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Gaza hospital a 'death zone'

Preemies moved from Al-Shifa hospital • Kuwait slams strike on school • Death toll reaches 13,000



GAZA: A Palestinian medic cares for premature babies evacuated from Al-Shifa hospital to the Emirati hospital in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on Nov 19, 2023. — AFP

KUWAIT: Thirty-one premature babies were evacuated from Gaza's biggest hospital on Sunday, the World Health Organization said, seeking to get the last patients and staff out of what it has dubbed a "death zone". The evacuation came as the Zionist entity said it was stepping up operations against Hamas. The death toll in Gaza has reached 13,000, with more than 5,500 children among the dead, alongside 3,500 women, with 30,000 more people wounded.

Kuwait condemned and denounced Saturday the Zionist occupation's heinous massacre of a large number of Palestinian civilians, including children and women, by bombing the UN-run Al-Fakhoura School in Jabalia refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. In a press statement, Kuwait's foreign ministry also expressed Kuwait's unequivocal rejection of the Zionist occupation forces' systematic targeting of defenseless Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip.

It also reiterated Kuwait's call for an immediate stoppage of such assaults and provision of protection for Palestinian people and relief agencies operating in the Gaza Strip and their staff. The ministry also underlined the need for holding the Zionist occupation accountable for its continued violation of international humanitarian law and UN resolutions.

Sirens blared across Jerusalem to warn of rocket fire from Gaza, sending civilians scurrying for cover as loud blasts from intercepted missiles pierced the air. In Gaza, a lack of fuel to power incubators has previously led to the deaths of other vulnerable newborns at Al-Shifa hospital, according to the health ministry in the territory. Al-Shifa has become the

focus of the six-week-old war that began on Oct 7. WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said 31 "very sick" babies were moved in a joint operation with staff from the UN and the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PCRS), which used six ambulances in the transfer. The babies were taken to the Al-Helal Emirati maternity hospital, he wrote on X, formerly Twitter. "They are receiving urgent care in the neonatal intensive care unit," he added.

An AFP photographer saw the tiny infants at the hospital, some three or four to a cot, being bottle-fed by nurses and tended to by doctors in surgical scrubs. "Further missions are being planned to urgently transport remaining patients and staff out of Al-Shifa Hospital, pending guarantees of safe passage by parties to the conflict," said Tedros. Alongside the babies, six health workers and 10 staff family members were also moved, he added.

Three Zionist soldiers were killed Saturday in fighting in northern Gaza, the military said, raising the number of troop deaths to 62 since the war began. The narrow coastal territory, under a crippling blockade since Hamas took power in 2007, has been under Zionist siege since the war erupted, leaving food, water, medicine and fuel in short supply. The fighting has rendered more than half of Gaza's 36 hospitals non-functioning by shortages, combat or damage, the UN has said.

On Saturday, hundreds fled Al-Shifa Hospital on foot as loud explosions were heard around the complex. Columns of sick and injured were seen leaving with displaced people, doctors and nurses.

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Kyrie Irving dons keffiyeh

MILWAUKEE: NBA and Dallas Mavericks star Kyrie Irving wore a keffiyeh in a show of solidarity with Palestine during a post-game press conference following his team's match against the Milwaukee Bucks on Saturday. Irving scored 18 of his 39 points in the Mavs' 40-point third quarter.



Pro-Palestinian pitch invasion

AHMEDABAD: A pro-Palestinian protester in India broke through security cordons to invade the pitch at the Cricket World Cup final on Sunday, stopping play briefly while he hugged superstar batsman Virat Kohli. Wearing a facemask in the colors of the Palestinian flag, and a T-shirt with the slogan "Stop Bombing Palestine", the unnamed young protester ran onto the pitch. — AFP

Houthi seize Zionist vessel

HODEIDA, Yemen: Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels said on Sunday they had seized a Zionist ship in the Red Sea, a claim immediately denied by the Zionist entity. The allegation came days after the rebel group had threatened to target Zionist vessels in the Red Sea over the Zionist entity's war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip. "We took a (Zionist) cargo ship to the Yemeni

coast," an unidentified Houthi official said in a statement, adding that further details would be released later.

A Yemeni maritime source said the Houthis "seized a commercial vessel" and took it to the port of Salif in the coastal city of Hodeida which the rebels control, without specifying its nationality. The Zionist entity's military denied the ship was Zionist. A statement by the army on X, formerly Twitter, said: "The hijacking of a cargo ship by the Houthis near Yemen in the southern Red Sea is a very grave incident of global consequence."

Qatar PM says 'minor' challenges to captive deal

DOHA: A deal to free captives Hamas seized in its Oct 7 attack on the Zionist entity now hinges on "minor" practical issues, Qatar's prime minister said Sunday, without giving details or a timeline. "The challenges that remain in the negotiations are very minor compared to the bigger challenges, they are more logistical, they are more practical," Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani told a joint press conference with EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell.

Qatar has helped broker talks aiming to free some of the 240 captives in return for a temporary ceasefire, a mediation effort that has so far led to the release of four captives. "The deal is going through ups and downs from time to time throughout the last few weeks," the premier said. "I think that I'm now more confident that we are close enough to reach a deal that can bring the people safely back to their homes."

Borrell, who was due to meet with Qatar's Amir before travelling on to Jordan, called for the "unconditional release" of all captives while denouncing the Hamas attack on the Zionist entity. "There's no hierarchy between horrors, one horror doesn't justify another horror," the EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell.

Foreign firms race to open Saudi offices

RIYADH: A wave of ribbon-cutting ceremonies is sweeping the Saudi capital as multinationals face a January deadline to open regional headquarters in the Gulf kingdom or lose out on government contracts. In what has become

a common scene, executives in suits and Saudi officials in white robes gather to inaugurate the new offices, sipping Arabic coffee in a haze of incense smoke while singing the praises of last year's fastest-growing G20 economy.

Announced in Feb 2021, Saudi Arabia's regional headquarters (RHQ) program is widely seen as a bid to compete with Dubai in the neighboring United Arab Emirates, a favorite base for global firms with business in the Middle East. Despite complaints from some executives that there remains a lack of

clarity on key details of the Saudi program, the Jan 1 deadline is holding, the Saudi investment ministry told AFP in a written response to questions. "Multinational companies that are part of the RHQ Program will be well positioned to bid for projects funded by the Saudi government," it said. "Only multinational companies with regional headquarters in the kingdom will be eligible for tenders and contracts floated by government entities." So far, 162 regional headquarters licenses have been granted in sectors including

pharmaceuticals, IT and construction, "with many others being processed", the ministry said.

The big question, analysts say, is whether participating firms are merely ticking a box to retain access to Saudi funds or genuinely embracing the government's vision of Saudi Arabia as the center of the region. The program is "an early litmus test of the degree to which foreign businesses are prepared or willing to comply with and buy into Saudi initiatives, or whether they will

Continued on Page 6



DOHA: Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed Al-Thani takes part in a press conference with EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell on Nov 19, 2023. — AFP

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Local

Domestic abuse: Spousal bullying may be hiding in the shadows

The silent epidemic behind closed doors of married couples

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: Behind closed doors of married couples, a silent epidemic may be hiding in the shadows. Spousal bullying is a lesser-known form of abuse that leaves its victims with deep scars, stripping away their self-worth and personal autonomy and toxifies marriages. To assist victims to break free from the chains that shroud their suffering, Kuwait Times confronts this terrifying truth and shines a light on the darkness of spousal bullying through the lens of lawyers and psychiatric specialists to protect readers through knowledge and help couples understand the fine line between spousal bullying and normal arguments.

International lawyer Bedour Al-Rasheed, lawyer and human rights activist Nivin Maarafie, US licensed clinical psychologist Dr Juliet Dinkha, couples and relationship consultant Basma Al-Hashimi and psychologist and therapist Jumanah Mohammad share their thoughts on this topic.

Kuwait Times: Does the law in Kuwait criminalize spousal bullying?

Rasheed: Law 16 of 2020 for Protection Against Domestic Violence and its explanatory memorandum issued on 17/9/2023 is a gamechanger for families and Kuwait. It urges all family members and allows anyone who witnesses any form of violence, whether sexual, verbal or financial, to report it, even if they are not personally involved. This is a leap in awareness and the importance of protecting the human entity, which elevates the individual, family, community and the state. The law defines domestic violence as any form of physical, psychological, sexual or financial mistreatment, whether through action, refusal or threat. It is a crime under the domestic violence law.

Maarafie: Spousal bullying is considered a criminal offense under domestic violence laws, particularly if there is evidence to support it. The case is referred to the public prosecutor's office under the



Basma Al-Hashimi



Bedour Al-Rasheed



Dr Juliet Dinkha



Jumanah Mohammad



Nivin Maarafie

category of misdemeanor, as domestic violence cases are within the jurisdiction of the public prosecutor's office for investigation. The legislature allows the victim to present evidence of being subjected to bullying within the marriage, which falls under the criminal aspect.

Kuwait Times: How does the law in Kuwait protect victims of spousal bullying?

Rasheed: Law enforcement in article 14, including the police and specialized investigative teams, are responsible for taking the necessary actions upon receiving complaints and directly referring them to the protection center. If any government employee attempts to coerce the complainant into withdrawing the complaint, they shall be punished with imprisonment for a period not exceeding three years and a fine not exceeding KD 250, or either of these penalties. It is important for individuals to protect themselves by setting boundaries, respecting themselves and acquiring legal knowledge by reading the new domestic violence law and knowing their rights. Knowledge is power.

Maarafie: It is possible to file for divorce if there is evidence. Types of bullying can include physical and appearance-based insults, comparison, imposing cosmetic procedures or standards, slan-

dering and attributing certain characteristics, demeaning in front of children or grandchildren or in public, all of which can result in punishment for the spouse, such as fines or imprisonment, depending on the severity of the bullying and whether it involves physical harm, as well as the specific circumstances of the case. The victim can protect themselves by filing a domestic violence complaint with the public prosecutor's office, where the case will be investigated and the spouse will be held accountable. I advise the victim of bullying to try to remain silent and not say anything that could be turned against them, while also attempting to gather evidence that proves the bullying they have experienced. Then they can resort to the courts, which is better than engaging in a back-and-forth and exchanging accusations.

Kuwait Times: How can couples differentiate between spousal bullying and regular arguments?

Dr Dinkha: Bullying involves repeated patterns of harmful behavior that are more intense and severe compared to typical arguments or disagreements. It often involves an imbalance of power, where one spouse consistently dominates or controls the other through manipulation, and is characterized by a desire to harm,

belittle or control the other person, while arguments and disagreements usually stem from differing perspectives or needs.

One has to evaluate how the interactions make them feel. If you consistently feel fearful, humiliated or emotionally drained after disagreements, it may indicate bullying rather than a healthy conflict. A healthy argument involves respectful communication and empathy for each other's feelings, whereas bullying involves name-calling, insults or dismissive attitudes. If anyone is feeling bullied or intimidated by their partner, I suggest seeking help of a therapist. The level of emotional and psychological harm spousal bullying can cause can reach severe depression and even suicidal thoughts.

Kuwait Times: What could be the reasons behind one spouse bullying the other?

Mohammad: Low self-confidence may lead to breaking down the psychological well-being of their partner and belittling their abilities in an attempt to convince themselves that they are superior. Suspicion of infidelity may lead to sexual bullying, for example, to make the other spouse lose trust and stop their own infidelity, and attempting to gain attention by imposing their dominance through vicious bullying. It is worth mentioning that often

bullying occurs under the guise of joking. **Kuwait Times:** How can a bully get rid of such characteristics?

Hashimi: Most psychologists attribute adults' problems to their childhood, the circumstances they grew up in and the events they experienced. However, this does not prevent the person from developing and improving themselves. In my opinion, a bully or any person with psychological problems of any kind is someone who needs to release what is inside them of negative feelings and emotions. (Change, of course, comes if they feel that they have a problem and need to change).

It also does not mean that the other party should treat them, tolerate them and wait for them to change for the better, because, each case is different from the other and has its own uniqueness and circumstances. We must also take into consideration that each person's tolerance and reactions are different from the other. This means that a person may have experienced many problems in their childhood but have overcome them in some way and is mentally healthy and has a healthy marital relationship, while another person who experienced the same circumstances may suffer for long periods and be unstable in dealing with the marital relationship due to their childhood trauma.

Deputy FM chairs meeting of council of diplomatic corps

KUWAIT: The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, chaired on Sunday a meeting of the Council of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps at the General Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the participation of the Assistants of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and members of the Council. — KUNA

ular Corps at the General Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the participation of the Assistants of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and members of the Council. — KUNA



'Pain is mixed with hope': Athletes feel agony of Palestine

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The Social Cultural Society organized an event titled "Palestine in the Eyes of Athletes" featuring various sports personalities and athletes sharing their experiences and perspectives on the Palestinian cause.

The first speaker, renowned football commentator Hafiz Darraji from Algeria, expressed the difficulty of expressing his feelings in such a challenging and sensitive circumstance where pain is intertwined with hope. He emphasized the pain for the plight of the Palestinian people and the

hope that this challenging period marks the beginning of a new era for the Palestinian cause. Darraji, visiting Kuwait for the fifth time, expressed his happiness and pride in receiving invitations from his Kuwaiti brothers to support the Palestinian people.

Highlighting the significance of the occasion, Darraji underscored the importance of athletes and influencers taking a stand on the Palestinian cause. He acknowledged that some athletes and influencers fell short of expectations, but stressed the crucial role athletes play in not only speaking about the cause but also uplifting the morale of the people in Gaza and occupied Palestine. Darraji expressed regret for some lukewarm stances while commending those who remained steadfast in supporting the rightful cause. He expressed hope that individuals would influence their respective regimes.

Football commentator Hassan Bader,

through an audio message, addressed the dire situation, citing the heinous killing and destruction caused by Zionist bombardment against homes, establishments, hospitals, infrastructure and schools in Gaza. Despite the challenges, Bader emphasized their resilience and determination to remain steadfast on the Holy Land, driven by their rights and a profound message. He thanked the organizers for hosting the event.

Athletes Youssef Al-Shatti, Sayeed Mohammad Al-Mousawi, Salman Al-Mousawi, Abdullah Al-Beloushi, Abdullah Miqdad Karam and Hassan Ibrahim expressed their unwavering support for the Palestinian cause. They shared the challenges faced in international arenas, where wearing the Palestinian keffiyeh resulted in the threat of penalties. Despite the consequences, they proudly continued to wear it, aiming to remind the world of the ongoing situation in Palestine and particularly Gaza.

Kuwait, Egypt charities sign deal worth \$500,000 for Gaza aid

CAIRO: The Kuwaiti Relief Society and the Egyptian Dar Al-Orman Association signed on Sunday an executive contract worth \$500,000 to prepare aid and relief materials for the people of the Gaza Strip via the Rafah land crossing. Member of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Relief Society and the society's representative Dr Muhammad Al-Sharhan, who signed the contract, said in a statement to KUNA that the contract aims to provide aid and relief materials to the people of Gaza. He noted that the aid includes food supplies, medical supplies, water containers and winter blankets.

Al-Sharhan explained that the value of the aid amounted to \$500,000 gathered from donations from the "Fazaa for Palestine" campaign, which was launched by the Kuwait Relief Society, 27 government agencies and other Kuwaiti charitable societies. It received overwhelming support from the government and private charities.

He added that this project comes in line with the high directives of the Kuwaiti political leadership to expand the circle of aid provided to the people of the Gaza Strip, diversify its methods and intensify its quantities. He pointed out that the Kuwaiti Relief Society participated and contributed to the Kuwaiti air bridge to alleviate the suffering of people in the Gaza Strip, noting that the volume of aid that

arrived at the Egyptian Al-Arish Airport has reached about 500 tons so far. He explained that the relief aid provided by the air bridge varied between food supplies, tents, ambulances and medical supplies. All of the supplies were delivered to the Egyptian Red Crescent Society, which in turn delivered to its Palestinian counterpart in Rafah.

Chairman of the Board of Directors of Dar Al-Orman Association Ahmed Al-Jundi said in a similar statement to KUNA that the association has a moral and legal obligation to implement the terms of the contract and provide relief materials urgently for the benefit of the people of the Gaza Strip affected by the Zionist attacks. Al-Jundi expressed his happiness in cooperating with the Kuwait Relief Society in a project to provide aid and relief materials to the brothers in Gaza.

Director of the Kuwaiti Office for Charitable Projects in Cairo Salwa Al-Enezi expressed her gratitude to the Kuwaiti Relief Society for its support and assistance to the Palestinian brothers in the Gaza Strip. Al-Enezi affirmed that Kuwaiti charities are continuing their efforts and relief work to contain the worsening humanitarian crisis in Gaza and alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian brothers as a result of the continued aggression of the Zionist forces.

The heads of the following charitable societies such as the International Islamic Charitable Organization, Al-Najat Charitable Society, the Islamic Heritage Revival Society, the Social Reform Society, the Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nouri Charitable Society, the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, the Kuwaiti Zakat House, the Patient Helping Fund Society, the Direct Aid Society and the General Secretariat of



CAIRO: A group photo of the officials of the two organizations after signing the contract.

Endowments participated in the project.

Meanwhile, three humanitarian aid airplanes took off Sunday carrying 90 tons of various humanitarian aid to help the people in the Gaza Strip, bringing the total number of flights from the Kuwaiti air bridge to 24. Director of Public Relations and Media Department at KRCS Khaled Al-Zaid told KUNA before take-off that the Kuwaiti relief aid from the Kuwaiti air bridge to date has amounted to about 600 tons through 24 flights provided by all Kuwaiti charitable

societies and bodies in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, KRCS, Egyptian Red Crescent and Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS). Al-Zaid revealed that 90 percent of Kuwaiti relief aid arrived in Gaza. Considering the separation of the north from the south of Gaza by the Zionist forces, it became difficult to deliver aid to the north. However in the southern part, the Palestinian Red Crescent was able to fill the warehouses with various Kuwaiti aid, he explained. — KUNA



Zain sponsors K-Land, Kuwait's newest family destination

Company actively supports unique homegrown projects

KUWAIT: Continuing to actively support and participate in a range of exciting local creative projects, Zain announces its sponsorship of K-Land, Kuwait's newest entertainment family destination. This new project, which offers an enjoyable and entertaining experience that celebrates Kuwait's rich cultural heritage, comes in strategic partnership with the Touristic Enterprises Company (TEC).

Zain was eager to be among the first to support this unique homegrown project,

recognizing the crucial role of the private sector in developing and supporting entertainment and recreational destinations that provide enriching experiences to the community. Zain's support to K-Land reflects its commitment to contributing to advance the local economy and tourism industry.

Behind K-Land's success story is a creative team of national talents who worked tirelessly to bring an all-new entertainment destination with an identity that celebrates Kuwait's rich culture, history, and notable landmarks. The project offers a unique opportunity for families and young people to enjoy the winter and spring seasons in its beautiful outdoor site, located at the Arabian Gulf coastline.

The games, attractions, and facilities at K-Land are inspired by Kuwait's rich culture, designed to resemble some of the nation's most recognizable landmarks like the Kuwait Towers, National Assembly building, the famous Water Towers, Souq Mubarakia shops, the traditional Kuwaiti house, and more. In addition, the children's praying area was designed to resemble Kuwait's famous Fatima Mosque. These designs bring a sense of national pride, giving families and visitors the best opportunity to create the most wonderful memories.

The games at K-Land are designed to stimulate sensory and cognitive growth for children, including all-new attractions brought to Kuwait for the first time. For instance, the thrilling Zain Kventure area includes exciting new games like bicycle slackline, ziplines on two different kinds

of lines, and a karting race on artificial sand dunes. K-Land includes dozens of other games and attractions for the whole family to experience and enjoy.

Every year, the Kuwaiti community anticipates Zain's participation in the biggest social and entertainment events, where the company adds its own flavor and reflects its brand values and identity: Zain A Wonderful World. The company is set to share the joys of K-Land with the community and has prepared special activities and surprises for visitors.



KUWAIT: The KUNA Center for Media Capacity Development holds a training program "Charisma necessary for leadership and media guidance." — KUNA photos



KUNA launches media training program in partnership with QNA

KUWAIT: The KUNA Center for Media Capacity Development launched on Sunday the training program "Charisma necessary for leadership and media guidance" with the participation of a number of employees of the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), the Public Authority for Youth, the Kuwait Ports Authority and the Qatar News Agency (QNA).

The program, which is presented by the journalist and professor of leadership and educational policies at the Public Authority for Applied Education, Dr Meshari Al-Husseini, aims to provide trainees with the skills of attendance, influence others, and identify the skills necessary for media attendance and methods of managing and leading media meetings.

The program, which will continue until Nov 23, deals with the definition of charisma, its types and elements, including media charisma and personality assessment, in addition to identifying the directions of meetings, control, dialogue management and leadership, dialogue language and dialogue soundtrack, and the training program includes workshops.

The KUNA Media Capacity Development Center, which was established in December 1995, is one of the most important media training centers, as it has provided hundreds of training programs in various media fields and aims to develop personal media capabilities and promote professional media work. — KUNA

KIBS holds seminar on 'future values in labor market'

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies (KIBS) organized a seminar entitled "Navigating Your Future Values in the Labor Market" at the College of Administrative Sciences at the Kuwait University. During the seminar, Dr Yaqoub Baqer interviewed Rana Al-Nibari. In the beginning of the seminar, Al-Nibari spoke about her experiences, the beginning of her practical journey, and some of the stations she worked during her career.

Al-Nibari pointed out the values in the labor market which she said would determine a person's career. She stressed the need for the person or institution to pay attention to work ethics and the basics that he/she believes in, including honesty and professionalism at work and commitment to time.

Al-Nibari touched on the personality of the start-up company, the beginning of the pyramid of it must be solid, the importance of having a cooperative team and the personality of a modern team leader. She underlined the need to take care of the products offered by the company and the public's view of the goods.

Talking about the importance and nature of the work of the Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies, she said "it cares about the employees of banks and the banking community in Kuwait, and has a strong financial immunity." Al-Nibari explained that a bank employee must have more than one role per year and be part of their work and evaluation, in addition to the need to learn new skills. At the end, the floor was open for a discussion and she took students' questions.



Rana Al-Nibari speaks about her experiences, the beginning of her practical journey, and some of the stations she worked during her career.



In my view

A global standard could help bolster police efficiency

By Azzah Al-Ghamdi



Local@kuwaittimes.com

The United States of America is globally regarded as a model to be emulated. One aspect that attracts admiration is the American police, considered an authority in maintaining security and order. They possess the power to provide relief and preserve lives in society, with officers granted the authority to act swiftly, including the use of lethal force when necessary.

Despite occasional shooting incidents, the United States is deemed a safe country, with such incidents often isolated. It ranks among the world's safest nations, showcasing high levels of security. Conversely, some countries face challenges with police inefficiency, impacting their ability to save lives and respond effectively to reports from the public.

In certain regions, individuals facing threats or assassination attempts find police stations unresponsive, ignoring reports and failing to take substantial steps to safeguard lives. This disregard may stem from corruption within security systems, leading to a lack of importance placed on the lives of ordinary citizens.

Due to the perceived negligence of some police forces, some individuals resort to taking matters into their own hands, seeking retribution independently. This may occur when the police either endanger lives or prioritize individuals with influence, neglecting those without connections. This poses a significant danger to the security systems of various countries, threatening national order and social peace, potentially resulting in conflicts between tribes and parties.

To address this issue, it is crucial to present it in interior ministry meetings, emphasizing the necessity of a global system and protocol verified by all United Nations-affiliated countries. This ensures that security systems and police worldwide operate with high efficiency, especially considering the interconnectedness of societies and the potential harm that expatriates may face.

The responsibility for ensuring police efficiency lies with the minister of interior, whose role is to preserve the prestige of security and prioritize the well-being of individuals in society. However, in some countries, interior ministries may be preoccupied with political investigations, neglecting the lives of citizens and jeopardizing the stability of government systems.

Addressing the issue of police negligence and inefficiency is vital for maintaining societal harmony and preventing potential crises. The establishment of a global standard for police efficiency, verified by international bodies, is crucial to ensuring the safety and well-being of individuals worldwide.

Kuwait Times
Established 1961THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYANEditor-in-Chief
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Heavy rains in Kuwait likely on Monday

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Meteorological Department said that the country is impacted by a rainy condition that began on Sunday morning in the west. Clouds and winds are expected to gradually advance towards the interior parts of the country later and will prevail until Monday evening. The rain will be of varying intensity, between light, medium and thunderstorms, and may be heavy in some areas. Director of the Department, Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi, told KUNA that the proliferation of low and medium clouds interspersed with some cumulus clouds will lead to rain of varying intensity, between light and medium, which may be accompanied by thunderstorms.

It will be heavy in some areas with chances of hailstones falling sometimes, accompanied by gusty winds at speeds exceeding 60 kilometers per hour. The rain may also stir up dust resulting in horizontal visibility and waves may rise to more than seven feet.

Al-Qarawi expected that the clouds will evaporate leading to a gradual improvement in the situation by Monday evening with chances of fog forming at night. He called on everyone to follow the weather forecast through the administration's website www.met.gov.kw and its official application on smartphones, especially when there are chances of weather fluctuations, to learn about the latest developments and view warnings if they are issued. — KUNA

Coast Guard to carry out live wire exercises

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Interior announced on Sunday that the General Administration of the Coast Guard will carry out Monday and Tuesday at 8 am live ammunition shooting exercises in the area south of Bubiyan Island and northeast of Failaka Island, extending to Awha Island. The general administration of security relations and media at the Ministry of Interior stated in a press statement on Sunday that these trainings come within the framework of the security institution's strategy to raise the efficiency of its members and raise their level of performance. The administration warned all seafarers not to approach the training site during this period, stressing that marine patrols will prevent anyone who tries to approach the site in order to preserve everyone's safety. — KUNA

Municipality teams prepared to deal with rainy situation

Reservation and licensing of camps suspended for two days

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Municipality confirmed on Sunday the readiness of its field teams to immediately deal with any eventuality arising out of water logging due to sudden rains. The teams are fully prepared to clear and drain water from roads enabling a smooth flow of traffic during rainy days.

The municipal public relations department explained in a press release that the field teams in the public cleaning and road works departments in the municipality's branches are ready to support the concerned authorities with their equipment in the event of rainwater logging in the various parts of the governorates. The cleaning teams pay attention to raising the level of cleanliness in all areas in the governorates in addition to dealing with complaints from citizens and residents that are received via the WhatsApp service and the hotline service No 139 of the Emergency Department of the Services Department or that are monitored via social media.

The releases said that inspectors at all hygiene centers and road works are prepared to deal with reports of water logging and provide assistance to the concerned government agencies within the framework of the concerted efforts of the various government agencies in dealing with rain-related problems to ensure the safety of citizens and residents.

The public cleaning and road works departments in the governorates have enlisted 1,690 cleaning workers who will be posted in various governorates. The departments will also provide necessary machinery and equipment such as blowers, lorries, bulldozers, tanks, pumps and chainsaws to clear water logging and traffic congestions.

Meanwhile, the Municipality announced on Sunday that it has suspended the process of receiving requests to reserve and issue licenses for spring camps on the website for two days. The municipality clarified in a press release that the temporary suspension has been made to carry out some technical adjustments to the reservation program until it resumes again to receive requests from those wishing to pitch their camps starting next Tuesday. — KUNA

Kuwait envoy to Malaysia receives Terengganu governor

KUALA LAMPUR: Kuwait's Ambassador to Malaysia Rashed Al-Saleh discussed on Sunday with Malaysia's former King and governor of the Malaysian state of Terengganu, Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin, the bilateral relations between both countries. Al-Saleh stated to KUNA that Sultan Mizan sent his greetings to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and to Kuwait's government and people.

He also added that both sides discussed the bi-



Municipal officials with the field teams.



Field workers remove a fallen tree from road.



KUALA LAMPUR: Kuwait's Ambassador to Malaysia Rashed Al-Saleh with Malaysia's former King and governor of the Malaysian state of Terengganu, Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin. — KUNA

lateral relation and trade, tourism and investment cooperation between Kuwait and Terengganu, noting that Terengganu is famous for its islands, beaches, lakes and many tourist attractions. The Malaysian

embassy opened in Kuwait in 1974, followed by the Kuwaiti embassy in Malaysia in 1980, noting that their strong bilateral relation is based on their cooperation in various fields. —KUNA

LuLu Hypermarket holds breast cancer awareness campaign

KUWAIT: As part of its social responsibility to the community, LuLu Hypermarket organized a breast cancer awareness campaign at their Al-Rai outlet on Nov 16. The campaign, which was held in association with the Indian Doctors Forum (IDF), aimed to raise public awareness about breast cancer and support patients in need. The compassionate initiative garnered significant attention and participation from the community. The top management of LuLu Hypermarket played an active role in supporting the campaign, and donated a significant amount to aid breast cancer patients, providing them with the necessary support and resources in their battle against this formidable disease.

Distinguished cancer specialists facilitated an awareness seminar on breast cancer during the event, drawing a large crowd of women, including individuals who were directly affected by this condition. Over 10 specialized doctors participated in the campaign, ensuring that attendees received comprehensive information regarding breast cancer risks,

early detection, and preventive measures.

In a further inspiring and heartfelt gesture, LuLu Hypermarket's entire female staff actively participated in the campaign. Staff members, who had been affected by breast cancer, shared their personal experiences during the session. As part of the campaign, LuLu Hypermarket also set up a pink colored 'Support Wall', where shoppers were encouraged to write messages of support, or share their own experiences of breast cancer, and stick the message on the wall in an expression of solidarity with breast cancer patients in the community. LuLu Hypermarket's breast cancer awareness campaign created a platform for raising awareness and educating the public through accurate medical information from the IDF doctors, and provided support for individuals impacted by breast cancer. By actively engaging customers and the community, the event not only provided valuable information but also brought a sense of empowerment to those affected by this disease.

LuLu Hypermarket's commitment to social responsibility continues to shine through initiatives such as the Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign. As a leading retail chain, they recognize the importance of giving back to society and making a positive impact on individuals and communities in need. Their efforts to support cancer patients through the IDF collaboration are certainly highly commendable.



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Afghans driven from Pakistan rebuilding lives from 'zero'

Haunted by war, Iraqis fight mental health issues

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BUREIJ: A Palestinian woman bakes bread in her home destroyed during the Zionist bombardment of Gaza, in Bureij in the central of Gaza Strip, on Nov 14, 2023. — AFP photos

Zionist bombing leaves Gaza in flour crisis

Hungry Gazans skipping meals; sometimes eating raw onion, uncooked eggplant

KHAN YUNIS: One of the last grain warehouses in the Gaza Strip has been damaged by Zionist strikes and a key flour mill in Khan Yunis — where hundreds of thousands have fled — has stopped working for lack of fuel. The store, also in Khan Yunis in the south of the territory and with room for 3,000 tons of wheat, was hit by an air strike overnight Wednesday-Thursday. AFP was unable to ascertain what happened to its reserves.

"If the Red Cross does not get the authorization from the (Zionists) so we can do the repairs needed, we will have to stop working," the head of the Gazan bakers' association, Abdulnasser al-Ajami, told AFP. Further north in the center of the Gaza Strip, another mill, Al-Salam, at Deir al Balah, was destroyed the day before, according to the United Nations humanitarian agency OCHA.

Of the five flour mills in the densely populated Palestinian territory, at least two have been hit since Oct 7, when the Zionist entity launched a military campaign on Gaza which killed more than 11,500 people, more than a third of them children, according to Palestinian officials. The relentless bombardment is aimed at destroying Hamas, who infiltrated the Zionist border with Gaza in an attack which left around 1,200 people dead, according to Zionist officials.

'Possibility of starvation'

The few big bags of flour to be found in Gaza now sell at astronomical prices of up to the equivalent of \$200. Civilians in Gaza faced "the immediate possibility of starvation" as food and water have become scarce, the UN World Food Program (WFP) warned Thursday. A trickle of humanitarian aid arriving via Egypt has done little to remedy the shortages, made worse by power cuts and a lack

of fuel for generators. Some 1,100 trucks have been allowed into Gaza so far, around 450 of them carrying food, enough to cover only "seven percent of the people's daily minimum caloric needs", the WFP said. There are just 2,000 tons of wheat remaining in Gaza, according to the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA). This is the equivalent of 370 tons of flour, or five-to-six days' supply.

UNRWA told AFP it works with 80 bakeries across the territory. In the north, where the fighting has been most intense, all of them are closed. Just 63 bakeries in central and southern Gaza are still making bread, but with difficulty because fuel is so scarce. The largest bakery, in Gaza City, shut on Tuesday after the solar panels which powered it were hit a Zionist strike. Afterwards, hungry residents looted the remaining flour.

According to the United Nations, no bakery in the northern Gaza Strip has been active since November 7 due to the lack of fuel, water and wheat flour and because of structural damage. A total of 11 bakeries in the Gaza Strip have been completely destroyed, while others are unable to operate because of the lack of flour, fuel and electricity.

'No more bread'

Since the beginning of the recent Zionist war on Palestine, Gazans have queued outside bakeries at dawn in the faint hope of getting enough to feed a family. But anyone waiting their turn — which takes five hours on average — is exposed to the threat of new air strikes. US aid agency Mercy Corps said its staff on the ground in Gaza have sometimes had to pay \$30 for five pieces of bread.

In Gaza's shops, the shelves are usually empty and signs in the windows say "No more bread" or "No



DEIR EL-BALAH: People gather at the entrance of the non-operational Al-Salam mills near Deir el-Balah in the center of the Gaza Strip on Nov 18, 2023.

more yeast". Together with the WFP, UNRWA distributes bread produced at its 154 shelters, which now host 813,000 people. But the trucks that deliver the bread are often short of fuel.

Many Gazans have resorted to making their own bread. In the south, where most of the around 1.6 million people who have been displaced by the war stay, the glow of makeshift ovens outside houses or tents pays testament to their efforts. But the flour, water and salt needed to make the bread are almost impossible to find in large parts of the Gaza Strip, according to OCHA. Hungry Gazans were "skipping or reducing meals", it said, and sometimes eating "raw onion and uncooked eggplant". — Agencies

Palestinian Authority, Muslim delegates to visit China

BEIJING: Top foreign policy officials from the Palestinian Authority and four Muslim-majority countries will visit China on Monday and Tuesday, Beijing announced, as the Zionist entity continues to wage its war on Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.

The visiting delegation is set to include the foreign ministers of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt and Indonesia, as well as the secretary-general of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. "During the visit, China will have in-depth communication and coordination with the joint delegation of foreign ministers of Arab and Islamic countries to promote a de-escalation of the current Palestinian-(Zionist) conflict, protecting civilians, and justly resolving the Palestinian issue." Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said in a statement on Sunday.

Since Oct 7, Chinese officials, including Foreign Minister Wang Yi, have called for an immediate ceasefire and a "cooling down" of the situation. China has historically been sympathetic to the Palestinians and supported a two-state solution to the Zionist-Palestinian conflict. Last month, Wang spoke with the Palestinian Authority's foreign minister Riyad al-Maliki, telling him Beijing "deeply expresses its sympathy with the Palestinian side".

The delegation is set to arrive in China days after US President Joe Biden argued that the coastal territory of Gaza and the Zionist-occupied West Bank should come under a single "revitalized" administration. "As we strive for peace, Gaza and the West Bank should be reunited under a single governance structure, ultimately under a revitalized Palestinian Authority," he wrote in the Washington Post. Qatar has helped broker talks aiming to free some of the 240 hostages held by Hamas in return for a temporary ceasefire, an effort that has so far led to the release of four hostages. Qatar later said the deal hinges on "minor" practical issues but did not provide details or a timeline. — AFP

Gazans forced to evacuate hospital speak of horrors

GAZA: Columns of Palestinians, some sick, some wounded made their way out of Gaza's largest hospital Saturday, walking for hours through the debris of war as they sought a new refuge. Zionist special forces have raided Gaza's largest hospital and terrorized the hundreds of Palestinians who had sheltered at Al-Shifa for days, searching for the Hamas command center the Zionists insist is concealed beneath. Both the militants and hospital managers deny any such base exists. The Zionist forces have so far failed to prove their claims.

Instructions to evacuate were issued Saturday, prompting the exodus of hundreds of patients and displaced towards the supposedly safer south of the Palestinian territory. "The streets were destroyed, there were bomb craters and a lot of decomposing bodies" near the hospital, said Samia al-Khatib, 45, who left Al-Shifa along with her husband and 15-year-old daughter. "There were scenes of horror, a real massacre," she told AFP.

Some clutched makeshift white flags as they made their way between dead bodies and heavily armed Zionist soldiers flanked by tanks and armored vehicles. Along a road lined by destroyed buildings and charred vehicles, children walked barefoot, elderly men leant on canes and the few who could afford it used horse-drawn carts to move south, where the Zionist entity has urged civilians to go. One man carried his disabled daughter on his



GAZA: A child waves a white flag as Palestinians fleeing Gaza City and other parts of northern Gaza walk along a road leading to the southern areas of the enclave on Nov 18, 2023. — AFP

back. Another carried his injured daughter in his arms, a plaster cast on her tiny leg.

'It was hell'

The hospital director said the Zionist army ordered the emptying of the facility. The Zionist military denied any such instructions, saying instead it had "acceded to the request of the director" to allow more civilians to leave.

At 8:00 am, the loudspeakers blared a Zionist soldier ordered everyone to evacuate "within an hour" or risk bombardment, said Rami Sharab, 24, who was stuck in the hospital for some 20 days. "I was one of the first to come out," said Sharab, who

had sought refuge in the hospital complex with his family after his neighborhood in Gaza City was bombed. "We heard shots in the air and artillery fire."

In all, more than 1.6 million people have been displaced in Gaza, around two-thirds of the territory's population, according to the United Nations. The United Nations estimated 2,300 patients, staff and displaced Palestinians were sheltering at Al-Shifa before Zionist troops moved in on Wednesday.

During the operation Zionist soldiers interrogated patients in the compound's courtyard, some left naked as soldiers checked them for weapons or explosives, witnesses said. "It was hell," said Sharab. "They stripped us, searched us and beat us." — AFP

International

Haunted by war, Iraqis fight mental health issues

High demand for mental health professionals but help hard to come by

BAGHDAD: Raghda Qassem searched all over Iraq's capital Baghdad for a psychologist she could talk to about her problems, before finally settling for consultations online. It was the best she could do in a state haunted by decades of conflict and trauma, where mental health is poorly treated and professionals are few and far between.

The World Health Organization estimates that in a country of 43 million, there are just two mental health workers for every 100,000 Iraqis. Qassem admitted she was long oblivious to her mental health needs, and only became aware of their importance "when hitting my thirties". It was while quarantined during the COVID pandemic that she "began to recognize symptoms of depression", Qassem said. "I realized that's what I had," said the 34-year-old women's activist.

She wanted to talk directly to a psychologist in Baghdad, because "when I speak I like to have the person in front of me". Many of her friends recommended that she see a doctor, but she was hesitant to do so because those who did "were treated with pills". Turning instead to the internet, she spoke to several psychologists, including a Lebanese woman with whom she was able to unravel the reasons for her unhappiness.

Demand is great

"It's because of her that I became aware of an accumulation of trauma from the war, the fear and anxiety I had in 2003 and since," she said, harking back to the US-led invasion to oust Saddam Hussein which precipitated one of the bloodiest eras in Iraqi history. The world has closely followed the Zionist military campaign on Gaza, which has claimed many thousands of lives — but such suffering and the psychological trauma it triggers have also plagued Iraq.

Ravaged by war and rocked by Islamic State



Paintings drawn by patients are displayed in Baghdad's Al-Rashad psychiatric hospital on Oct 8, 2023.

group attacks, Iraq's demand for mental health professionals is great, but help is hard to come by. Baghdad's Al-Rashad psychiatric hospital receives patients suffering from serious psychological illnesses, such as schizophrenia, and offers outpatient treatment for depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder.

At the hospital, haggard-looking patients can be seen wandering alone through the corridors. Some have been at Al-Rashad for decades, said its director Firas al-Kadhimi. "There's a shortage of specialized doctors," he told AFP. Kadhimi's hospital has only 11 psychiatrists for its 1,425 patients, aged between 14 and 70, the director said. "I don't think there's anywhere else in the world where a doctor has to treat 150 patients in the space of 30 days," he said.

Another five social workers are on staff at the facility, but they have to see 100 patients daily and sometimes do their consultations three at a time. There are, however, music and art workshops for pa-

tients. In a small theatre with red seats, three elderly people on stage rehearsed a skit prepared by a former hospital employee, who comes to help.

People more receptive

Previously, it might have been difficult for an Iraqi to say, "I have a mental problem", but attitudes have become more accepting thanks to news and social media. "The number of visitors is rising in the consultation clinics," Kadhimi said. Psychologist Zeinab Abdel Razaq works with French charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF) in Baghdad. Razaq told AFP that while there may still be a mental health "stigma" in Iraq, it had "begun to decrease". "People are more

receptive to psychology," she said. One patient, Zeinab Abdelwahab, said she initially came for physiotherapy and stayed for mental health care. After several months of sessions, "I noticed a radical change in my mood," said the thirty-something with a painful personal history. Her mother died, she said, her father was sick, she suffers from polio and has had several falls, fracturing her knees and pelvis. Abdelwahab recognized that her own perception of psychological care had been distorted by social beliefs. "When I came here, I realized that it is not just for crazy people," she said. "They're just people who need to speak to someone else, seeking comfort about how they feel. And with no restrictions." — AFP

AI of war: How robots can be used in autonomous killing

SAN FRANCISCO: Like gunpowder and the atomic bomb, artificial intelligence (AI) has the capacity to revolutionize warfare, analysts say, making human disputes unimaginably different — and a lot more deadly. Ahead of a summit between China's Xi Jinping and US President Joe Biden, there had been suggestions that the two men would agree to ban lethal autonomous weapons. The meeting appeared to produce no such accord, but experts say it's a vital topic that is already altering armed conflict — and switching up the competition for global supremacy.

Observers say Beijing is massively investing in AI, to the point where it may soon be able to change the balance of power in the Asia-Pacific, and perhaps beyond. And that has profound implications for a world order that has long been dominated by the United States. Here are some of the possible applications of AI in the art of warfare.

Robots, drones, torpedoes ... all kinds of weap-

ons can be transformed into autonomous systems, thanks to sophisticated sensors governed by AI algorithms that allow a computer to "see". Autonomy does not mean that a weapon might "wake up in the morning and decide to go and start a war," said Stuart Russell, professor of computer science at the University of California at Berkeley.

Autonomous weapons

"It's that they have the capability of locating, selecting and attacking human targets, or targets containing human beings, without human intervention." The killer robots of any number of sci-fi dystopias are an obvious example, but perhaps not a very practical one. "People have been exploring that too, (but) to my mind that one is the least useful," Russell added.

Most weapons are still in the idea or prototype stages, but Russia's war in Ukraine has offered a glimpse of their potential. Remotely piloted drones are not new, but they are becoming increasingly independent and are being used by both sides, sending humans underground to seek refuge. This could be one of the biggest immediate changes, according to Russell. "A likely consequence of having autonomous weapons is that basically, being visible anywhere on the battlefield will be a death sentence."

Autonomous weapons have several potential ad-

vantages for an attacking army: they can be more efficient, can probably be produced more cheaply, and they remove tricky human emotions such as fear or anger from battlefield situations. But these advantages raise ethical questions. For example, if they are so cheap and easy to make, there is virtually no limit to the firepower an aggressor can employ, Russell said. "I can simply launch a million of them at once if I want to wipe out an entire city or an entire ethnic group," he added.

Autonomous vehicles

Submarines, boats and planes that are capable of operating autonomously could be a huge boost to reconnaissance, surveillance or logistical support in remote or dangerous environments. Such vehicles are at the heart of the "Replicator" program launched by the Pentagon to counter China's enormous manpower advantage.

The objective is to be able to deploy several thousand cheap and easy-to-replace systems in short order, said US Deputy Secretary of Defense Kathleen Hicks, in a variety of areas ranging from maritime to outer-space. The idea is that with so many "flung into space scores at a time ... it becomes impossible to eliminate or degrade them all," Hicks said.

Many companies are developing and testing

autonomous vehicles, like California-based An-duril, which touts an Autonomous Underwater Vehicle "optimized for a variety of defense and commercial mission types" including long-range oceanographic sensing, mine countermeasures, and anti-submarine warfare.

Tactical software

Powered by AI and capable of synthesizing mountains of data collected by satellites, radars, sensors, and intelligence services, tactical software can offer human planners a real edge. "Everyone within the (Department of Defense) needs to understand that data is actually the ammunition in an AI war," Alexandr Wang, the boss of Scale AI, told a US Congressional hearing this year.

"We have the largest fleet of military hardware in the world. This fleet generates 22 terabytes of data every day. And so if we can properly set up and instrument this data that's being generated into pools of AI-ready datasets, then we can create a pretty insurmountable data advantage when it comes to military use of artificial intelligence." Scale AI has a contract to deploy a language model on a classified network of a major US Army unit. Its chatbot — disarmingly named "Donovan" — should allow commanders to plan and act within minutes, rather than weeks, according to the company. — AFP



VALENCIA, Spain: A protester shouts slogans as she holds a sign during a demonstration in support of the Palestinian people on Nov 19, 2023. — AFP

Gaza hospital a 'death zone'...

Continued from Page 1

At least 15 bodies, some in advanced stages of decomposition, were strewn along the route, an AFP journalist said. The WHO said 29 patients at the hospital with serious spinal injuries cannot move without medical assistance.

The Zionist entity has told Palestinians to move south for their safety, but deadly strikes continued there too. At least 26 people were killed in a strike that hit a residential building on Saturday, according to the director of the Nasser hospital in Khan Yunis. Zionist troops raided Al-Shifa Hospital earlier last week on suspicion that it was being used as a Hamas base.

The Zionist entity has been under pressure to prove its allegations that a Hamas command center is concealed beneath the hospital, a charge the militants deny. Conditions at Al-Shifa are dire, according to the WHO, with a mass grave outside and nearly 300 patients and 25 health workers inside. But it warned that nearby facilities were already overstretched and urged an immediate ceasefire given the "extreme suffering of the people of Gaza".

Al-Shifa head of surgery Marwan Abu Sada told AFP that Zionist troops were still in the hospital and it was surrounded by tanks. "I heard at least two explosions since this morning," he said. Doctors said Zionist troops were going from building to building and regularly detonated explosives on the ground floors and hospital basements searching for Hamas tunnels.

A Hamas health official said more than 80 people were killed on Saturday in twin strikes on Jabalia refugee camp, the territory's largest, including on a UN school sheltering displaced people. The Zionist army said only that "an incident in the Jabalia region" was under review without elaborating. "The horrendous events of the past 48 hours in Gaza beggar belief," United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said in a statement, referring to actions "which fly in the face of the basic protections civilians must be afforded under international law".

US President Joe Biden threatened sanctions against Zionist settlers who have ramped up attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank in recent weeks. Since the Zionist-Hamas war began, Zionist troops and settlers have killed more than 200 Palestinians in the West Bank, according to the health ministry in Ramallah. The PRCS on Sunday reported two deaths in overnight army raids in Jenin and the Bethlehem area. — Agencies

Houthis seize Zionist vessel...

Continued from Page 1

movement in the Red Sea, especially in Bab al-Mandab (strait), and did not dare to raise (Zionist) flags on its ships... and turned off identification devices. We will search and verify the ships that belong

Qatar PM says 'minor' challenges...

Continued from Page 1

policy chief added, urging an end to the escalating violence and the creation of "sustainable peace" in the region. The United States said Saturday it was still working to secure a deal between the Zionist entity and Hamas after the Washington Post reported there was a tentative agreement to free women and children held in Gaza in exchange for a pause in fighting. Citing unnamed sources, the newspaper said all parties would halt combat operations for at

least five days while some captives were to be released in batches. The White House quickly responded on Saturday evening with a message on X, formerly Twitter, to deny any major breakthrough. US deputy national security advisor Jon Finer told NBC they were "closer than we have been in quite some time" to securing a deal. But he added on CBS: "The mantra that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed really does apply."

Sheikh Mohammed said on Sunday it was "counterproductive to see leaks about the negotiations coming out in the media before sealing the deal". On Thursday Biden had said he was "mildly hopeful" of reaching a deal to free the captives, believed to include about 10 US citizens. The Zionist entity has so far refused to heed calls for a ceasefire before all the captives are released. — AFP

Foreign firms race to open...

Continued from Page 1

seek workarounds that see them retain the majority of staff in the UAE and delegate a select few to Saudi," said Kristian Ulrichsen, a fellow at Rice University's Baker Institute.

It should also offer clues about the implementation of flagship projects such as a new airline and airport, and the \$500 billion, futuristic mega-city known as NEOM, Ulrichsen said. Riyadh defines a regional headquarters as an office that provides "strategic direction, management, and support services for company subsidiaries, branches, and affiliates in the (Middle East and North Africa) region", the investment ministry said.

One firm, IHG Hotels & Resorts, placed its new office on the 12th floor of a skyscraper in the capital's financial district, staffing it with 25 employees from departments including revenue management, sales, marketing, design and engineering. IHG has been present in Saudi Arabia for nearly 50 years, actively bids for government projects including developments along the Red Sea Coast and plans to open 20 hotels across the kingdom in 2024 and 2025, Hailtham Mattar, managing director for the

Middle East and Southwest Asia, said during the office's ribbon-cutting ceremony in October.

But the company also has offices in Dubai and elsewhere in the region, and "we will continue with those offices", Mattar told AFP. As for the process of establishing a Saudi regional headquarters, he acknowledged there were some kinks to work out. "It took us a bit of time and jumping through hurdles to achieve our license for this office. However we are there now which is great and that's what we're happy and positive about," he said.

"This is all new to Saudi Arabia, right? So we have to really be conscious of that. There's a lot of trial-and-error, there's a lot of perfecting some of the processes, and sometimes some of the processes have maybe one too many steps." The investment ministry has touted benefits for firms setting up regional headquarters in Saudi Arabia, including the ability to apply for unlimited work visas and a 10-year waiver on quotas for hiring Saudi nationals.

But it has not specified what kind of tax relief the firms might receive, a major question for executives. Laurent Germain, CEO of French construction engineering firm Egis Group, nevertheless told AFP he had no regrets about establishing a regional headquarters in Saudi Arabia last year, and that he advised other French firms to do the same. "We've come into a situation where now it is in Saudi Arabia that we have the most activities in the Middle East, and probably so for the next 10 years." — AFP

International

Afghans driven from Pakistan rebuilding lives from 'zero'

Families return to homeland where nothing and no one awaits them

TORKHAM: Rocked gently on his mother's knees, a fly on his nose, a baby sleeps fitfully in a tent in a barren border camp as his family prepares to leave the waypoint to rebuild their lives in Afghanistan. In the transit camp at Torkham, where returnees driven out of Pakistan sweat in burning heat during the day and shiver through the night, many of the blue tents at the foot of rocky mountains standing stark against a cloudless sky have already emptied.



TORKHAM: Afghan refugees with their belongings sit atop a truck as they head from a makeshift camp near the Afghanistan-Pakistan Torkham border to Jalalabad on Nov 12, 2023. — AFP photos

Trucks overloaded with several families, carrying cushions, brightly colored blankets and kitchen utensils, are readied to set off. Border officials say at least 210,000 Afghans, including many who have lived decades, if not their whole lives, outside their country, have passed through the Torkham border point since Pakistan ordered those without documents to leave. From the reception camp, they have dispersed to various Afghan provinces with a handout of around 15,000 afghanis (\$205) — just enough to support a family for a month.

For many, nothing, and no one, awaits them. "We have nowhere to go, we don't have a house, or land, I don't have any work," said Sher Aga, a former security guard in Pakistan. He bundled his nine children

and all the family's belongings into a truck to head north, to Kunduz province, where he was born. But the 43-year-old has no memory of his homeland, having left Afghanistan when he was five. "I don't have any family there anymore," he told AFP. "My children ask me, 'What country are we going to?'"

'We fear starvation'

In a tent that she, her husband and their 10 children are sheltering in, 40-year-old Amina hides her face behind a red headscarf. They are destined for Jalalabad, capital of Nangarhar province where Torkham is located, and where she has "many brothers". "I asked my family to find us a house" to rent, she said, "but they say there are none". "No one has called us or come to see us," she added. In Pakistan, her sons worked selling vegetables or driving rickshaws to pull in enough money to sustain the family, but Amina fears for their prospects in Afghanistan, wracked by economic crisis and unemployment. "If the boys don't work, we're not going to make it." Another nearby tent is crammed with the 16 members of Gul Pari's family, who have been sleeping on cardboard boxes without blankets since arriving at the transit camp.

Her voice is drowned out by the honking of tanker trucks delivering much-needed water to the camp, with clusters of laughing, barefoot children clinging to the back. The 46-year-old grandmother, her grandchild's rail-thin body cradled in her lap, said that in five days they will leave for Kunduz to start a new life in a country she hasn't seen in four decades. Life was precarious for the family collecting scraps in Pakistan, but in Afghanistan, "We have nothing," she said. "We fear starvation. But if we find work, it'll be OK. We will be happy in our homeland. In Pakistan, we were being harassed." Most of those returning fled an Afghanistan ravaged for decades by deadly conflict, but the end to fighting since the Taliban's return to power in 2021 has encouraged some to come back.

'Starting from zero'

Amanullah and his family were stranded in a temporary camp in the neighboring province of Laghman,



Afghan refugee Shazia (left), mother to three children, loads her belongings onto a truck heading to Jalalabad, days after their deportation from Pakistan.

having nowhere else to go in Afghanistan. Amid a dozen white Red Crescent tents sprouting from the lunar landscape, the 43-year-old, who lived 35 years in Pakistan, said life in the camp was hard on him, his wife and their six children.

"There are no toilets," the former construction worker said, and the women "are having a very difficult time" because they have to wait until nightfall to go out to relieve themselves in groups for safety. "There is barely any electricity either." "All the tents are pitch black" as soon as night falls, he told AFP, holding up a small red flashlight. "We have small children, so we have a lot of hardship," he said, adding that all his children were in school in Pakistan, but he fears

for their future now. "If we stay here for five days, a month, a year, it could be alright, but we need work, a house ... we're starting from zero."

On the road to Jalalabad, Shazia and 20 other women and children piled into a small truck that leaned precariously as it veered around bends in the road, whipping the women's blue burqas around a teetering mound of bundles. Of the Afghans returning from Pakistan, she is luckier than most: her husband went ahead of them to Jalalabad and found a four-room house to rent for four families. "The rent is expensive," said the 22-year-old mother-of-three, her youngest child only two months old. "But tonight, we will be able to sleep." — AFP



KHERSON: Kateryna (center) and Oleksandr (right) sit in an outdoor cafe with their friends in the southern city of Kherson, on Oct 31, 2023. — AFP photos

Teens in ruined Kherson regret 'stolen' youth

KHERSON: Slinging a bag over her shoulder, Anastasia headed out from the gym in Kherson — one of the few places where she could unwind in a city on Ukraine's front line. "It distracts me from war," said the 14-year-old in a baggy Guns N'Roses T-shirt, calling it an "escape" from the reality of living with daily Russian strikes.

Since school was online and many people have fled, the social life of teenagers like Anastasia revolved around a handful of places — like the once-bustling gym. The clientele changed since the start of the war, with an influx of teenagers joining the regulars — muscly, bearded forty-somethings lifting heavy weights. "I'd like to be with people my own age. The people I hang out with are two or three times older." "COVID and the war have stolen my



Anastasia, (14), works out in a gym, in the southern city of Kherson.

youth, which should have been so happy," she said.

Outside, the streets were mostly empty and the cafes frequented by soldiers in fatigue. Anastasia clutched the phone on which she was following her school classes and receiving news of her loved ones. She dreamed of having a fuller offline social life.

"I'd like to see people at last. When I went to Mykolaiv for the day, I was surprised to see some life," she said, referring to a nearby city in southern Ukraine further away from the front line. As well as sport, she also did theatre despite a ban on large gatherings and performances due to the threat of drone and missile strikes. "We only get together in small groups to rehearse. It's interesting to feel other emotions, to play the role of another person," she said.

'Learnt to rethink my life'

Kherson was taken over by Russian forces at the beginning of the war and recaptured by Ukrainian troops several months later on Nov 11 last year — the last major movement along a vast front line. Anastasia remembered the "unforgettable emotions" from those events but said they have marked her "for life". "Young people aren't supposed to know what it's like when people close to them die," she said. "I used to think about what I wanted to wear but now I think about what to do under fire. I've learnt to rethink my life in general."

Many businesses in the city center were shut and the sound of incoming fire from the other side of the Dnipro River became part of daily life. On a street covered in thick, dark fog, one bright spot stood out — the "Ciao Cacao" cafe. Eighteen-year-old Dima usually worked at the cafe, and otherwise stayed at home playing the video game "Counter-Strike". "We go out despite the bombs. We don't want to stay locked up," said Dima, laughing with a group of friends who were taking selfies and talking about how their homes were destroyed by strikes. Dima had dreamt of leaving Ukraine but was now enrolling at a naval military academy. "Leaving is bad. It's treason," he said. He assumed he would end up fighting in the war, adding: "It's not like I have anything else to do." Like Anastasia, Dima felt he grew up too fast. "Adults say that we don't know anything when we're 18. But with what we've been living through, I think I have enough experience to understand what life is about." — AFP

DR Congo election campaign starts with fireworks and bullets

KINSHASA: Democratic Republic of the Congo kicks off a month-long election campaign Monday with 26 candidates running for president amid a tense political climate and fighting in the east of the country. Some 44 million registered voters, out of a population of almost 100 million, will elect a president on Dec 20.

They will also choose between tens of thousands of candidates for legislative and local bodies in the country with vast resources but endemic conflict and corruption. A "pre-campaign" has been underway for a while, with President Felix Tshisekedi, who is seeking a second term, attending numerous public events while his allies vaunt his record. With the launch of the official campaign, big rallies, media interviews, giant posters and handing out flyers will be allowed. On opening day, Tshisekedi is holding a rally at the Martyrs stadium in Kinshasa while one of his main challengers, Martin Fayulu, is addressing a rally in a nearby province.

In total there are a record 25,832 candidates for the legislative elections, 44,110 for provincial bodies and 31,234 for municipal councils, according to the Electoral Commission (Ceni), which faces the struggle of organizing voting across the country's 2.3 million square kilometers and limited infrastructure. "There is a political will to stick to the electoral calendar, but there are doubts about the technical feasibility," said Tresor Kibangula, a political analyst at the Ebuteli research institute.

Mixed record

The east of the country has been racked by fighting for three decades, and violence is surging again after the M23 group, supported by Rwanda, recently occupied much of Nord Kivu province. The fighting will prevent normal voting in two territories in the province, but the whole process would be threatened if rebels take the provincial capital Goma. "M23 will not take Goma," insisted Tshisekedi, who says a return to calm is his priority, along with improving services and the economy, building roads and respecting freedom of speech and of the press.

His record is mixed, according to analysts, and disastrous according to the opposition, which is already warning of massive fraud. In addition to Fayulu, who claims he was robbed of victory in 2018, the main opposition candidates are Moise Katumbi, former governor of the Katanga mining region; Doctor Denis Mukwege, who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2018 for his work with victims of sexual violence; and two former prime ministers. — AFP



KINSHASA: Supporters of a political group advocating for a re-election of the incumbent President of DR Congo Felix Tshisekedi wave flags and chant slogans as they gather to attend his first rally. — AFP



GRINDAVIK: This photo taken on Nov 13, 2023 shows a crack cutting across the main road in Grindavik, southwestern Iceland following earthquakes. — AFP

Years of uncertainty ahead for Iceland volcano town

GRINDAVIK: After a barrage of earthquakes that herald an impending volcanic eruption, some evacuated residents of the Icelandic town of Grindavik wonder if they will ever return. "There are going to be a lot of people who don't want to go there. My mother said 'I never want to go there again,'" Eythor Reynisson, who was born and raised in Grindavik, told AFP.

The fishing port of 4,000 people on Iceland's south coast was evacuated on Nov 11 after magma shifting under the Earth's crust caused hundreds of earthquakes — a warning of a likely volcanic eruption. Thousands of smaller tremors have shaken the region since. With massive crevices ripping roads apart and buildings' concrete foundations shattered, the once picturesque Grindavik now resembles a warzone. The damage to the town hall will take months to repair.

Long term threat

Even if the magma flow stops and no eruption occurs, "there is the issue of whether one should live in a town like this," Freysteinn Sigmundsson, a geophysicist at the University of Iceland, told AFP. The Reykjanes peninsula had not experienced an eruption for eight centuries until 2021.

Since then, three eruptions have struck — all in remote uninhabited areas — and volcanologists believe this may be the start of a new era of activity in the region. Sigmundsson warned that "a difficult period of uncertainty" lies ahead, as eruptions could happen in coming years. That has left residents wondering whether it is worth rebuilding their homes. Sigmundsson said that for the region to be deemed safe, the current activity would first need to cease. "There is a possibility that the activity will move to another area. And then it could be acceptable to go back to Grindavik," he said.

'Strong community'

Despite the conditions, a resilient community spirit was evident as residents this week queued to enter Grindavik to collect belongings they left in their hurried evacuation. Residents embraced each other and shared moments of laughter. "I am really emotional. That's basically how I am feeling right now," Johannes Johannesson told AFP.

For some, living around volcanoes comes with the territory. "We are a strong community, so I think it's possible to build it up again," Reynisson said. Iceland is home to 33 active volcano systems, the highest number in Europe. Towns have been hit before. In 1973, a fissure erupted just 150 meters (yards) from the town center on the island of Heimaey, surprising locals at dawn. — AFP

Business

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2023

US transition to EVs faces delays

Concerns about vehicle range, limited charging capacity adding to issues

NEW YORK: The US transition to electric cars has hit a speed bump, with concerns about vehicle range and limited charging capacity adding to core affordability issues. Automakers in recent weeks have pushed back EV sales targets and delayed capital projects as they seek to reduce inventories of unsold EVs at dealerships.

"The slowdown in EV sales is much more pronounced than it is for other categories of vehicles and that isn't related to the economy," said Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalData. "The EV has a problem attached to it," he said. "It's a much more difficult and complex purchase because of the range of the vehicles and the charging infrastructure."

American consumers are accustomed to often-lengthy road trips for holidays or to visit friends and relatives, owing to the country's large size and limited public transit options. But so far, the network of EV charging stations remains dodgy, with many areas either lacking infrastructure or equipped with unreliable machines. More than three-quarters of drivers consider EVs reliable, according to a survey by the Consumer Technology Association (CTA), the organizer of the annual Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. But there are also significant doubts among drivers surrounding the autos over inadequate charging infrastructure (36 percent), battery range (39 percent) and vehicle affordability (38 percent). The average EV sold in October for \$51,762, some \$13,000 below the year-ago level for the autos, but almost \$4,000 above the average price of all autos. In Europe, the elevated price of gasoline adds an incentive that allows consumers there to overlook the lofty upfront cost of the vehicle.

But that is less of a factor in the United

States, where gas prices are only about half the level in France or Britain, according to Observatoire Cetelem 2024. Industry leaders such as Tesla Chief Executive Elon Musk have also pointed to increased borrowing costs as a drag after a series of Federal Reserve interest rate hikes over the last year and a half. Tesla remains a dominant player in EVs, accounting for more than 55 percent of the 873,000 EV autos sold in the first 10 months of 2023, according to industry researcher Kelley Blue Book.

Ford Chief Executive Jim Farley predicted "some bumpiness" in the evolving US market. "The dynamic changes in the market - pricing, adoption rates, regulations - are forcing us to further reduce the cost of our EVs," Farley said last month. Ford's rival and fellow Detroit giant General Motors recently pushed back until the end of 2025 a plan to convert its Orion, Michigan plant for EVs "to better manage capital investment while aligning with evolving EV demand," the company said last month.

"In addition, we have identified engineering improvements that we will implement to increase the profitability of our products," GM said. Ford and Tesla too are looking to simplify their manufacturing processes to limit costs. "Reducing the cost of our vehicles is our top priority," said Tesla Chief Financial Officer Vaibhav Taneja.

For its futuristic Cybertruck, which is expected to commence deliveries before the end of 2023, Tesla is "doing everything possible to simplify that vehicle" to reach efficiency "that is unheard of in the auto industry," Musk said.

Ford has also vowed to tweak its vehicle design and manufacturing in order to reduce complexity. But the results are still unproven, according to Deutsche Bank analyst Emmanuel Rosner. "What



ALHAMBRA, United States: Traffic on a Los Angeles freeway during the evening rush hour commute on April 12, 2023 in Alhambra, California. The US transition to electric cars has hit a speed bump, with concerns about vehicle range and limited charging capacity adding to core affordability issues. — AFP photos

concerns us most is that automakers haven't cracked the economics to make an easy, affordable EV," Rosner said on CNBC. Washington has mobilized in favor of EVs during the presidency of Joe Biden, approving \$7.5 billion in funds for EV chargers and extending tax credits up to \$7,500 for consumer purchases of the autos.

The Biden administration wants 50 percent of vehicles sales to be electric by 2030. "The politicians wanted it to happen overnight, but you can't just set arbitrary targets, you've got to make sure that the infrastructure's there," said Saunders of GlobalData. "The long-term trajectory is probably good for EVs," but "it's something that's much slower-going," he predicted. — AFP



REDONDO BEACH, United States: A driver charges his electric vehicle at a charging station as the California Independent System Operator announced a statewide electricity Flex Alert urging conservation to avoid blackouts in Monterey Park, California on August 31, 2022.

Investors in OpenAI seek return of fired CEO

NEW YORK: Major investors in OpenAI, the company behind hugely popular ChatGPT, are working to orchestrate the return as CEO of Sam Altman, a leader in the AI revolution who was fired in a shock move Friday, US media reported Sunday.

Investors as important as Microsoft and venture firm Thrive Capital - "are making efforts to bring back Sam Altman," the Wall Street Journal reported, citing unnamed sources.

Microsoft and Thrive are the two largest investors in OpenAI, but other investors are supportive of these efforts, the Journal said. The New York Times meantime said that Ilya Sutskever, a respected AI researcher and member of the company's board of directors, had expressed growing concern about the possible dangers of OpenAI's technology, and felt Altman underestimated such risks.

OpenAI sent a shock through the industry on Friday when it announced the immediate ouster of Altman, a major Silicon Valley star. A statement from



LAGUNA BEACH, US: Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI, speaks during The Wall Street Journal's WSJ Tech Live Conference in Laguna Beach, California on October 17, 2023. — AFP

OpenAI's board referred to the company's stated mission of making sure artificial intelligence benefits everyone, and said that "new leadership is needed for the company to move forward."

Greg Brockman, one of OpenAI's co-founders, was pushed from the company's board in the shake-up Friday. He said later that he had quit. Several other company officials also said they were leaving.

a lot of trust in national politics. There is a lot of unhappiness," said Glas, whose farm produces organic apples, berries and free-range chickens for sale in the nearby village of Loppersum. "It's going very slowly at the moment. We have to fight for things and all the restoration is a big problem," Glas said.

"Everybody around here says 'seeing is believing,'" added Brookman, who also sits on the local board of businesses in Loppersum - located close to the epicentre of the seismic activity. "We have been waiting for eight years to have reinforcements done, but you are sent from pillar to post," she said.

It's not just Groningen's farmers who are unhappy. Across rural Netherlands many farmers still fly upside-down Dutch flags on their homesteads and next to highways - a sign of distress that has become the unofficial symbol of their protest.

For the past two years, farmers have shot down proposals to cut Dutch nitrogen emissions by slashing livestock numbers and possibly closing polluting farms. The boiling discontent resulted in the massive victory of the rural-backed Farmer-Citizen Movement (BBB) party in key provincial elections earlier this year. And although the BBB's support has been checked by the emergence of newer political parties, both the nitrogen problem and the aftermath of earthquakes in Groningen remain substantial political issues.

The issues raised by Dutch farmers will continue to resonate even after the November 22 election. "Farmers still have a big voice in Dutch politics," said Tom Louwse, associate professor of political science at Leiden University. "These issues will inevitably come back. They haven't gone away. It's just being ignored a little bit at the moment," Louwse told journalists at a pre-election discussion.

The company said that Altman's departure followed "a deliberative review process by the board, which concluded that he was not consistently candid in his communications with the board, hindering its ability to exercise its responsibilities." "The board no longer has confidence in his ability to continue leading OpenAI."

The statement added: "We are grateful for Sam's many contributions to the founding and growth of OpenAI. At the same time, we believe new leadership is necessary as we move forward." Sequoia Capital, another investor in OpenAI, said it supported Altman and Brockman in whatever they chose to do next, whether to return to the company or create a new startup, CNBC reported, quoting an unnamed source. The 38-year-old Altman was pondering a return to the company but wanted changes in both the board of directors and the company's governance structure, the Journal said.

It said Altman was at the same time holding talks on possibly creating a new company, including several of the OpenAI employees who resigned after his firing. A final decision was expected as soon as this weekend. Since ChatGPT went online on November 30, 2022, millions of people have used it to help compose messages, request a recipe or invent a story for their children which the robot can then read to them. — AFP



GARMERWOLDE, Netherlands: Farmer Pieter Glas stands in an orchard of his Eikemaheert farm, outside Loppersum, northern Groningen on October 31, 2023. — AFP

"Depending which government is there, I think (nitrogen) again will be an issue they will protest about," Louwse said. Despite widespread discontent, there is some light at the end of the tunnel.

Many of Groningen's farmers voiced great admiration for a visit from Dutch King Willem-Alexander last month. They also praised the outgoing government's deputy minister in charge of mining, Hans Vrijbrief, who they said has been working hard to get the bureaucratic cogs turning. More than half of Dutch farmers now say they are noticing the impact of climate change on their businesses and are willing to invest in sustainable energy. On Eikemaheert organic farm, Piet Glas said the government should not be the only ones to find solutions. "As farmers, we also need to look at doing things differently. We too need to look at new ways of farming," he said. — AFP

Paris tax plan targeting SUVs hits bumpy road

PARIS: A plan to make SUV owners pay more for parking in Paris has met with a mixed response from residents, ranging from Gallic shrugs to outright support or rejection. Mayor Anne Hidalgo is asking the capital's residents to vote on the fee hike in February, leaving no doubt about where she stands on the issue. "We want to say stop to the excesses of car companies," Hidalgo said.

Launching the initiative on Tuesday, city hall said the overall space taken up by cars had diminished thanks to its "determined action" but that the average size and weight of cars had gone up because of sport utility vehicles (SUVs). The vote will be the second city-wide referendum on urban matters, after residents in April voted to ban rental e-scooters from the capital. "I think it's really good to try and limit the number of big cars, be it SUVs or other big cars," said Arnaud Jaccard, a doctor. "They need more petrol and they pollute more."

WWF, an NGO, also backed the move, saying the carbon footprint of building and running SUVs made them an "aberration" at a time of worsening climate change. The contribution of SUVs to CO2 emissions growth was second only to the aviation sector, said Arnaud Gilles at WWF. "We can't allow SUVs to be the future of mobility, especially in cities," said Pierre Leflaive, at Réseau Action Climat, an environmental association.

But others, feeling that SUVs were being unfairly singled out, argued that they were often used as family cars carrying several passengers. "If we're talking about doing away with cars that can carry five people, then I think it's going to be a problem," said Dominique Cathelin, a pensioner. "There are more pressing issues," she said. Ahmed Desouky, a company driver with an SUV, said he felt punitive parking fees were unlikely to put a dent in the use of the heavy vehicles. "This is Paris," he said. "There's no shortage of visitors and people with money." Hidalgo said this week the fee increase would be "very significant", without giving a figure.

City hall later said it would slap the surcharge on internal combustion engine cars or hybrids of over 1.6 tons, and electric cars over two tons. SUV owners with residential parking permits issued by the city would be exempt. In April, Parisians voted overwhelmingly to banish for-hire electric scooters from the streets of the French capital. However, turnout for the referendum was just 100,000 people, representing under 7.5 percent of the capital's registered voters. Victor Dupin, an engineer, said it was "not necessarily very honest" of the authorities to ask for a popular approval for measures they could have taken by themselves. "It's like they want to absolve themselves of their political responsibility," he said. Socialist Hidalgo, who has been Paris mayor for nearly a decade, has made a transformation of the capital's mobility mix a priority. — AFP

Quakes, climate: How Dutch farmers lost faith in politics

LOPPERSUM, Netherlands: Spade in hand, Dutch organic farmer Piet Glas strolls off with his Jack Russell terrier Ollie to hunt mice nesting in a nearby apple orchard.

Here on the Eikemaheert farm in a far northeastern corner of the Netherlands, Glas, 60, says he feels just as remote from the Dutch government as his location is from the seat of power in The Hague.

That feeling of disconnect between the people and politicians is a major theme of the November 22 election and has sparked the emergence of new parties seeking to shake up the political landscape.

For at least two decades, farmers and townsfolk alike in this region have felt abandoned as they endured a raft of earthquakes - the result of extraction from the EU's largest gas field since the early 1960s. Despite a flurry of recent compensation measures by Prime Minister Mark Rutte's outgoing government, many say they have been left drowning in red tape - resulting in years of waiting for pay-outs and growing disillusionment.

Last month, the Dutch government finally closed the taps on six decades of gas mining, saying the field would only be reopened under "extraordinary circumstances." But many farmers like Glas, and his neighbor Ina Brookman, who lives a few kilometres down the road, say they don't expect the cracks in their homes to be fixed any time soon. "We've lost

Gulf Bank's capital increase 6.9 times oversubscribed

The Bank's capital base grows by KD 60 million



Weekly Commodities Report

Crude trades lower; focus turns to OPEC's meeting

By Ole Hansen

Crude oil traded lower for a third day with fresh selling emerging after prices failed to reach safer grounds earlier in the week when global stock markets and general risk appetite surged after an unexpected slowdown in US inflation once again increased bets that the Federal Reserve's rate hiking cycle is over.

While the current demand outlook looks robust according to IEA and OPEC estimates, the short-term risk of additional weakness cannot be ruled out given continued selling pressure from momentum-focused funds, but traders may also consider the risk of additional action to support prices from OPEC and non-OPEC when they

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank announced the completion of the subscription period of the Bank's capital increase through rights issue successfully, with a 686.3 percent subscription coverage, totaling KD 411.8 million in comparison to issuance size of KD 60 million.

The subscription process was led jointly by Kamco Invest and Gulf Bank, as the lead managers and subscription agents. The subscription was open for eligible shareholders and rights holders from Oct 29 to Nov 12, 2023. Gulf Bank's capital increase of issued and paid-up capital was KD 26.1 million through a rights issue of 260,869,565 new shares at 230 fils per share including a nominal value of 100 fils, in addition to a share premium of 130 fils per share. Accordingly, Gulf Bank's issued and paid-up capital increased by 7.76 percent, reaching KD 362.1 million.

Gulf Bank's Chairman Jassim Mustafa Boodai stated, "The significant oversubscription reflects shareholders' confidence in Gulf Bank and its future plans." The increase aims to strengthen the Bank's capital base, enhance regulatory capital ratios, and enables the pursuit of future growth opportunities aligned with the Bank's strategy.

Boodai emphasized on the Bank's commitment to sustainable growth and added value for all stake-

holders, and continue providing exceptional products and service that meets customer aspirations.

holders, and continue providing exceptional products and service that meets customer aspirations. Jassim Mustafa Boodai expressed his appreciation to the lead managers Kamco Invest and Gulf Bank, and Kuwait Clearing Company for their outstanding efforts. He also thanked the regulatory authorities, including the Central Bank of Kuwait, the Capital Markets Authority, Boursa Kuwait, and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, for their cooperation in providing necessary approvals. As of September 30, 2023, Gulf Bank's capi-



Jassim Mustafa Boodai

- The oversubscription highlights shareholders' confidence in the bank and its future plans.
- The bank is committed to delivering sustainable growth and added value for all stakeholders, and continue providing exceptional products and service that meets customer aspirations.
- Gulf Bank is well-equipped to invest in its future strategic growth and will continue providing exceptional products and service to its customers.

tal adequacy ratio reached 15.8 percent and tier 1 capital ratio 13.6 percent, both above regulatory requirements. The Bank is an "A" rated bank by three international credit rating agencies. In the first nine months ending September 30, 2023, Gulf Bank reported a net profit of KD 53.8 million, an 18 percent increase compared to the same period in 2022. Operating income grew by 6 percent to KD 140.1 million, with return on assets improving from 0.9 percent to 1.0 percent and return on equity increasing from 9.0 percent to 10.0 percent.

years. During the week, monthly oil market reports from OPEC and the IEA sent mixed signals, but overall, both agencies revised up their global demand growth forecast for this year, driven by upward revisions to 2H23 demand forecasts in the US and across non-OECD. Both also revised their 3Q23 Chinese demand forecasts again, with the IEA seeing an annual growth of around 1.8 million barrels per day. Turning to non-OPEC supply, all three agencies revised up 2023 supply growth on higher US and Brazil forecasts. A significant difference, however, was seen in supply from Russia which OPEC saw falling to 9.6 mb/d in 4Q23 while the EIA and IEA put production around 1 mb/d higher.

These supply deficit forecasts received little attention given the current sentiment-driven weakness where traders continue to adjust positions to reflect the current negative momentum. The latest weakness came after the EIA in their latest update covering two weeks' worth of data reported a 17.5 million barrel increase in nationwide stockpiles with Cushing, the WTI delivery hub, seeing a 3.5 million barrel rise. During the same time, however, total inventories of gasoline (-7.9m bbl),

distillates such as diesel and heating oil (-4.7m) and jet fuel (-3.8m) dropped by a combined 16.4 million barrels. Apart from implied gasoline demand rising to 9 mb/d, the highest level for this time of year since 2021, some support may also emerge from refineries coming out of maintenance. US refinery utilization rates rose for the first time in four weeks to 86.1 percent last week, still somewhat below the 92.9 percent rate recorded in the same period last year, but overall rising refinery demand will eat into crude stocks and eventually help create a floor under the market.

WTI crude oil is currently stuck in a \$75 to \$80 range with the latest weakness being driven by fresh selling after the recent rebound failed to drive prices onto safer grounds above \$80. In the short-term the risk of additional weakness cannot be ruled out given the mentioned selling pressure from momentum-focused funds, but traders may also consider the risk of additional action to support prices from OPEC and non-OPEC when they meet on November 26.

Note: Ole Hansen is head of Commodity Strategy, Saxo Bank



HAMBURG: Picture taken on November 16, 2023 in Hamburg, northern Germany, shows the suspended construction site of the Elbtower, a project by Signa group, that was expected to be one of Germany's tallest buildings and was halted at the end of last October 2023. -- AFP

Austrian property tycoon's troubles rattle investors

VIENNA: The Austrian property group that co-owns New York's iconic Chrysler building has warned of an imminent "restructuring" that has cast a spotlight on several precarious projects—and the wealthy tycoon behind the company. Rene Benko, one of Austria's richest people, with a net worth of \$6 billion according to Forbes, has grown his Signa group into a real estate giant since founding it in 2000. But as the sector is hit by higher borrowing costs and surging material prices, a growing number of developers are filing for bankruptcy.

Several Signa projects, including the construction of a landmark high-rise in Germany, have ground to a halt, making investors jittery about their money. Confirming its troubles, Signa announced last week that Benko was stepping down from its advisory board as the group prepares a "plan for essential restructuring steps" by the end of November.

"Signa symbolizes the real estate boom of recent years, in which cheap money was readily distributed for every project, no matter how daring," the Austrian daily Die Presse wrote in an editorial this month.

"A perfect environment for Benko, who took out dizzying amounts of loans without shame. Sustainability didn't play a role," it said. Born in 1977 to a middle-class family in Innsbruck, Benko worked with a friend restoring attics as a teenager before dropping out of school and founding Signa.


Among its first purchases was a department store in Innsbruck, which Benko transformed into a modern shopping centre. Since then, Benko has added the Chrysler building and the Berlin shopping gallery KaDeWe to the company's portfolio, while branching out into media and other sectors. At one point, the company reportedly tried to attract investors with slogans like "It was never so boring to get rich". "When

you have success, you become interesting. And if you give the impression that you have remained a man of your words, you build trust and expand your circle of friends," Benko told Die Presse in 2008. With offices in Austria, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and Switzerland, Signa has holdings worth 27 billion euros (\$29 billion) and projects worth 25 billion euros in development, according to its website. But Signa looks to be in trouble. Thailand's Central Group said this month that it had taken control of the historic British department store Selfridges, which Signa used to own. And Signa-led work on the prestigious Elbtower in the heart of Hamburg—expected to be one of Germany's tallest buildings—was halted at the end of last month.

Karen Pein, the Hamburg senator in charge of urban development, has threatened to demolish the half-built tower if the group is not able to continue work on schedule. The future of another Signa project, the renovation of the Alte Akademie in Munich, a former Jesuit college to be transformed into an office and residential complex, is also uncertain. Fitch, the credit rating agency, has already downgraded the Signa Development subsidiary after it said it was "facing challenges including with respect to its liquidity position". And the online e-commerce unit Signa Sports United has initiated insolvency proceedings for several of its entities and has decided to drop its stock listing on the New York Stock Exchange to reduce costs.

Signa did not respond to AFP requests for comment. Signa's undertakings have drawn criticism in the past. The leading German department store chain Galeria Karstadt Kaufhof, which Signa purchased in 2019, filed for bankruptcy in 2020 amid the coronavirus pandemic, and the chain decided to close 52 stores at the start of the year. In 2020, Benko testified before an Austrian parliamentary committee probing wide-ranging corruption allegations after the so-called Ibizagate scandal shook the country's politics.

He was asked about his links to several high-ranking conservative and far-right political figures, though Benko has not been charged in connection with the case. The scandal erupted in 2019 when a video showed Austria's former far-right leader offering public contracts to a woman posing as a Russian oligarch's niece in exchange for campaign help. —AFP



686%

Coverage of the capital increase of GULF BANK K.S.C.P.

The rights issue subscription period for the increase in the issued capital of Gulf Bank K.S.C.P. (the "Bank") ended on Sunday, 12 November 2023. The offered rights of 260,869,565 shares were fully subscribed during this period.

The following is a summary of the subscription results for the rights offering:



- Total number of rights issue shares offered: 260,869,565 shares
- Total value of rights issue shares offered: KD 60,000,000
- Total number of subscribed shares: 1,790,461,631 shares
- Total value of subscribed shares: KD 411,806,175
- The percentage of allocation of additional issue shares to subscribers who have applied for more than their entitlement: 1.849%

The shares will be distributed to the subscribers and the excess amount shall be refunded to the respective shareholders within five business days of the disclosure of the allocation results that was made in Boursa Kuwait.

For more Information

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Joint Lead Manager & Subscription Agent

The Kuwait Capital Markets Authority or any other regulatory body in the State of Kuwait shall not bear any liability for the contents of this announcement or its accuracy, and will not be held liable for any loss arising from reliance on any part of this announcement.

Business

MEIRA recognizes NBK with three awards

Awards for outstanding achievement in investor relations in 2023

- NBK awarded as Leading Corporate for Investor Relations in Kuwait
- NBK was recognized as being the Most Improved IR Program in GCC
- Amir Hanna named the Best Investor Relations Professional - Kuwait

KUWAIT: Recognizing the Bank's commitment to upholding exemplary practices aligned with the highest standards of transparency and professionalism in investor relations, the Middle East Investor Relations Association (MEIRA) honored National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) with three prestigious excellence awards in 2023. The recognitions were extended during the association's annual awards ceremony held in Bahrain, sponsored by Bahrain Stock Exchange and in collaboration with the Central Bank of Bahrain.

The Bank received two prestigious accolades and was honored as the Leading Corporate for Investor Relations in Kuwait and received recognition for being the Most Improved Investor Relations Program in the GCC region. NBK also secured the esteemed title of Best Investor Relations Professional - Kuwait, attributed to Amir Hanna, the Head of Group Investor Relations and Communications at the Bank.

Beyond MENA, NBK was one of two Middle Eastern banks to secure a place on the shortlist for the top investor relations programs for EMEA financial institutions.

Additionally, the Bank achieved a distinctive position as the sole Kuwaiti corporate to secure a spot among the top 5 MENA Best Investor Relations Program, Best Investor Relations by CEO and Best Investor Relations by CFO. The MEIRA awards for this year were determined through a comprehensive



Amir Hanna, Head of the Investor Relations and Communications Group at the National Bank of Kuwait, receiving the award.

survey that gathered insights from over 190 companies, encompassing perspectives from fund managers, analysts, specialists, regulatory bodies, and representatives from stock exchanges.

The recipients were acknowledged for their exceptional efforts in investor communication, their dedication to transparency, and the implementation of comprehensive practices within investor relations. These awards serve as a testament to the significant value these practices contribute, fostering enduring trust between companies and their



Amir Hanna and Khaled Al-Balushi receiving the Middle East Investor Relations Association Awards.

shareholders. The accolades stand as a testament to NBK's dedication in offering exemplary investor relations practices. They underscore the Bank's commitment to transparent and valued disclosures, acknowledged by all stakeholders. These awards affirm NBK's ongoing commitment to enhancing communication with shareholders and analysts, thereby bolstering market confidence within the

investor community. The Middle East Investor Relations Association (MEIRA) operates as an autonomous, non-profit entity affiliated with the Investor Relations Society (IRS). Its primary focus lies in advancing the field of investor relations, advocating for international standards in corporate governance, and fostering the growth, effectiveness, and appeal of capital markets across the Middle East.

'Big Three' auto employees ratify overhauled contracts

NEW YORK: Members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) have ratified the in-principle labor agreements promising sweeping pay increases that were reached with US car companies Ford, Stellantis and General Motors, a union source told AFP Saturday. "All three are ratified," the source said of the agreements, which were reached after an unprecedented strike that lasted more than six weeks.

According to information published on the union's website Thursday, around 55 percent of hourly staff at GM voted in favor of the four-year contract.

At Ford, 67 percent of unionized employees voted in favor of their contract, while nearly 69 percent voted in favor at Stellantis, according to the UAW website Saturday. Stellantis, which owns the Jeep and Chrysler brands, confirmed the ratification in a statement. "With negotiations now officially behind us, we will focus our full attention on executing our Dare Forward 2030 strategic plan and serving our customers by delivering the high-quality products and technologies they want and expect," North America COO Mark Stewart said in a statement.

Neither Ford nor the UAW immediately responded to AFP's request for comment on Saturday. The strike came after UAW president Shawn Fain, who was elected in the spring, targeted Detroit's "Big Three" all at once for the first time in the organization's 90-year history. It began with three factories employing nearly 13,000 people in mid-September, before the walkouts spread to more sites and eventually saw 45,000 of the UAW's 146,000 "Big Three" members downing tools.

The striking workers returned to work after the agreements-in-principle were announced, rather than following the usual process of waiting for their ratification. The union had demanded a 40 percent salary increase over four years, to keep up with corporate compensation over the same period.

During the negotiation period, Fain repeated his rallying cry, "Record profits mean record contracts."

The final agreements allow for a 25 percent base salary increase over four years, cost of living adjustments, increased benefits and improved contracts for retirees, among other measures. — AFP

EU climate chief hails China talks, despite coal fears

BEIJING: The European Union's climate chief said that he had held "very good and open conversations" with Chinese counterparts, despite unease in Brussels about expanding coal capacity in the world's number-two economy.

Wopke Hoekstra, who will represent the EU in closely watched negotiations at the COP28 climate summit later this month in the UAE, said that any country building more coal capacity was a matter of concern. China is the biggest emitter of the greenhouse gases driving climate change, such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), and Chinese leaders this year gave the green light for building more coal-fired plants.

"Even though we know at times of scarcity you might need to scale up a bit, that is a far cry from building new coal capacity," said Hoekstra, speaking to reporters at the end of an official visit to Beijing. "That is of course something we would rather not see and about which we are critical," the recently appointed EU commissioner for climate matters added.

He said that he had raised the issue in his meetings in China this week. China relied on coal for nearly 60 percent of its electricity last year. Greenpeace said in April that China had approved a major surge in coal power in early 2023, accusing it of prioritizing energy supply over its pledge to reduce emissions from fossil fuels. The jump in approvals for coal-fired power plants has added to concerns that China will backtrack on its goals to peak emissions between 2026 and 2030 and become carbon-neutral by 2060. — AFP

How big tech avoided paying billions in fines

PARIS: Rarely a month goes by without big tech companies getting fined for price fixing, squashing competitors or misusing data, but it can take years before they pay a penny. Ireland's data regulator confirmed to AFP that Meta has not paid any of the two billion euros (\$2.2 billion) in fines issued since last September. TikTok also owes hundreds of millions.

Amazon is still appealing against a 746 million euro fine from 2021, Luxembourg's data regulator told AFP. Google is still disputing EU fines worth more than eight billion euros for abusing its market position between 2017 and 2019.

Apple has fought for years against a French antitrust fine of 1.1 billion euros and an order to pay 13 billion euros of tax to Ireland. The problem is constant, global and involves tech companies of all sizes, not just the big four. This week Australia confirmed that X (formerly Twitter) had not paid a fine imposed for failing to outline its plans to stamp out content depicting child sexual abuse — though X is now counter-suing. Critics say fining tech companies does not stop their bad behavior and it is time for more drastic action.

Margarida Silva, a researcher at Dutch NGO the Centre for Research on Multinationals, pointed out that tech firms have long revelled in their reputation for "disruption".

"Not paying the fines fits in with the way we've seen big tech companies challenge pretty much any enforcement of rules against them," said Silva. "Even if the company ultimately loses, by that point they will have dragged the administration through years and years of expenditure."

This sets tech apart from industries like finance, she argued, where there is still an incentive to pay to reassure the public and investors. But Romain Rard, a lawyer at Gide Loyrette Nouel in Paris, said it was common sense that

Walmart lifts full-year forecast

NEW YORK: Walmart narrowly lifted its full-year forecast following solid quarterly results as it continued to navigate a market challenged by elevated pricing that has depressed demand for some goods.

The giant retailer, which emphasizes its strength as a value-oriented vendor, reported profits of \$453 million. That compares with a loss of \$1.8 billion in the 2022 period, which was hit by large costs tied to an opioid settlement.

The results come on the heels of a more than year-long period in which US households have been buffeted by the most acute period of consumer price inflation in a decade — a trend that appears to have abated after a series of Federal Reserve interest rate increases. Alluding to these dynamics, Chief Financial Officer John David Rainey said a tightening of credit and an erosion of the pandemic-era consumer balance sheets were reasons for a "cautious" outlook on the fourth quarter.

The giant retailer now expects full-year profits of between \$6.40 to \$6.48 per share, up from the prior range of \$6.36 to \$6.46 a share. Chief Executive Doug McMillon said Walmart enjoyed "strong revenue growth" in the third quarter and was "excited" by

the upcoming holiday season, noting that the Thanksgiving meal will cost less than in 2022.

McMillon greeted the decline in prices in some consumer goods, such as eggs, chicken and seafood. But beef prices remain high, a sign "commodities will do," he told analysts.

"The pockets of disinflation we are seeing are helping, but we'd like to see more faster, especially in the dry grocery and consumables categories," McMillon said.

Company revenues rose 5.2 percent to \$160.8 billion, with more than two-thirds coming from Walmart's US division, which scored a 4.9 percent jump in comparable sales. While that is still an impressive count, it is down from more than eight percent growth in the year-ago period.

Walmart bills itself as an affordable option for cash-strapped consumers, pointing to the benefits of tremendous economies of scale as the world's biggest retail chain. The retailer garnered strong sales in groceries and pharmacy goods, offsetting weakness in discretionary items such as apparel, home and toys. Results during the quarter were also dented somewhat by elevated spending on store remodels.

During a conference call with analysts, McMillon acknowledged



firms would look to appeal big penalties.

"It's not as if companies can just ignore the fine, challenge decisions and hope for the best that they can get away without having to pay anything," he said. And there have been notable successes for the companies — chip firms Intel and Qualcomm have both recently had billion-dollar EU antitrust fines overturned or dramatically reduced on appeal.

Europe's system is different to jurisdictions like China or the United States, where fines often come at the end of a lengthy process and are announced as settlements. In 2019, Facebook paid a record \$5 billion fine to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) over the Cambridge Analytica scandal.

And e-commerce giant Alibaba told investors in 2021 it immediately paid a record almost \$3 billion fine to Chinese regulators in 2021. Activists argue that these companies are simply too rich for financial penalties to have much impact. Austrian lawyer Max Schrems, who has campaigned vigorously for data rights in Europe, said the issue was exacerbated by uneven application of the rules.

The Irish Data Protection Commission, he said,

allowed the companies too much leeway with their appeals processes and issued fines that were far too small. In an interview with AFP, Ireland's deputy data protection commissioner Graham Doyle defended his office's record and said fines were only one part of the story. "With the vast majority of these investigations that we've finalized, whilst the fines tend to generate the most publicity, we have also imposed corrective measures," he said.

He highlighted an investigation into Instagram for their handling of children's data. A 405 million euro fine is currently under appeal, but Doyle stressed that the platform had already fixed the initial problem. Activists agree that fines can only be a part of the solution. Silva argued that rather than noodling around with financial penalties, it was time for competition regulators to step up. She urged them to halt future takeovers and mergers in the sector and undo the damage of the past, potentially even breaking up the companies. "The problem of Meta would be entirely different if it hadn't been allowed to buy Instagram and WhatsApp," she said. AFP has asked Meta for a response. — AFP



WASHINGTON: A Walmart Supercenter is seen in Washington, DC on November 16, 2023. Walmart narrowly lifted its full-year forecast on November 16, 2023, following solid quarterly results. — AFP

that the company "could have done a better job on expenses." However, Walmart said it benefited from lower supply chain costs compared with the 2022 quarter, when it also heavily marked down merchandise due to oversupply.

Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalData, described the results overall as "strong," indicating that Walmart has succeeded in holding onto new customers drawn to its lower prices for groceries and household staples. "There was a fear that as inflation came down, Walmart would see the influx of customers dry up," Saunders said in

a note. "However, it is not working out that way as Americans remain pressured financially and are still looking to make their dollar stretch further — and Walmart is the place many have turned to."

Saunders said a key challenge will be to get more customers to purchase general merchandise items like apparel and toys that have higher profit margins. He praised Walmart's investments in store upgrades, saying the spending "will stand Walmart in good stead with core shoppers once the economy starts to improve and their spending power improves." — AFP

NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

Global inflation continues to fall

US retail sales decline after a resilient Q3

KUWAIT: Inflation in the United States continues its downtrend, with CPI coming at 3.2 percent annually versus the previous figure of 3.7 percent. Monthly CPI also came in flat from last month's increase of 0.4 percent, while core CPI fell to 4 percent coming in below expectations. The data supports the narrative that the Federal Reserve might not adopt anymore rate hikes, and that rate cuts may begin as early as May of next year as priced by markets.

ous increase of 0.8 percent. The readings indicate a pullback in consumer spending amid an easing in labor market conditions and inflation. The current environment, which suggests a slowdown in growth, is likely to give the Federal Reserve comfort that their monetary policy is succeeding in bringing inflation down and could suggest that they are done hiking rates.

Data regarding the labor market in the United States showed further signs of easing, after

level in two years, amid a recent drop in energy prices. Meanwhile, core CPI fell to 5.7 percent from 6.1 percent in September. The largest contributor in this decline was the housing and household services sector and the food and beverages sector. The data comes following the Bank of England's decision of leaving the interest rate benchmark unchanged at 5.25 percent, suggesting that the current levels are sufficient in bringing down inflation. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak stated that the UK has "turned the corner" in its fight against inflation, as the annual CPI rate dropped by about a half since January. The data release has increased expectations of faster than anticipated rate cuts from the BoE, as an accelerated descent in inflation continues.



LONDON: UK retail sales dropped surprisingly in October owing to a cost-of-living crisis, to reach the lowest level since February 2021 when the country suffered a COVID lockdown.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30860.

Rates - November 19th, 2023

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.0682	1.0663	1.0915	1.0907	1.075	1.065	1.0955
GBP	1.2217	1.2210	1.2505	1.2461	1.2295	1.065	1.2473
JPY	151.51	149.18	151.92	149.62	148.3	147.2	147.46
CHF	0.9028	0.8850	0.09052	0.8855	0.8740	0.8670	0.8770

Even as the Fed is still looking for further progress, the drop in CPI from around 6.3 percent in January to 3.2 percent in October is on track to become the fastest one-year decline in inflation over the past 40 years. Meanwhile, the Producers Price Index noted the steepest fall in October for the past 3 years, declining by 0.5 percent monthly following easing prices of oil and gas in the past weeks. Core PPI, which excludes energy and food, came in flat below the forecasted 0.3 percent increase. According to the Labor Department, nearly 80 percent of the drop in good prices came as a result of declining energy prices, as markets worry about the demand side of the equation rather than any potential shortages of supply.

Retail sales slow down

US retail sales in October declined for the first time in seven months, after a resilient Q3 marked by soaring GDP and consumer spending. Monthly retail sales fell by 0.1 percent, significantly below last month's figure of a 0.9 percent increase. The core figure, which excludes gas and auto sales, was up 0.1 percent on the month versus the previ-

unemployment claims increased to 231,000 from 218,000 previously, the highest since August. Furthermore, continuing claims rose to the highest level in two years, coming in at 1.87 million claims. The reports are likely to reinforce the notion that the Federal Reserve is done with hiking rates.

The greenback closed at 103.917 after declining over the week.

Inflation in the eurozone fell to its lowest level in more than two years, with annual CPI falling to 2.9 percent from 4.3 percent previously. Core CPI also fell to 4.2 percent from 4.5 percent previously. Falling energy prices is a significant factor in softer inflation readings, however consumers in the Euro area have been less resilient than their counterparts in the United States. The ECB is likely to see that current rates are sufficient enough to bring inflation down to their target.

The euro strengthened over the week, closing at 1.0907.

UK inflation drops sharply

UK's inflation fell to 4.6 percent in October from a previous 6.7 percent, marking the lowest

Retail sales decline

British retail sales showed another decline, coming in at -0.3 percent monthly versus the revised September figure of -1.1 percent. Expectations were for retail sales to increase by 0.3 percent. Recessionary fears are starting to rise as higher interest rates squeeze consumers and households. Unlike their counterparts in the US, British consumers have been less resilient as a second straight month of retail sales decline confirm that there is a long winter ahead.

The sterling gained over the past week, last trading at 1.2461.

China data promising

China's industrial output and retail sales data grew above expectations in the third quarter, coming at 4.6 percent and 7.6 percent respectively. The data comes following weaker than expected CPI and PPI data released earlier this month, leading analysts to strike a cautious note, emphasizing that the property sector remains a weak link for the Chinese economy. China's AZN strategist Xing Zhaopeng stated that the month-on-month figures suggest increasing deflationary risks. The recent data, as well as an unexpected increase in imports and shrink in exports poses a challenging risk on Chinese authorities, as any aggressive monetary support would further widen interest rate differentials between China and other developed economies.

The USD/CNY currency pair is down on the week, last trading at 7.2111.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30860.

UK retail sales hit lowest level since 2021 lockdown

LONDON: UK retail sales dropped surprisingly in October owing to a cost-of-living crisis, to reach the lowest level since February 2021 when the country suffered a COVID lockdown. Sales by volume fell 0.3 percent last month after sliding 1.1 percent in September as inflation remained elevated, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said in a statement.

Analysts' consensus forecast had been for sales growth of 0.4 percent in October. The ONS added that the value of sales edged up 0.1 percent last month, as the cost of food and other essentials continues to rise. "Retail sales fell again in October to their lowest level since February 2021 when widespread lockdown restrictions were in place," noted Heather Bovill, deputy director for surveys and economic indicators at the ONS. "It was another poor month for household goods and clothes stores with these retailers reporting that cost-of-living pressures, reduced footfall and poor weather hit them hard."

Bovill added that online retail was the only main sector to report growth in October. The data comes amid the usual peak shopping season as Christmas approaches. "Rising household costs remain at the forefront of consumers' minds, despite headline inflation easing in recent months," Aled Patchett, head of retail and consumer goods at Lloyds Bank, said following Friday's data. — AFP



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 16 NOVEMBER 2023

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Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	21,718	7,292.17	0.8%	2.1%	-10.1%	444,521,377	163,928,655	33,092	16.5	1.2	72.8%
Main Market	8,102	5,407.27	0.7%	0.2%	-3.4%	355,157,737	55,074,430	20,469	12.4	0.7	27.2%
All Share	29,820	6,642.26	0.8%	1.7%	-8.9%	799,679,114	219,003,085	53,561	13.4	0.8	100%

Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Banking	16,978	1,598.33	0.3%	1.3%	-10.9%	131,845,935	69,371,005	11,958	16.1	1.0	56.93%
Basic Materials	437	774.97	-1.7%	2.3%	-10.4%	3,849,872	2,364,305	668	11.0	2.0	1.47%
Consumer Discretionary	571	1,425.58	-1.7%	-5.2%	-4.1%	60,282,160	22,424,739	6,291	12.0	0.9	1.91%
Consumer Staples	182	599.00	2.5%	2.4%	24.8%	3,234,874	1,555,977	236	12.7	1.1	0.61%
Energy	191	942.03	1.3%	4.5%	-17.3%	979,563	85,614	123	9.3	0.7	0.64%
Financial Services	4,214	1,187.03	1.1%	2.7%	-5.6%	287,348,134	48,338,446	12,287	17.7	0.7	14.13%
Health Care	233	469.74	0.0%	0.5%	1.7%	2,470,611	1,110,923.46	23	12.4	0.9	0.78%
Industrials	3,065	910.84	1.9%	2.7%	-15.6%	50,976,177	29,814,982	7,167	13.1	0.8	10.28%
Insurance	910	2,225.53	-0.4%	-0.6%	43.5%	527,027	209,315	103	9.9	0.9	3.05%
Real Estate	2,224	1,178.15	1.1%	2.2%	-2.5%	215,842,793	22,615,377	8,880	15.5	0.6	7.46%
Technology	8	571.09	-1.9%	-5.4%	-18.0%	6,793	535.65	6	NM	0.7	0.03%
Telecommunications	612	1,100.15	3.7%	4.5%	-6.9%	41,352,141	20,943,088	5,646	10.1	1.4	2.05%
Utilities	195	465.79	1.1%	1.7%	-5.9%	963,034	168,776	173	13.7	1.5	0.65%

Top Gainers

Stock	Last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
UNICAP	64	33.33%	2,293,849	135,291	249
IFAHR	400	26.98%	44,119,868	15,787,334	3,363
EMIRATES	34.8	22.11%	128,434	4,122	45
ALDEERA	209	16.76%	119,713	22,578	96
GFC	52	13.04%	2,100	106	3

Top Losers

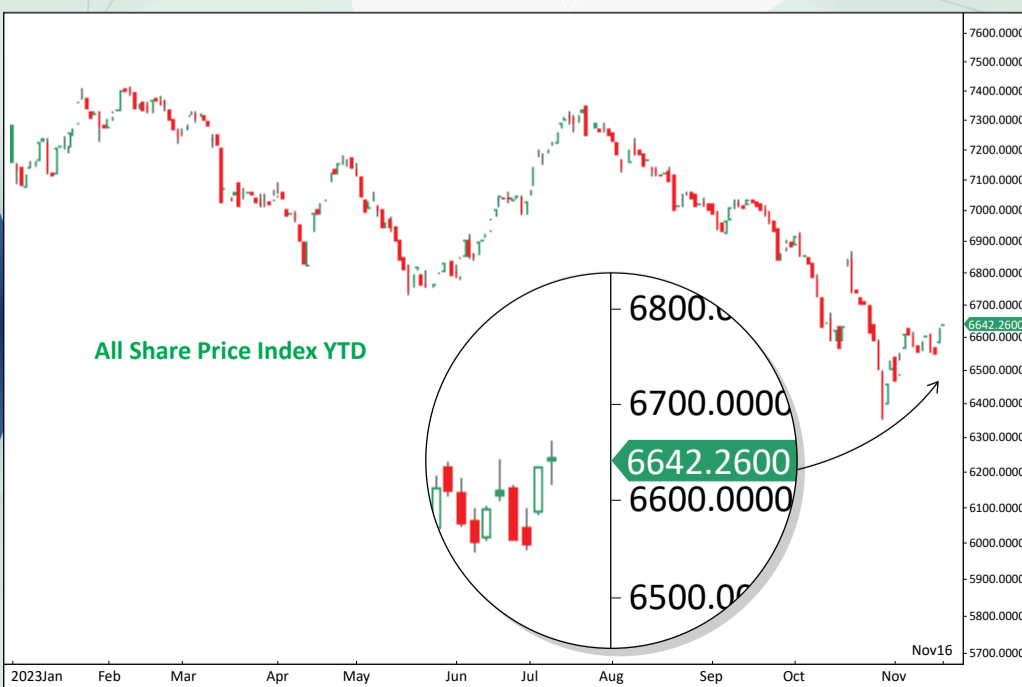
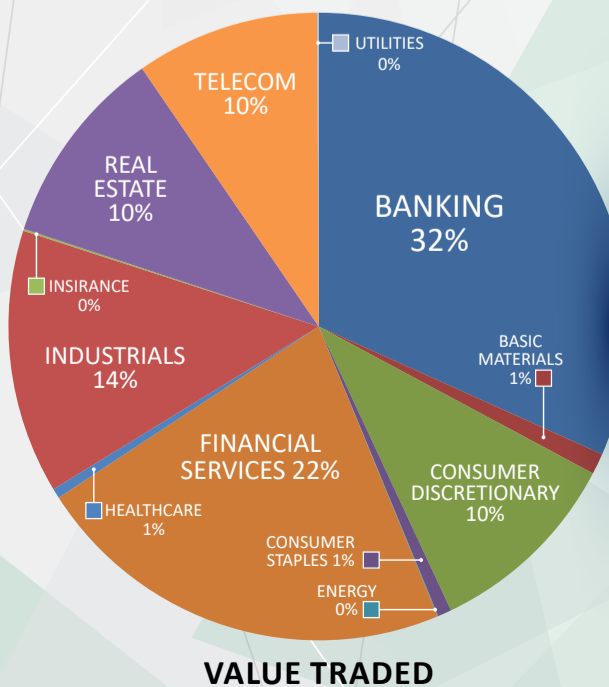
Stock	Last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
TAHSSILAT	22.5	-11.07%	396,120	8,839	69
ARKAN	78	-10.34%	323,740	25,320	54
THURAYA	141	-9.03%	5,301	783	5
MUNSHAAT	124	-8.82%	16,101,698	2,077,556	888
MARAKEZ	41	-6.82%	204,517	8,741	84

Top Volume

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
ARZAN	184	12.88%	89,865,107	15,701,077	1,990
KFH	704	1.44%	52,091,333	36,398,381	4,671
KRE	169	-1.74%	46,439,825	7,875,099	1,766
IFA	208	7.77%	44,143,072	8,919,718	1,886
IFAHR	400	26.98%	44,119,868	15,787,334	3,363

Top Value

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KFH	704	1.44%	52,091,333	36,398,381	4,671
ZAIN	505	4.99%	38,237,499	19,104,606	3,936
NBK	878	-1.35%	20,722,257	18,152,855	3,288
IFAHR	400	26.98%	44,119,868	15,787,334	3,363
ARZAN	184	12.88%	89,865,107	15,701,077	1,990



Market Summary:

- Premier and Main markets volume and value increased by 6% 4%, and 12% 40%, respectively.
- Premier and Main indexes are now on an uptrend due to lower inflation data and the FED expectation of no change rate.
- Technically, the All Share index closed at 6642, with support levels at 6621, 6526, and 6487, while resistance at 6670. The Premier index closed at 7292, with support levels at 7195, 7094, and 6966, while resistance was at 7343. The Main index closed at 5407, with support levels at 5393, 5339, and 5308, while resistance at 5424.

Lifestyle



British artist Sam Cox, better known as Mr Doodle, posing for a picture with his piece "The Doodles Leave Earth" at Pearl Lam Galleries in Hong Kong.—AFP photos



British artist Sam Cox (top), better known as Mr Doodle, draws on a model spaceship for a live art performance with children from Make-A-Wish Foundation at Central MTR Station in Hong Kong.

BRITISH ARTIST DRAWS HONG KONG CROWDS WITH HIS 'GRAFFITI SPAGHETTI'

A Hong Kong transport hub was taken over Sunday by googly-eyed aliens, extraterrestrial jellyfish and a cast of eccentric characters—all part of a live performance by British artist Sam Cox, better known as Mr Doodle. The 29-year-old calls his style "graffiti spaghetti"—a series of interlocking patterns, whimsical characters and surreal narratives that often chronicle the adventures of Mr Doodle in "Doodle Land".

His show in Hong Kong attracted hundreds of fans and curious on-lookers, his canvas a two-metre-wide silver spaceship for him "to fly back home" installed at an MTR station in Central district. "I really enjoy the live performances in front of people, because I love to be able to hear people get inside the process," Cox told AFP in an interview Thursday.

"I don't always know where it is going, and everyone is just there together and enjoying the process." Cox—who cites the late American pop artist Keith Haring as an influence—gameily adopts his alter ego, dressing in a doodled suit during his public events, which on Sunday included a crowd of children. "(My daughters)... were so excited when they knew Mr Doodle was coming," Mimi Tjen told AFP, as her husband alternated between hoisting



British artist Sam Cox, better known as Mr Doodle, draws on a model spaceship for a live art performance at Central MTR Station in Hong Kong.

their nine- and 11-year-old daughters on his shoulders to get a better view.

As many children's first drawings are often doodles, "they understand that language," said Cox. At Sunday's event, 10 children joined him to scrawl their own creations on his spaceship—some imitating the Mr Doodle style, while others opted for mountains and stars.

'Relaxation and joy'

"I like to create artwork that doesn't take itself too seriously... a lot of people expect art and artists to act a certain way," Cox told AFP. "I try to listen to myself and think about what's the most ultimate version of myself I can be." His pieces carry price tags ranging from \$10,000 to \$500,000, according



British artist Sam Cox, better known as Mr Doodle, working on a sculpture named "Jelly-boggle" at Pearl Lam Galleries in Hong Kong.

to Pearl Lam, Cox's global representation. Lam said she typically signs more traditional creators who tend to prefer their exhibition spaces austere.

But for "Mr Doodle in Space"—a solo exhibition launched Thursday—her staff wallpapered her gallery in Cox's signature imagery, enveloping his canvases with an eye-popping

pandemonium of scribbles. Lam said Cox's social media following and full embodiment of the character is bringing a younger generation to art. "In this modern commercial world, you need some relaxation and joy... that's what Mr Doodle gives."—AFP

Swift postpones Rio show due to extreme heat after fan death

American superstar Taylor Swift on Saturday postponed a show in Rio de Janeiro due to extreme heat, after a fan died at the singer's concert the previous night. Saturday's postponement came after the heat index in the city had risen to as high as 59 degrees Celsius (138 Fahrenheit) Friday, when a 23-year-old fan in the crowd of 60,000 died during the first "Eras Tour" show in Brazil. "I'm writing this from my dressing room in the stadium," Swift posted on Instagram Saturday. "The decision has been made to postpone tonight's show due to extreme temperatures in Rio."



US singer-songwriter Taylor Swift performs during her Eras Tour at Sofi stadium in Inglewood, California.—AFP photos

"The safety and well-being of my fans, fellow performers and crew has to and always will come first," she added. The concert has been moved to Monday. Swift could be seen in videos posted to social media from Friday trying to help fans by dispatching aides to pass out water bottles and even throwing one to the audience herself.

"It's with a shattered heart that I say we lost a fan earlier tonight," Swift said in a post on Instagram to her millions of followers earlier Saturday. "I

can't even tell you how devastated I am by this." The Rio Health Secretariat reported that Ana Benevides died Friday evening after suffering cardio-respiratory arrest in the Nilton Santos stadium during Swift's concert.

It said efforts to revive the young woman failed and an investigation had been launched. "At this time, the cause of death cannot be determined," the agency said. Much of central and southeastern Brazil has been suffering an unusually oppressive springtime heat wave. Fans lashed out at the venue's handling of the heat, saying officials had prevented them from bringing in water. "The lack of organization yesterday was absurd. What happened to the young woman was a crime due to bad organization. You just don't deny anybody water," said Yasmin Monteiro, 24, who tried to enter the stadium Saturday with five liters of water, before the announcement that the night's concert was postponed.

Caio Wesley, a 25-year-old who tried to carry in four liters of water, described organizers' attitude in prohibiting the entry of liquids as "selfish." "I brought all this water to see how long I can last," he told AFP. Brazil's Justice Ministry on Saturday published a resolution requiring event organizers to guarantee that fans have access to drinking water.

"It is unacceptable that people suffer, faint and even die due to lack of access to water," Justice Minister Flavio Dino said. In her earlier Saturday post, Swift said she would not discuss the woman's death from stage as "I feel overwhelmed by grief when I even try to talk about it. I feel this loss deeply and my broken heart goes out to her family and friends," she added.—AFP



Toomaj Salehi

Iran rapper jailed over backing protests freed on bail

Iranian authorities have released on bail a popular rapper jailed for more than a year over supporting nationwide protests sparked by Mahsa Amini's death in custody, local media have reported. Toomaj Salehi, 32, was arrested in October 2022 after publicly backing the wave of demonstrations which erupted a month earlier, triggered by the death of 22-year-old Amini, an Iranian Kurd, who had been taken into custody over an alleged breach of strict dress rules for women. In July, Salehi was sentenced to six years in prison on charges of "corruption on earth"—one of Iran's most serious offences which carries a maximum penalty of death.

The musician's lawyer, Amir Raisian, told Iran's reformist newspaper Shargh late Saturday that upon appeal, the Supreme Court had found "flaws in the initial sentence" and ordered that Salehi be "released from prison today on bail". An image posted overnight on Salehi's official Instagram account shows him out of jail, holding a bouquet of white flowers. The accusations against Salehi included spreading "lies on the internet" and "propaganda against the state" as well as inciting people to violence and "having formed and managed illegal groups with the aim of disrupting security in cooperation with a government hostile" to Iran. Iranian officials have labelled last year's protests "riots" and accused Tehran's foreign foes of fomenting unrest.

Meanwhile, prominent actor Hanieh Tavassoli—one of a dozen actors recently banned from work for failing to observe Iran's dress code for women—has been handed time in jail, her lawyer said Sunday. An Iranian court gave Tavassoli, 44, a six-month prison term and a fine of 150 million rials (\$300) for "publishing false content with the intention of disturbing the public", lawyer Maryam Kianersi said without elaborating, according to Shargh.—AFP

New York's Met presents 1,000 years of Byzantine influence on Christian African art

Mosaics, paintings, jewelry, ceramics, manuscripts: from the 4th to the 15th century: the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York is showing 200 ancient and medieval works that reflect a thousand years of influence of the Byzantine Empire on the Christian communities of Egypt, Tunisia and Ethiopia. One of the wealthiest in the world, the museum has brought together gems from collections from Africa, Asia and Europe for an exhibition called "Africa & Byzantium," from Sunday until next March.

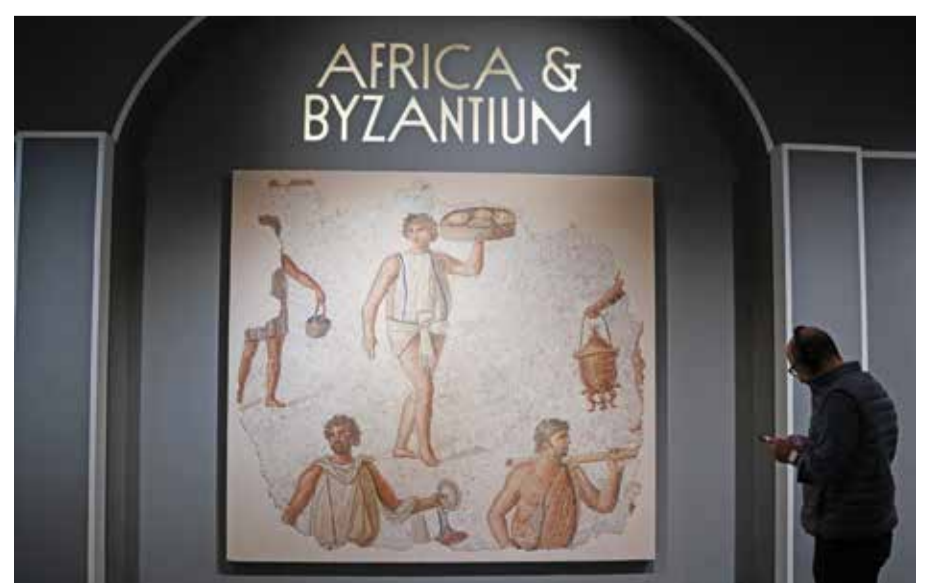
The Met presented a preview this week to a few journalists with its partners, the Egyptian and Tunisian governments and the oldest Coptic Orthodox monastery in the world, Egypt's Saint Catherine of Sinai. Bringing together artistic, religious, literary and archaeological treasures, "Africa & Byzantium" shows the impact of the Byzantine Empire from its capital Constantinople—which was formerly Byzantium and is now called Istanbul—on Christianity, which spread in the Horn of Africa from the 4th to the 7th centuries.

According to Met CEO Max Hollein, the exhibit "brings new focus and scholarship to an understudied field, expanding our knowledge of Byzantine and Early Christian Art within an expansive worldview." Visitors will be able to view painted manuscripts, textiles, marble mosaics, carved ivories from Nubia, gold jewelry from Egypt, wall paintings—many of them appearing part for the first time in the United States.



Visitors look at "Bridal Chest," while touring the "Africa & Byzantium" exhibit during a press preview at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

The pieces explore the links between cultural and multi-faith communities from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, mixing Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Christian and Jewish traditions, the Met said. Tunisian Cultural Affairs Minister Hayet Guettat Guermezi told AFP, praised the exhibition, saying it "provides us with the opportunity to recall the universality of Byzantium, which is a proposal for freedom, unity, reconciliation, respect and peace, the peace that is so needed in our world today."—AFP



A visitor stands at the entrance to the "Africa & Byzantium" exhibit during a press preview at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.—AFP photos



Fans of US singer Taylor Swift queue outside the Nilton Santos Olympic Stadium before Swift's concert, "Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour", amid a heat wave in Rio de Janeiro.

Nicaraguan Sheynnis Palacios wins crown at Miss Universe 2023



The newly crowned Miss Universe 2023, Sheynnis Palacios from Nicaragua, waves after winning the 72nd edition of the Miss Universe pageant, in San Salvador.--AFP photos

Nicaragua's Sheynnis Palacios was crowned Miss Universe 2023 on Saturday at the 72nd edition of the pageant, held this year in El Salvador. Palacios, 23, received the crown and sash from her predecessor, R'Bonney Gabriel from the United States. This is the first time a contestant from Nicaragua has won the contest, with Thailand's Anntonia Porsild and Australia's Moraya Wilson rounding out the top three. Palacios, who said she considers humility and gratitude for little things as her main qualities, won among 84 contestants who participated during a week of competitions that included posing in swimsuits, evening gowns and traditional dresses.

In her final answer to the jury, Palacios emphasized the importance of equal pay regardless of gender so that women can "work in any area." "There is no limit for women," she said. Each participant paraded on a stage set up in the newly renovated Adolfo Pineda National Gymnasium, in the capital San Salvador. The organizers of the gala, which was attended by El Salvador's President Nayib Bukele, also announced that the next edition will be held in Mexico.—AFP



President of El Salvador, Nayib Bukele, waves from the stage during the 72nd edition of the Miss Universe pageant.



Contestants stand on stage.



Miss Universe Nicaragua, Sheynnis Palacios (right) and Miss Thailand, Antonia Porsild (left) await the announcement of the winner of Miss Universe 2023 on stage.



Miss Colombia, Camila Avella, along with Miss Guatemala, Michelle Cohn (off frame), the first married women and mothers to enter the competition, walks on stage.



Miss Universe 2022, R'Bonney Gabriel of US, takes a bow on stage.

Miss Nicaragua, Sheynnis Palacios, walks on stage.



Miss Chile, Celeste Viel, walks on stage.



Contestants stand on stage.

Sports

Verstappen battles through to win Las Vegas Grand Prix thriller

Ferrari's Leclerc overtook Red Bull's Perez on the last lap to grab second place

LAS VEGAS: World champion Max Verstappen claimed the 18th win of his record-breaking season, overcoming a five-second penalty to power to victory in a thrilling Las Vegas Grand Prix on Saturday. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc overtook Red Bull's Sergio Perez on the last lap to grab second place ahead of the Mexican with French driver Esteban Ocon of Alpine finishing fourth at the end of a race which saw multiple lead changes and plenty of overtaking.

Verstappen had been highly critical of the return of Formula One to Vegas after a 41-year absence, saying the event was "99 percent show", but as he drove past the finish line he celebrated with a chorus of 'Viva Las Vegas' on the team radio.

"He loves a race like that. Even though he was on the end of a penalty. When he came back...the way he fought. I think he changed his mind about Vegas," said Red Bull team principal Christian Horner. The show was certainly evident with pre-race grid packed with a host of celebrities from the world of music, sport and entertainment as memories of the embarrassment of the opening practice session on Thursday being stopped early due to a loose water valve on the track, faded.

When the race was under way, the low grip on the track made sure there was no shortage of incident, overtaking and lead changes, as the night race delivered the entertainment the American promoters had craved from the new event.

The Dutchman won by 2.070 over Leclerc but had to work for his victory in what was the latest starting race in F1 history. "It was a tough one. I tried to go for it at the start. We both braked quite late and I just ran out of grip, so we ended up a bit wide," said the triple world champion.

'A lot of fun'
"The stewards gave me a penalty for that and it put us on the backfoot. I had to pass quite a few cars and there was the Safety Car, so at that point there was a lot going on," added Verstappen, summing up the race as "a lot of fun." The Dutchman, starting second on the grid, grabbed the lead in the first turn of the opening lap but was penalized five seconds for pushing Leclerc wide. The tricky surface was evident when McLaren's Lando Norris crashed out, spinning into the barrier on turn 14 of the fourth lap. The British driver was taken to hospital for precautionary tests.

Ferrari's Monegasque driver Leclerc kept in close touch though and was able to get the lead back, overtaking Verstappen on lap 16. The Dutchman had to serve his penalty in the pit, leaving him plenty of work to do to regain his lead and when Leclerc went into the pits on lap 22, Perez took over at the front.

Mercedes' George Russell made contact with Verstappen, clipping his front wing, an incident which resulted in a five second penalty for the British driver who crossed the line fourth but ended in eighth place.

Leclerc and Perez jostled for the lead but Verstappen was ominously gaining ground and after he passed Perez he then made his decisive move on lap 37. From then on, Verstappen never looked back, Leclerc slipping into third spot after he out-braked himself and allowed Perez to fly by. But there was one more twist in the tale as Leclerc brilliantly moved past Perez to grab second place. "What a race. I enjoyed it so much. I'm of course disappointed to only finish second, but that's the best we could do," said Leclerc.

"And we needed it. The weekend didn't start the way we wanted it to start but I am so happy it ended that way. It's such an incredible sport. The energy around the city is incredible and I at least really en-



LAS VEGAS: Ferrari's Monegasque driver Charles Leclerc (L), Red Bull Racing's Dutch driver Max Verstappen (2nd L) and Red Bull Racing's Mexican driver Sergio Perez (R) celebrate on the podium after the Las Vegas Formula One Grand Prix, in Las Vegas, Nevada. Verstappen won the race with Leclerc second and Perez third. — AFP

joyed today," he said. Ferrari's Carlos Sainz, who had started in 12th place after being sanctioned with a harsh ten-place grid penalty, rose to finish sixth behind Aston Martin's Lance Stroll.

The Mercedes pair of Lewis Hamilton and Russell finished seventh and eighth with Aston Martin's veteran Spaniard Fernando Alonso ninth and McLaren's Australian Oscar Piastri tenth. — AFP

HH the Crown Prince annual shooting tourney concludes

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Annual Shooting Tournament that was held at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex concluded on Saturday with a ceremony that was attended by representative of HH the Crown Prince, Farwaniya Governor Mishal Al-Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Commerce and Industry Minister Mohammad Othman Al-Aiban, President of Asian Shooting Confederation Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, Director General of Public Authority for Sport Yousuf Abdallah Al-Baidan and President of Kuwait and Arab shooting federations Eng Duaij Khalaf Al-Otaibi.

Sheikh Mishal Al-Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah commented following the ceremony saying he is honored to represent HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in the tournament that witnessed the participation of a large number of shooters from the shooting club, army, police and National Guard federations.

Sheikh Mishal Al-Jaber lauded the good organization of the tournament and bringing it out in this honorable form and wished shooters more success. Meanwhile, Eng Al-Otaibi said Kuwait Shooting Sport Club always look forward to organize this annual tournament which includes all categories and disciplines.

He added that the tournament attracted a large number of shooters from the club, army, police and National Guard, while it was officiated by international Kuwaiti referees, as it included competition in the skeet, trap, pistol, rifle and archery.

Al-Otaibi said Kuwait shooting is blessed with the care and interest of HH the Crown Prince as he instructed to support youth in general and Kuwait shooting in particular, resulting in signing a cooperation protocol between KSSC and the National Guard.

He said Kuwait shooting continued its winning ways with shooters winning 30 various medals (6 gold, 11 silver, 13 bronze) at all levels, most important of which is the qualification of shooter Khalid



Al-Mudhaf to Paris Olympics 2024 after winning the bronze of the World Championship, and winning four medals in the Asian Games.

Air Rifle 10m – Women
Mariam Irzouqi, Ritaj Al-Ziyadi, Rawan Al-Kandary.

Air Pistol 10m – Women
Israa Bahman, Aliaa Busakhar, Athari Al-Beloushi.

Olympic Archery – Men
Ali Al-Zaid, Abdallah Taha, Habis Al-Shammiri.

Compound Archery
Abdallah Malallah, Ahmad Al-Shatti, Bader Al-Shilahi.

Olympic Shooting – Women
Suaad Al-Bahar, Reem Al-Naqeeb, Nour Al-Sharhan.

Archery – Male Juniors
Mohammad Al-Hamdan, Khalid Al-Shaaban, Ahmad Al-Rashidi.

Archery – Female Juniors
Lulua Al-Awadi, Dana Al-Hilali, Fatima Al-Wuhaib.

Results are as follows:

Skeet – Men: Abdallah Al-Rashidi, Mohammad Al-Daihani, Mansour Al-Turqi.

Trap – Men: Talal Al-Rashidi, Abdelrahman Al-Faihan, Marzouq Al-Waalan.

Skeet – Women: Sheikha Al-Rashidi, Eman Al-Shamma, Afrah Adel.

Trap – Women: Sarah Al-Hawal, Zeina Al-Humoud, Asmaa Abdelmalek.

Air Pistol 10m – Men: Hamad Al-Namshan, Hassan Abdelmajeed, Fahad Al-Duraie.

Air Rifle 10m – Men: Ali Al-Muatiri, Saud Al-Subaie, Abdallah Al-Harby.

50m Rifle 3 positions – Men
Ali Al-Mutairi, Turkey Al-Shimmari, Khalid Ibrahim.

Rapid Pistol 25m – Men
Salman Al-Enezi, Hassan Abdelmajid, Abdallah Abdelwahab.



INTERSPORT and AAW sponsor Run Kuwait charity race

KUWAIT: Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Co. (AAW) and INTERSPORT, one of the leading sport brands, announced on Sunday their support and sponsorship of the 11th Run Kuwait charity race. The

run was organized by the non-profit Fawzia Sultan Healthcare Network (FSHN) on November 11 at Morouj, to raise funds for the treatment of children with special needs.

Run Kuwait's sponsorship by AAW and INTERSPORT is driven by the strong commitment of both brands to corporate social responsibility, and their support for local initiatives that aim to create a positive impact on society. Their participation in the event included the sponsorship, and their teams' participation in the race.

Run Kuwait is an initiative that combines social

responsibility with fun, enabling participants to contribute to the well-being of children with special needs, who require treatment. The event raised funds to support the Children's Evaluation and Rehabilitation Center (CERC), which offers a wide range of multi-disciplinary treatments for children with disabilities, providing free treatment for those in need.

This year's edition of the Run Kuwait charity race introduced a new initiative that made the event even more special. For the first time, children were encouraged to participate, not just for fun but also to support children in need. The race featured three



SEOUL: South Korea's T1 celebrate with the trophy after winning against China's Weibo Gaming at the League of Legends world final in Seoul on November 19, 2023. — AFP

S Korea's T1 win record fourth League of Legends world title

SEOUL: South Korean powerhouse T1 swept aside China's Weibo Gaming on Sunday to clinch a record fourth League of Legends world championship, widely considered the Super Bowl of e-sports. T1 won three straight games in the best-of-five final at the Gocheok Sky Dome stadium in Seoul, roared on by a capacity crowd of 18,000.

Legions of fans descended on Seoul for the final of the League of Legends world championship, which has rapidly grown since the first edition in 2011 into one of the crown jewels of the billion-dollar global e-sports industry. Fireworks went off as T1 members lifted the trophy, bouncing in a huddle as the crowd chanted "T1! T1! T1!"

"More than anything, I am very grateful that I was able to play in front of so many people," said T1's Faker, a superstar gamer hailed as the Michael Jordan of e-sports. Faker, whose real name is Lee Sang-hyeok, has now won a record four world titles and, aged 27, is also the oldest player to clinch the biggest prize in League of Legends.

He has celebrity status in gaming-mad South Korea, and gets a rockstar reception at public appearances. The victory marked a dominant run at the world championship for T1, who were looking to bounce back after losing in the final in San Francisco last year. "It feels unreal right now, it feels like a dream," said T1's Keria, whose real name is Ryu Min-seok. The crowd, including many dressed as characters from League of Legends, witnessed a glitzy ceremony before the final that included a performance by K-pop stars NewJeans.

'My voice is gone'

Tickets for the final at the Sky Dome, which usually hosts baseball games, sold out in 10 minutes when they were made available in August, according to League of Legends maker Riot Games. Thousands also gathered at a fan zone set up in central Seoul to watch the match, which was also screened live at more than 40 cinemas across South Korea.

In Beijing, hundreds of fans attended a viewing party at the Communication University of China. "Watching the competition with so many at school, it feels really great," student Pang Jian, a Weibo Gaming supporter, told AFP. "I've shouted so much that my voice is gone."

Viewing parties were also held in Vietnam. "I am a fan of Faker... he is my idol," 26-year-old Nguyen Minh Duc told AFP at a sports complex in Hanoi where 2,000 fans watched the final. "Seeing T1 become the champions today is wonderful." League of Legends involves two teams with five players each competing in a battleground where the goal is to destroy the opponent's base. It is the most watched e-sport in the world, with tens of millions tuning in to livestreams from competitions every year. — AFP

Sports

Kuwait develops strategic plan for promoting dressage growth

Dressage blends traditional horsemanship with modern equestrian techniques

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Dressage in Kuwait boasts a rich tapestry intricately woven into the nation's equestrian heritage. Rooted in a centuries-old tradition, Kuwait's deep-seated connection with horses and horsemanship dates back to the bedouin era, when horsemanship symbolized prestige and skill.

The evolution of this sport in Kuwait seamlessly blends traditional horsemanship with modern equestrian techniques. The commitment to preserving this artistry goes beyond a mere sporting endeavor, embodying a cultural legacy that reflects the values of discipline, grace, and the seamless communication between horse and rider in the Kuwaiti equestrian realm.

Reflecting on Kuwait's equestrian history, Fajer Al-Sabah, the founder of the Kuwait National Dressage Committee and a member of the International Federation for Equestrian Sports Group 7 Dressage Committee, recalled the dynamic evolution of the sport. In the early 1980s, a significant surge in equestrian activities, particularly favoring show-jumping, was catalyzed by Nadia Al-Mutawa's gold at the Asian Olympics.

Sabah notes that small programs were initiated at a local horse-riding club, culminating in Kuwait's first-ever dressage competition. "After Charlotte Dujardin of Great Britain won gold at the 2012 London Olympics, dressage experienced a surge in international interest, aided by social media. However, despite growing interest in Kuwait, the lack of discipline in riding centers hindered training opportunities. In 2022, dressage was officially established and recognized as an equestrian discipline under the Kuwait Equestrian Federation," she said.

Showjumping traditionally dominated Kuwait's equestrian landscape, with the equestrian federation primarily focusing on it. "The first competition hosted in November 2022 had minimal riders. The second competition saw almost double the participation. The final competition of the 2022/2023 season had over the expected number of participants, with more who intended to join the 2023/2024 season. The interest is growing, and the people are becoming more educated about the sport just by experiencing it firsthand, whether by watching or riding," Sabah explained.

She highlighted that due to its recent recognition in Kuwait, the sport is still in its nascent stage, resulting in riders currently performing at a relatively lower level. However, with each passing month of rigorous training and each subsequent competition, there's a marked and swift advancement among the riders, showcasing substantial progress as they ascend the proficiency levels.



Head Coach Amber Heyer with a rider at the first ever dressage competition.



(Left to right) Fajer Al-Sabah, founder of the Kuwait National Dressage Committee with Head Coach Amber Heyer.



Dressage rider in Kuwait.



Winners at the National Dressage Competition.

In 2023, Kuwaiti riders Abdullah Al-Amer, Ebraheem Esmail and Abdulrahman Al-Houqal ventured into local competitions in the Netherlands. Amer and Esmail secured first place, showcasing their expertise, while Houqal achieved a commendable fourth place, signaling the rapid growth and competitive success of Kuwaiti riders in the international dressage arena.

Looking ahead to the 2024-2025 plan, Sabah mentioned that the committee aims to further promote dressage, especially among young riders in Kuwait. The Group 7 Committee secured approval for two FEI programs — talent identification and national judging. Collaborating with the MENA region committee, European trainers and judges, the committee is dedicated to fostering the growth of dressage in Kuwait and the broader GCC region.

Head Coach Amber Heyer, a top dressage trainer in the Netherlands, visited Kuwait in 2022 to develop a strategic plan for promoting dressage growth in the country and the GCC region. Recognizing the growing interest in the sport, Heyer created a program to enhance dressage, emphasizing its importance for riders in terms of safety and skill development.

"Many jumping riders in Kuwait felt they were lost and barely surviving because they did not know about dressage. Dressage is not only about beautiful movements but the basics of jumping," she said. Heyer indicated that people in Kuwait are very supportive, and dressage is growing in the community. "It is very important for children and youth. It is safer and they will be better riders," she added.

Heyer underlined that dressage serves as the foundation of riding and encapsulates fundamental principles essential for both horse and rider. She explains that dressage involves balance, control and precision in movement, and focuses on communication, subtlety and harmony between horse and rider.

Heyer emphasizes that dressage is a form of knowledge, requiring an understanding of the horse's nature and balance, effective communication and simplicity to ensure the rider's actions are clear and do not harm the horse. She advocated for starting with dressage for anyone interested in riding, as it provides a fundamental understanding of riding mechanics, ensuring the safety of riders and the comfort of the horse, making a better rider for the future.

But the scoreline will raise fresh questions over the need for such clashes between giants and minnows in a congested fixture calendar. "We did everything to make this score happen. That is the ambition that there is in this team," said France boss Didier Deschamps. Just one goal was enough to ensure the Dutch joined France in qualifying from Group B with a 1-0 victory over the Republic of Ireland. Wout Weghorst's powerful drive separated the sides in Amsterdam in what is likely to be Irish boss Stephen Kenny's final competitive game in charge.

"In the end, it's about winning the game. We knew we needed the three points to qualify directly today, at home with our own fans," said Netherlands forward Cody Gakpo. "We created a lot of chances, opportunities, but we have to score more goals and have more finesse in the final third."

Romania, Switzerland qualify

Romania reached just a second major tournament since 2008 by ending the Zionist entity's chances of automatic qualification with a 2-1 win. Despite being forced to play what should have been a home fixture in Hungary due to the ongoing conflict between the Zionist entity and Hamas, the Zionist entity went in front after just two minutes through Eran Zahavi. But Romania hit back quickly to level through George Puscas and secured their place in Germany thanks to Ianis Hagi, son of Gheorghe Hagi who inspired the Romanians famous run to the 1994 World Cup quarter-finals. Switzerland also qualified despite being held 1-1 at home by Kosovo. Romania are now in pole position to win Group I with a draw at home to the Swiss on Tuesday enough to secure top spot. Wales' hopes of reaching a third consecutive European Championship were dealt a huge blow by a 1-1 draw away to Armenia. Rob Page's men began the day with automatic qualification in their own hands. — AFP



Kuwait Special Olympics hold sports festival

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait Special Olympics organized the healthy sports festival in cooperation with Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital on the occasion of the "World Diabetes Day", with the participation of 130 players representing schools, establishments and societies concerned with the handicapped as well as athletes from Tomouh Sport Club. The festival that lasted two days at Asima Mall included walking race, followed by medical tests for participants that included blood sugar level tests, blood pressure, body mass index and nutrition.

National Director of Kuwait Special Olympics lauded the good turnout by special education schools as well as societies of the handicapped and the positive return of the festival of sports, psychologically, health and awareness for the special needs among our children. She said holding this festival in cooperation with the diabetes and endocrine glands unit at Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital comes within the partnerships

special Olympics is keen to make with medical entities to present comprehensive high quality medical service to the special needs, in order to enhance the health and physical efficiency for them and increase their chances to participate in games.

She said Kuwait Special Olympics is keen on developing health programs in order to increase the quality of athlete's life and making parents aware about various health fields of interest to players, saying that the health program will continue year long that in addition to activating the healthy societies program starting next year 2024 which aims at dealing with the health challenges special needs players are facing through instant societal solutions.

The program works also on increasing the delivery of care and prevention programs to improve their health condition to deal with the challenges they face through several programs the special Olympics implemented during the past five years.

Burseli thanked all efforts that contributed to the success of the festival particularly Public Authority for Sport, Information Ministry, Tomouh Club and the diabetes unit at Jaber Al-Ahmad hospital.

Meanwhile, Head of Endocrinology and Diabetes at Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital Dr Thamer Al-Essa said he was pleased with the participation of special Olympics in the World Diabetes Day and the interaction of athletes and their parents.

France smash records in 14-0 win, Dutch, Swiss and Romania qualify

PARIS: Kylian Mbappe scored a hat-trick in France's record-breaking 14-0 thrashing of 10-man Gibraltar as the Netherlands, Switzerland and Romania booked their places at Euro 2024 on Saturday. Les Bleus set a new record margin of victory in European qualifying and a national record in Nice.

Ethan Santos' own goal and Marcus Thuram had already opened the floodgates before 17-year-old Warren Zaire-Emery scored. That was Zaire-Emery's last contribution as the PSG midfielder was forced off with an ankle injury but a red card for Santos after just 18 minutes allowed the World Cup finalists to run amok.

Mbappe's penalty made it 4-0 and Jonathan Clauss, Kingsley Coman and Youssouf Fofana all scored before half-time. Adrien Rabiot, Coman again and Ous-



NICE: France's forward #09 Olivier Giroud performs an overhead kick and scores during the UEFA EURO 2024 Group B qualifying football match between France and Gibraltar at the Allianz Riviera stadium in Nice, southeastern France. — AFP

Classifieds

Clinics & Hospitals

Clinics

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

Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Change of Name

I, **Miqdad S/o Abbas Ali**, Holder of Indian Passport No. Z2815566, having permanent address 132/4 Kotawala Baag Ratla Madhya Pradesh, India - 457001 residing in Kuwait at present hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: **Miqdad (Name) Kalabhai (surname)**. So I known as **Miqdad Kalabhai - 20-11-2023**

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is 1889988



AHMEDABAD: Australia's players celebrate with the trophy after winning the 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup one-day international (ODI) final match against India at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on November 19, 2023. — AFP

Australia win sixth World Cup

Head ends India's dominant run of 10 unbeaten matches

AHMEDABAD: Opener Travis Head hit a sparkling 137 to power Australia to a record-extending sixth World Cup title with a convincing six-wicket win over India in Ahmedabad on Sunday. Chasing a tricky 241 for victory in the final, Australia slipped to 47-3 before the left-handed Head hit his second century of the tournament to steer the team home with seven overs to spare. Head's knock and his marathon stand of 192 with Marnus Labuschagne, unbeaten on 58, ended India's dominant run of 10 unbeaten matches at the event.

Head fell after his 120-ball knock laced with 15 fours and four sixes before Glenn Maxwell hit the winning runs to trigger wild celebrations in the Aussie camp. "Just thrilled to be a part of it," man-of-

the-match Head told Star Sports.

"It's a lot better than seeing the World Cup on the couch at home (on his injury). I was a little bit nervous but Marnus played exceptionally well and soaked all the pressure." India's chances of ending a global trophy drought since their 2013 Champions Trophy win went up in smoke once Head got going with Labuschagne.

Head's century was the seventh in a World Cup final and third by an Australian after Ricky Ponting (140 not out v India in 2003) and Adam Gilchrist (149 v Sri Lanka in 2007). The bowlers set up victory for an Australian side that bounced back after two losses to win nine in a row as Mitchell Starc (3-55) and Pat Cummins (2-34) helped bowl out India for 240.

India hit back when Mohammed Shami shared the new ball with Jasprit Bumrah and struck on his second delivery to get David Warner caught behind for seven. But it was Bumrah's double strike in quick succession that raised the roof as he had Mitchell Marsh caught behind for 15 and Steve Smith lbw for four. Head stood firm with Labuschagne for company to thwart the Indian attack despite captain Rohit Sharma rotating his bowlers in a hunt for a breakthrough.

'Unbelievable' achievement

Head, who suffered a fractured hand in South Africa in September, was in danger of missing the World Cup but Australia kept him in the squad until he was fit

to play. He hit a match-winning century against New Zealand in the team's sixth league game and after a few low scores hit an attacking 62 in his team's nervy three-wicket semi-final win over South Africa in Kolkata. He turned India's nemesis a second time this year after his 163 proved decisive in Australia's World Test Championship triumph at the Oval in June.

Head reached his 100 in 95 balls and raised his bat to an applauding Australian dressing room. "What we've achieved today is unbelievable," said Labuschagne. "It's the best achievement I've ever been part of. India have been the team of the tournament, but you know if you play your best cricket, you have a chance. Our bowlers were sensational

and Travis put on one hell of a display."

Warner said, "Our bowlers were fantastic, they set the tone from ball one. The fielding supported that." Australia elected to field first and the players backed up Cummins' decision with disciplined bowling and impressive fielding.

Virat Kohli and KL Rahul hit 54 and 66 respectively after Rohit's attacking 47 but the ball dominated the bat on a slow, dry pitch. Head took a stunning catch while running back from cover point to cut short Rohit's innings off spinner Maxwell.

Cummins bowled Kohli, who ended as the leading batsman in tournament with 765 runs, to silence the crowd of 92,453 fans, who like the home team in the middle had a forgettable day. — AFP

Thunder roll over Warriors in overtime, Bucks out-last Mavs

LOS ANGELES: Oklahoma City's Shai Gilgeous-Alexander and Chet Holmgren combined for 76 points Saturday as the Thunder erased an 18-point deficit to beat Golden State 130-123 in overtime, handing the Warriors a sixth straight NBA defeat. Gilgeous-Alexander scored 10 of his 40 points in overtime and rookie Holmgren's 36 points included a turnaround three-pointer with seven-tenths of a second left in regulation to force the extra session.

Andrew Wiggins had put Golden State up 117-114 with a three-pointer with 3.1 seconds left, but Holmgren responded and the Thunder out-scored the Warriors 13-6 in overtime. Wiggins scored a season-high 31 points and Stephen Curry added 25 in his return from a strained right knee.

With Draymond Green still serving his five-game suspension for a choke-hold on Minnesota's Rudy Gobert, the Warriors fell to 1-6 at home. The contest was part of a pulsating night of NBA action. Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 40 points and the Milwaukee Bucks used a massive 43-point fourth quarter to finally put away the Dallas Mavericks 132-125.

The Miami Heat's seven-game winning streak came to an end with an agonizing 102-97 loss to the Chicago Bulls, and San Antonio's losing streak stretched to eight games despite another big night from Victor Wembanyama. The Spurs again squandered a big lead in a 120-108 loss to the Memphis Grizzlies.

In Milwaukee, the Bucks were pushed to the limit by a Mavs team trying to wrest the Western Conference lead from the Denver Nuggets. Instead it was the Minnesota Timberwolves joining Denver atop the conference after a 121-120 come-from-behind victory over the New Orleans Pelicans. A back-and-forth first half that saw the Bucks lead by as many as 11 and the Mavs by as many as five, ended with Milwaukee up 60-58. Dallas star Kyrie Irving scored 18 of his 39 points in the Mavs' 40-point third quarter, but Milwaukee responded in the final frame. — AFP

Hojgaard's birdie burst carries him to Dubai title

DUBAI: Nicolai Hojgaard rebounded in the final round to take the DP World Tour Championship by two shots and collect his first title of the season. "I put in so much hard work in the last couple years, and this has been a really good year if I look back on it. The only thing that was missing was a win, and to get it this week, against this field, is unbelievable," said Hojgaard.

The 22-year-old Dane took \$3 million for winning the \$10.5m event and climbed to second in the final Race to Dubai standings behind Rory McIlroy. But Nicolai's identical twin Rasmus fell one place short of securing the last of the 10 PGA Tour cards for next season on offer.

Nicolai Hojgaard had led after both the first two rounds before slipping three shots back on Saturday. On Sunday, he made three birdies on the outward nine before following a bogey on the 12th with five straight birdies from the 13th.

He agonisingly missed a four-foot birdie putt on the 18th for a 21-under par four-round total of 267 with Viktor Hovland and Tommy Fleetwood still on the course at 20-under. "Having a putt on the 18th to actually close it out, and let it slip by, it was quite a tough moment for me," said Hojgaard after he won.

But Englishman Fleetwood three-putted the 17th for a bogey, while Hovland dumped his second shot into the water on the par-5 18th. Both shot rounds of 68 and joined overnight leader Matt Wallace (69) of England at 19-under par total, two behind Hojgaard, who had the day's lowest round of 64.

McIlroy shot a two-under 70 to finish in a tie for 22nd but he had secured his fifth Race to Dubai crown before this weekend. "I think over the last 10 years, I've won eight season-long titles be-



DUBAI: Denmark's Nicolai Hojgaard (L) lifts the winner's trophy as Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy lifts the world championship trophy after the last day of the DP World Tour Championship European Tour golf tournament 2023 at Jumeirah Golf Estates in Dubai on November 19, 2023. — AFP

tween America and here, so it just shows my level of consistency," he said.

"There are a few guys that can beat me sort of one week or the next week, but I don't think there's a lot of people that can beat me throughout the entire season. "It's just about trying to be a little more clinical when I get to those weeks where I have chances to win."

Rasmus Hojgaard shot a 69 to finish tied for 11th but that left him 18th in the Race to Dubai.

Japan's Ryo Hisatsune at No. 17 took the tenth card. The 10 players who secured their PGA Tour cards included Adrian Meronk, Ryan Fox, Victor Perez, Thorbjorn Olesen, Alexander Bjork, Sami Valimaki, Robert MacIntyre, Jorge Campillo, Matthieu Pavon and Hisatsune.

The 2023-24 season of the DP World Tour begins next week in South Africa and Australia with the Jo'burg Open and the Australian PGA Championship. — AFP