwaiti Karate Federation Fayeze Al-Daihani.

In a statement to KUNA, Al-Daihani said that all the medals won by the team in the seven-day tournament were in the martial arts category, as player Musa Al-Mutairi was crowned

with the gold medal after achieving first place in the under 61 kilogram competition. Players Sami Al-Ibrahim and Fahd Al-Azmi won silver medals after coming in second place in the under 57 kg and over 70 kg competitions, added Al-Daihani, while players Haidar Hashem and Jassim Bafaqeer won bronze after reaching the semi-finals in the over 84 kg and under 52 kg competitions.

Al-Daihani stressed that the federation pays great attention to national team players and include them in major tournaments to help hone their skills and further develop them, in order to achieve distinguished results in international, continental and regional sport forums. Al-Daihani concluded by praising the Kuwaiti national team's performance and achievements in the tournament. — KUNA

## New Zealand on brink of World Cup semi-finals

BENGALURU: Trent Boult led an inspired bowling display to help New Zealand down Sri Lanka by five wickets on Thursday and move to the brink of the World Cup semi-finals. Chasing a modest 172 for victory, New Zealand rode on an opening stand between Devon Conway (45) and Rachin Ravindra (42) to achieve the target with 160 balls to spare in Bengaluru.

The Kiwis remain in fourth position with 10 points ahead of Pakistan and Afghanistan and a with much superior net run-rate than their rivals. Both Pakistan and Afghanistan need improbable victory margins in their last matches against England and South Africa respectively to have any chance of making the final four.

"There's a few teams that could end up on similar points," said New Zealand captain Kane Williamson. "It's out of our control, we have a couple of trainings, a couple of days off, I don't know how it will look but it's great." The Black Caps, in their last league match, bounced back from four straight losses to close in on a likely semi-final clash against undefeated India. Ravindra, who also took two wickets, added to his blazing form in the tournament including three centuries to edge past South Africa's Quinton de Kock and top the batting chart with 565 runs.

Both left-handed openers struck regular boundaries before Dushmantha Chameera broke through with the wicket of Conway and soon Ravindra followed his partner to the pavilion. Williamson fell for 14 and Mark Chapman was run out but Daryl Mitchell's attacking 43 ensured an easy way home despite his departure 10 runs short of the target. Boult returned figures of 3-37 after the Kiwis elected to field first and bundled out Sri Lanka for 171 in 46.4 overs.



BENGALURU: Sri Lanka's Dilshan Madushanka (L) bowls as New Zealand's Rachin Ravindra watches during the 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup. — AFP

Opener Kusal Perera smashed 51 but the rest of the batting fell apart. Sri Lanka slipped to 128-9 before number nine Maheesh Theekshana (38 not out) and Dilshan Madushanka (19) put on a 43-run 10th-wicket to add some respect to the total.

Sri Lanka lost half their side for 70 inside 10 overs after Lockie Ferguson sent back the left-handed Perera, who hit nine fours and two sixes in his 28-ball knock. Perera was dropped on nought by wicketkeeper Tom Latham off Tim Southee who struck with a wicket on the next ball to send back Pathum Nissanka, caught behind for two.

Boult then took the wickets of skipper Kusal Mendis (six), Sadeera Samarawickrama (one) and Charith Asalanka (eight), who was given not out but the Kiwis successfully reviewed the decision in their favour. The Mendis strike was Boult's 50th World Cup wicket Cup to enter elite company including Glenn McGrath, Muttiah Muralitharan, Mitchell Starc, Lasith Malinga and Wasim Akram. Leg-spinner Mitchell Santner struck twice with his left-arm spin to claim the key wickets of Angelo Mathews (16) and Dhananjaya de Silva (19). — AFP