

2 Defense minister urges alert amid 'exceptional' situation

8 COP28 turns attention to potent methane emissions

13 World's oldest beauty adviser sitting pretty

16 England held by North Macedonia in Euro qualifier

BRICS urges immediate Gaza truce

South Africa slams genocide by Zionists • MBS: Stop arms exports to Zionists • Xi calls for int'l peace conf

Crown Prince hails Asiad medalists, thanks supporters



KUWAIT: HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Kuwaiti athletes who won medals at the 19th Asian Games at Bayan Palace on Nov 21, 2023. — KUNA

KUWAIT: HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Tuesday Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Aiban, Director-General of the Public Authority

for Sports Al-Bidan and the President of Kuwait Olympic Committee Sheikh Fahad Nasser Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, who presented to HH the Crown Prince Kuwaiti athletes who won medals at the 19th Asian Games held in Hangzhou.

"We are pleased to welcome you all and convey the greetings and blessings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and for you, our sincere appreciation and

Continued on Page 6

JOHANNESBURG: The BRICS group of nations Tuesday called for an immediate and sustained humanitarian truce in Gaza during an extraordinary summit where chair South Africa accused the Zionist entity of war crimes and genocide in the Palestinian territory. Pretoria hosted a virtual meeting of BRICS — a group of major emerging economies that includes Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa — aimed at drawing up a common response to the Zionist-Hamas conflict.

"We called for an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities," the group said in a summary of the meeting. "We reiterated our strong support for regional and international efforts aimed at achieving an immediate cessation of hostilities, ensuring the protection of civilians and the provision of humanitarian aid."

"The collective punishment of Palestinian civilians through the unlawful use of force by (the Zionist entity) is a war crime. The deliberate denial of

medicine, fuel, food and water to the residents of Gaza is tantamount to genocide," said South African President Cyril Ramaphosa.

Leaders and representatives of BRICS said a long-term diplomatic solution to the Palestinian-Zionist conflict was needed to ensure peace, with Chinese President Xi Jinping calling for an "international peace conference" to achieve that goal. "There can be no sustainable peace and security in the Middle East without a just solution to the question of Palestine," Xi said, speaking through an interpreter.

China has historically been sympathetic to the Palestinians and supportive of a two-state solution to the Zionist-Palestinian conflict. And it has this year sought to play a greater role in the Middle East, facilitating a historic rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran and sending an envoy to the region to push for a ceasefire in the Zionist-Hamas conflict. Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman

Continued on Page 6

Hopes mount for Gaza truce



GAZA: An injured Palestinian girl evacuated from the Indonesian Hospital receives care at Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis on Nov 20, 2023. — AFP

GAZA: Hopes mounted Tuesday that Hamas could release dozens of captives from war-torn Gaza after the group's leader and key mediator Qatar said a truce deal was in sight and the Zionist premier pointed to "progress". The announcements are the most optimistic yet of a potential breakthrough in the conflict, which has been raging for more than six weeks and left thousands dead.

"We are close to reaching a deal on a truce," Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh said, according to a statement sent by his office to AFP. In Qatar, foreign ministry spokesman Majed Al-Ansari said "we're very optimistic, very hopeful" and told reporters: "We are at the closest point we ever had been in reaching an agreement."

Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has vowed to destroy Hamas, was more circumspect, telling soldiers at a military base only that "we are making progress" on the return of captives. In Washington, US President Joe Biden, who does not support a full ceasefire, said a temporary truce was "now very close".

Hopes of a release deal have been mounting since Qatar on Sunday said only "minor" practical issues remained. Speculation grew further

Continued on Page 6

Palestinian flags, keffiyehs fly high in Kuwait stadium

KUWAIT: Palestinian flags and the black-and-white keffiyehs flew high in Kuwait's Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium as football fans vented their emotions in a World Cup qualifier on Tuesday. Thousands of Palestinian sympathizers turned out at the 60,000-seat venue for the game against Australia, Palestine's first in front of fans since the start of the Zionist-Hamas war.

"Palestine is in our hearts. We came to the stadium, old and young, in support," Anfal Al-Azmi, a 45-year-old Kuwaiti woman said. Defender Harry Souttar's 18th-minute goal was all that separated the teams in a 1-0 win for Australia, where the action on the pitch was almost incidental. "We do not care about the match. We came to deliver a message," said Wael Youssef Labbad, 40, a Palestinian from Ashkelon. "We, the Palestinian people, are always present with the keffiyeh and the flag."

Palestine's red, black, white and green flag was ubiquitous at the game — which shifted from Ramallah in the West Bank because of the war — and many fans twirled the distinctive keffiyehs as they chanted. Others held up "Free Gaza" banners and pictures of keys, symbolizing the homes lost by Palestinians during the 1948 creation of the Zionist entity. Australia's players



KUWAIT: Supporters of Palestine attend the 2026 FIFA World Cup AFC qualifier between Palestine and Australia at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium on Nov 21, 2023. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

will donate a portion of their match fee to humanitarian operations in Gaza, whose situation was described as "horrific" by visiting coach Graham Arnold.

"Kuwait and Palestine are one. Today we are guests of Palestine in their land," said Kuwaiti Ahmed Al-Anezi, 36, who was draped in the Palestinian flag

and wore a keffiyeh. "Today I and my entire family came to provide support to the Palestinian people and to consolidate the first Arab cause in the souls of my children." Syrian university student Yahya Shaher, 18, said: "We are here to support our brothers. We are one and victory is ours." — AFP (See Page 16)

Assembly panel holds meeting on electoral reform

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly's legal and legislative committee on Tuesday held a conference to discuss ways to reform the election system in the country, including proposals to introduce for the first time party-like lists in the elections. Head of the committee MP Mohannad Al-Sayer said the panel will receive all proposals and after thoroughly discussing them, it will finalize a draft law to be ready for assembly debate on Dec 19.

Participants included Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun, Deputy Speaker Mohammad Al-Mutair, a large number of current and former MPs, civil societies, activists and others. A large number of participants supported the idea of holding elections on the basis of groups or party-like lists rather than individual candidates in a bid to transform the political scene in the country to be collective instead of individuals.

Rapporteur of the committee MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari said that amending the election system can be better done when there is political stability and the country currently enjoys a good degree of such stability. MP Jenan Bushehri said she supports the idea of the party-like lists provided public interests should come first, adding that Kuwait needs an election system that strengthens collective work like parliaments in advanced countries.

MP Mubarak Al-Tasha said the new law should achieve justice among voters so that electoral districts should have the same number of voters. At present, there are huge differences in the number of voters in various constituencies. He also said that the committee will be looking into the two vote or four-vote systems to replace the current single vote.

MP Hamad Al-Matar called for also considering amending the constitution along with changing the election system, while former MP Rashed Al-Farhan said the Assembly membership should be increased to 100 members through amending the constitution. Deputy Speaker Mutair said all are in favor of change, but there are different opinions to that end, adding that the existing single vote law has divided the country on sectarian and tribal lines. MP Hasan Jowhar said there is a historical opportunity for amending the

Continued on Page 6

Indian workers trapped in tunnel seen on camera

SILKYARA TUNNEL, India: Forty-one Indian workers trapped in a collapsed road tunnel for 10 days were seen alive on camera Tuesday for the first time, looking exhausted and anxious, as rescuers attempted to create new passageways to free them. One of the proposed routes is nearly half a kilometer long. Still wearing their helmets, the men could be seen peering at the endoscopic camera sent by rescuers down a thin pipe through which air, food and water are being sent.

"We will bring you out safely, do not worry," rescuers were heard telling the trapped men as they gathered near the camera, in video released by state authorities. Excavators have been removing tons of earth, concrete and rubble from the under-construction tunnel in the northern Himalayan state of Uttarakhand since November 12, after a portion of the tunnel collapsed.

Continued on Page 6



Local



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Tuesday at Bayan Palace Saudi Arabia Minister of State and Cabinet Member Prince Turki Bin Mohammad bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and his accompanying delegation. — KUNA

Crown Prince meets Saudi Minister of State, delegation

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Tuesday at Bayan Palace Saudi Arabia Minister of State and Cabinet Member Prince Turki Bin Mohammad bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and his accompanying delegation.

Prince Turki conveyed Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and the Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud's greetings to His Highness Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal wished the Saudi king and Crown Prince everlasting well-being and the people of Saudi Arabia further development and progress under their wise lead-

PM receives FM, newly-appointed ambassadors

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Tuesday Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber

Al-Sabah accompanied by new chiefs of diplomatic and consular missions abroad at Seif Palace. Sheikh Salem introduced Kuwait's permanent representative to the Arab League Talal Al-Mutairi, Kuwait's Ambassadors to Venezuela Fadhel Al-Hasan, Ambassador to Bhutan Adel Al-Jasam, Ambassador to the Republic of Chile Ziad Al-Anbaei, Ambassador to Brazil Talal Al-Mansour, Ambassador to South Africa Salem Al-Shibli and Ambassador to Singapore Ahmad Al-Shuraim to His Highness.

Sheikh Salem also introduced the Consul of Kuwait to Italy Sheikh Jaber Duaij Khalifa Al-Sabah, the Consul to China Anas Marafi, and the Consul to Vietnam Talal Al-Hazza to His Highness. The reception was attended by the Undersecretary of the Prime Minister's office Sheikh Khaled Talal Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, Director of the Office of His Highness the Prime Minister Hamad Al-Amer, and Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocol Affairs Nabeel Al-Dakheel. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives Foreign Minister, newly-appointed diplomats on Tuesday. — KUNA

Kuwait Defense Minister urges alert amid 'exceptional' circumstances

Sheikh Ahmad attends GCC defense ministers' conference

MUSCAT: It is imperative to remain alert at a time when the world is facing "exceptional" circumstances regionally and internationally, Kuwait's Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah told his counterparts from the Gulf Arab region on Tuesday.

"As Zionist entity forces step up their attacks across Palestinian territories, it would behoove armed forces from around the region to be "vigilant and prepared" for any potential threats, the Kuwaiti minister underlined during the talks in the Omani capital during the meeting of the 20th session of the Joint Defense Council of the Defense Ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

Such gatherings are instrumental in bolstering "military cooperation" among Gulf Cooperation Council states, he added, saying it is a step forward towards preserving peace and security within the six-member bloc and beyond.

Sheikh Ahmad said, "The highest levels of readiness and vigilance are

achieved by working to develop a system of joint military cooperation between the countries of the region based on our firm certainty and great confidence in the capabilities and efficiency of our armed forces in carrying out the various roles, tasks and duties assigned to them."

In this regard, he appreciated the tireless efforts made by his counterparts in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries to support the bonds of cooperation and joint teamwork between the armed forces. The Kuwaiti official explained that those efforts were resulted in many tangible achievements and contributed to high directives of the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

The State of Kuwait always aspires to the success of such meetings, which aim to achieve cooperation and unify goals, programs and plans among the GCC countries provide room for discussion and consultation on various issues and topics of common interest. Sheikh Ahmad extended his sincere congratulations and blessings to the



Minister of Defense during the meeting of the 20th session of the Joint Defense Council of Defense Ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries in Muscat.

leadership, government and people of the sister state Sultanate of Oman on the occasion of its 53rd National Day, wishing the Sultanate continued progress, development and prosperity under the wise leadership of Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al-Said.



Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and his Omani counterpart Shehab Al-Said in Muscat.



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and Acting Minister of Public Works Jassem Al-Ostad holds meeting with Ireland's Minister for Business, Employment and Retail, Neale Richmond and his accompanying trade mission.

Irish trade mission visits Kuwait, seeks to boost cooperation

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and Acting Minister of Public Works Jassem Al-Ostad held a meeting with Ireland's Minister for Business, Employment and Retail, Neale Richmond who was accompanied by the Irish Ambassador to UAE, Kuwait and Qatar, Alison Milton during his visit to Kuwait.

Minister Richmond's visit is part of a three-day trade mission to Kuwait, Riyadh and Jeddah. The mission will focus on enhancing the existing trade links with the region and promoting Ireland's services across aviation, digital technology and consumer sectors and finding opportunities for investment and cooperation especially in the field of aviation as Ireland is distinguished by its great experience in aviation and aerospace.

Kuwait and Ireland have great bilateral ties, notably in the field of education where most Kuwaiti students in the field of medicine study in Irish universities.

As a major growth market, Enterprise Ireland has had a presence in the GCC region for over 20 years. In 2022, Enterprise Ireland client exports to the Middle East and North Africa region increased by 8 percent. Irish companies exported €163.5 million in goods and services to Saudi Arabia in 2022, making it Enterprise Ireland's largest trading partner in the MENA region, along with €44.9 million in exports to Kuwait.

"The Gulf region offers huge opportunities for



Jassem Al-Ostad with Neale Richmond (right)

exporting Irish SMEs, with over €200 million in exports to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia combined in 2022," said Minister Neale Richmond. "Ireland's particular strength in the global aviation sector is an impressive success story. "With a large focus on the aviation sector throughout the Trade Mission, I'm looking forward to promoting Ireland's capabilities as a global leader in the sector, with the aim of opening up further opportunities for Irish enterprise."

Tom Kelly, Divisional Manager for Industrial and Life sciences, with Enterprise Ireland said "During this trade mission, Enterprise Ireland, along with our client companies, aims to further showcase the very best of what Irish companies have to offer and to engage with business leaders across this region."

French consultant at ILO visits Kuwait Times, Kuwait News

By Passant Hisham

KUWAIT: French consultant at the International Labor Organization (ILO) Charles Autheman visited Kuwait Times and Kuwait News on Tuesday, where he was taken on a tour of various departments, including the newsroom, printing press, studio and the artistic space of the newspaper.

Deputy Managing Editor Faten Omar, along with reporters Ghadeer Ghloom and Passant Hisham, welcomed Autheman and provided insights into the rich history of Kuwait Times. The newspaper has a legacy of over six decades as the first English-language daily in Kuwait and the Arabian Gulf.

In a meaningful discussion, Autheman highlighted the potential of Kuwait Times in contributing to awareness and training programs for domestic workers. He shared details about a strategic initiative focused on conducting training activities that center around ethics and human rights for journalists and media practitioners. By deepening



Autheman explaining his part of a strategic initiative that focuses on delivering training activities centered on ethics and human rights to journalists and media practitioners.

their understanding of these crucial aspects, the media can play a pivotal role in supporting quality reporting on labor market issues, especially those involving domestic workers.

With a decade of experience organizing and facilitating training workshops in over 20 countries, primarily in the Middle East, Autheman aims to extend his efforts to Kuwait. His focus is on empowering journalists, trade unions and communication professionals to enhance their skills and contribute positively to labor-related reporting.



Autheman, Deputy Managing Editor Faten Omar and reporter Ghadeer Ghloom during their tour of the printing press

Local

Schengen visa exemption for Kuwaitis: EU Commission approval awaited

Kuwait, European Union meeting on Dec 11 in Brussels: Official

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Ambassador Sadiq Marafi disclosed that Kuwait's file to exempt its citizens from the Schengen visa has been ready for a while, awaiting approval from the European Parliament. Speaking on the sidelines of Belgium's King's Day event on Monday, he informed the press that a meeting between Kuwait and the European Union is scheduled for Dec 11 in Brussels, involving the Committee of Senior Officials. The discussions will encompass various areas of cooperation, including the Schengen visa issue.

Marafi lauded the longstanding and positive relations between Kuwait and Belgium, emphasizing their six-decade history of fruitful collaboration in economic, political, developmental and other domains.

Belgian Ambassador to Kuwait Christian Domes highlighted the excellent ties between the two nations since Kuwait's independence, noting Belgium's participation in the international coalition that liberated Kuwait. Domes underscored their joint efforts in the Human Rights Council and the anti-Daesh coalition, expressing optimism about enhanced economic cooperation.

"We are also good trading partners, and our figures lately are in constant progress since COVID struck. I am pretty confident things will improve shortly," Domes said.



Belgian Ambassador Christian Domes speaks at the event.

He mentioned a trade figure of €371 million for 2022, with prospects for improvement. Looking ahead to the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations, Domes anticipated celebrating the milestone and elevating cooperation to new heights.

Expressing concern for the children of Gaza on World Children's Day, the

Belgian ambassador called for respect for the UN Charter and peaceful conflict resolution. "It is in this grim international context that we commemorate World Children's Day today. Belgium is committed to the protection and promotion of children's rights. Our thoughts are with all the children living in difficult

humanitarian situations, particularly the children of Gaza, who suffer the brunt of the war," Domes said.

He commended Kuwait's humanitarian support for the Palestinian people, citing Belgium's commitment to prioritizing the Middle East Peace Process during its EU Council Presidency in the first half

of 2024. Domes revealed Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo, along with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, would engage in bilateral talks with political leaders from the Zionist entity, Palestine, Jordan and Egypt on Nov 23 and 24. The objective is to explore diplomatic solutions to the crisis.



KUWAIT: (Left to right), Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Ambassador Sadiq Marafi and Belgian Ambassador to Kuwait, Christian Domes cutting the cake at the ceremony.



KUWAIT: Ambassador Byung-ha Chung (center) and Dr. Abdulmuhsen Al-Medej (right).

Korean Embassy, KU host event to mark opening of Korean language center

KUWAIT: The Embassy of the Republic of Korea to the State of Kuwait and Kuwait University hosted an opening ceremony of the King Sejong Institute (Korean Language Center) in Kuwait University on Monday, Nov 20, 2023. The Institute is the first of this kind in Kuwait.

The Embassy of the Republic of Korea and Kuwait University signed, early this year, a MoU to establish the King Sejong Institute in Kuwait University amid the framework of mutual education cooperation between the two countries.

The King Sejong Institute is a representative national brand established by Korean government that encourages learning of the Korean language around the world. Until the moment, about 250 institutes have been established in more than 80 countries worldwide. The ceremony consisted of congratulatory remarks by Byung-ha Chung, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, and Dr. Abdulmuhsen Al-Medej, Dean of College of Arts of Kuwait Uni-



KUWAIT: During the ceremony hosted by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea to Kuwait and Kuwait University.

versity, followed by the distribution of certificates to students taking the first Korean language course, attended by esteemed members of Kuwait University officials, former Kuwait Ambassador to Korea and key members of the Korean community in Kuwait.

Byung-ha Chung, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, in his welcoming remarks, highlighted the significance of language as a bridge between

cultures. He also expected the important role the institute will play in enhancing bilateral cultural exchange and expressed his gratitude to Kuwait University for the mutual collaboration. The King Sejong Institute will offer Korean language courses and programs. Furthermore, the institute will also contribute to deepen our mutual understanding, particularly among young people.

Youth Authority holds 46th Kuwait Int'l Book Fair

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Youth announced that it will hold various activities in connection with the 46th Kuwait International Book Fair which commenced on Tuesday at the Mishref fairgrounds. The fair will continue until Dec 2, 2023 during which several cultural, social and scientific activities will be held.



Asrar Al-Ansari

Authority spokeswoman Asrar Al-Ansari said that the activities give an interactive space for the youth, noting that lectures, dialogue sessions and workshops will be held with the participation of a group of distinguished youth.

Al-Ansari stated that the most prominent of these activities include panel discussions on cultural topics such as "comics", "puppet theater", "story telling" and "discover theater for the first time". Several senior writers and novelists will be hosted as part of the fair through panel sessions. Special events for children and Kuwaiti youth interested in culture will also be hosted.

She pointed out that the Authority's participation stems from the fact that the exhibition constitutes an important field for the exchange of ideas and experiences with young people. "It represents an opportunity for them to explore new horizons of thought and creativity and contribute to the development of cultural awareness and encourage reading and continuous learning," she said. She said these efforts are important to support and empower young people.

The initiative also reflects the Authority's keenness to support cultural projects in the country as it currently sponsors the Literature Academy initiative held by the Kuwaiti Writers Association. "It offers a number of courses and workshops in various literary arts with the aim of refining young talents in the field of creative writing," she explained.

Al-Ansari said that the Authority cooperates with various state institutions and civil society organizations to organize unique programs that contribute to providing creative spaces for young people in various fields. She invited people to visit its booth in Hall No 7 and participate in the events. She praised the cooperation of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters in this regard, congratulating the great cultural edifice on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of its establishment, which has a leading role in promoting culture and arts in the country.—KUNA



Burgan Bank sponsors DAI's 8th Fall Festival

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank recently concluded its successful sponsorship of Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah's (DAI) 8th Fall Festival. The one-day event, which took place at the Amricani and Yarmouk Cultural Centers, saw an impressive turnout of visitors, in addition to the participation of local entrepreneurs, artists, and artisans. Burgan's renewed sponsorship and support of the Fall Festival comes under the Bank's all-encompassing social responsibility program and its efforts to preserve and promote Kuwait's rich heritage and cultural identity.

Commenting on the event's success, Hessa Hussain Al-Najadah, Senior Manager – Corporate and CSR Communica-

tions at Burgan Bank, said: "We are delighted to be part of such a culturally rich event. As part of our mission to contribute to the growth of our community, we continue to search for and collaborate with impactful entities such as Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah, who spare no effort in showcasing and celebrating the Kuwaiti culture and its unique heritage. Events such as this Fall Festival are essential for the preservation of our Kuwaiti culture and its evolution into new forms that resonate with the younger generations."

Similar to the previous editions of the event, Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah's 8th Fall Festival marked a great opportunity for artisans and



small-business owners as well as the mass public. Throughout the event, local artists and entrepreneurs had the opportunity to exhibit their unique, high-quality products to a wide audience. Meanwhile, the event offered

families as well as arts and culture enthusiasts an opportunity to enjoy a diverse range of performances – from live music to theater, storytelling, and more – as well as engaging workshops for children and adults alike.

Al-Nouri Charity inks agreement with UNICEF

KUWAIT: The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) signed an agreement on Monday with the Kuwait-based Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nouri Charity to help fund education in Yemen at a value of \$422,000. The agreement that was signed at the UN House in Kuwait in Mishref, aiming to secure education for all the children affected by the conflict in Yemen by renovating a number of schools and honing the skills of their staff members as well providing student necessities.

UN representative to the Gulf States, Al-Tayeb Adam, gave a statement to KUNA, expressing gratitude for the efforts of Al-Nouri charity saying "their great role in serving needy and stricken communities" is very hopeful. He assured that the UNICEF is keen on continuing these types of collaborative projects with Al-Nouri charity considering them one of the prominent humanitarian institutions in the GCC and Middle East. — KUNA

Kuwait Times
Established 1961THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYANEditor-in-Chief
ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYANEDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24833199 Extn. 301
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 220
ACCOUNTS : 24833199 Extn. 125
P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com
Website: www.kuwaittimes.com

Al-Shuhada joins network of WHO's global healthy cities

12 regions in Kuwait now in healthy city network: Hawally governor



KUWAIT: Hawally Governor and the Acting Governor of the Capital Ali Al-Asfar with other officials pose for a group photo as Shuhada region joined WHO's Regional Healthy City Network. — KUNA photos

Awqaf: Aqsa Mosque has special place in hearts of believers

KUWAIT: Assistant Undersecretary for Media and External Relations and Acting Assistant Undersecretary for the Holy Quran and Islamic Studies Affairs at the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Muhammad Al-Mutairi emphasized the special significance of Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa Mosque in the hearts of believers, having a revered location with a high status in the eyes of Allah Almighty.

He underscored its importance as the initial qibla and the starting point of the Prophet's (PBUH) ascendance to the heavens, emphasizing that the "We are all yours, Al-Aqsa" forum signifies a triumph for the Palestinian cause. He said the cause is not only for Palestinians but concerns all Muslims, calling for prayers, devotion to Allah Almighty, and reliance on Him alone.

These remarks were made during the inauguration of the forum organized by the Department of Islamic Studies and Quranic Sciences for the Capital and Hawally governorates at the department's theater in Shuhada.

Mutairi noted that the forum saw participation from various governmental and private entities involved in charitable and humanitarian work, along with Holy Quran centers and select schools under the ministry of education. The primary aim is to acquaint new generations with the Palestinian cause and educate them about its significance.

In conclusion, Mutairi expressed gratitude to all those who contributed, organized and participated in the forum, giving special thanks to the Department of Islamic Studies and Quranic Sciences of the governorates of Capital and Hawally.

KUWAIT: Hawally Governor and the Acting Governor of the Capital Ali Al-Asfar announced that Al-Shuhada area has joined the regional network of healthy cities affiliated with the World Health Organization initiative. The achievement will have its positive impact for the residents of the region, he said. Al-Asfar said in a press statement on Tuesday after signing the registration form, that with the addition of the Al-Shuhada region, the number of Kuwaiti healthy cities registered in the Hawally and Capital Governorates will rise to 12 regions.

He expressed his thanks for the efforts made by the members of the Healthy Cities Committee and their remarkable role, which had an impact. The positive thing is that Al-Shuhada area has joined the health cities and the improvement of health services provided. For her part, the head of the Health Cities Office at the Ministry of Health, Dr Amal Al-Yahya, told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the registration of Al-Shuhada area reflects special importance as it is the second area in Hawally Governorate and the 18th in Kuwait and comes after registering Hawally Governorate as a healthy governorate.

Al-Yahya added that there are five areas, including Al-Shuhada in Hawally Governorate, that were chosen as implementation sites for the Hawally Governorate project, noting that cooperation will be established with all other Kuwaiti health cities. She stressed the excellence of the work in Hawally

Kuwait's 25th Gaza aid plane heads to Egypt

KUWAIT: The 25th relief aid plane for the Gaza Strip departed Kuwait to Al-Arish city, Egypt, carrying 40 tons of medical aid and supplies. In remarks to KUNA, the Director General of Al-Salam Charitable Society, Dhari Al-Baijan, said that the association has mobilized its energies and efforts to help



KUWAIT: Hawally Governor and the Acting Governor of the Capital Ali Al-Asfar chairs a meeting.

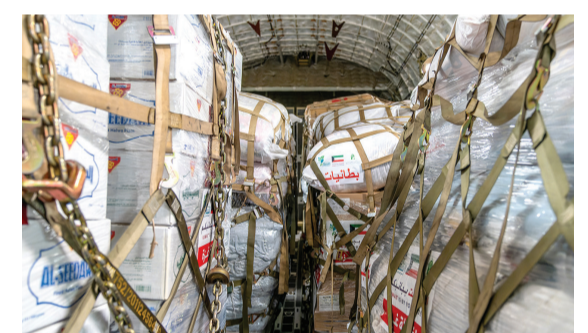
Governorate thanks to the cooperation between the various sectors in cities, in addition to containing the application of special concepts for health places, including the health university, the health mall, and health-promoting schools.

She pointed out the ministry of health's plan to expand the application to include all regions of Kuwait, as well as the directives of the minister of health regarding developing a plan that includes all primary

health care centers so that they are all affiliated with and implementing the initiative. Healthy cities, especially with regard to standards for health development, include 26 of the 80 standards for healthy cities. With regard to the project at the level of the ministry of health, she stressed the need for all primary healthcare centers to implement the healthy city standards for health development during the five-year plan. — KUNA

the brothers in Palestine and it seeks to provide all necessary humanitarian supplies, especially in light of the current circumstances that the people in the Gaza Strip are experiencing.

He also noted that the amount of the association's "We are all Gaza" campaign launched last Friday exceeded KD 850,000 and that the association's stores contained more than 300 tons of various aid. In turn, Deputy Director General of the International Islamic Charitable Organization for Institutional Communication, Ibrahim Al-Bader, said that the authority's participation within the Kuwaiti air bridge amounted to 18 relief aircraft in cooperation with the Al-Salam Charitable and Kuwait charity organizations. — KUNA



The 25th relief aid plane from Kuwait is ready to take off.

NBK organizes training program for MoI officials

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) organized a training program for officers responsible for overseeing the Anti-Fraud and Money Crimes Unit in the Ministry of Interior. This initiative demonstrates NBK's dedication to enhancing collaborative endeavors in the fight against electronic and financial fraud, in line with the "Let's Be Aware" campaign.

The launch ceremony was attended by Mohammad Al-Kharafi, Chief Operating Officer - Head of Group Operations & Information Technology, and Emad Al-Ablani, GM - head of Group Human Resources, Khalid Al-Matrouk, Chief Security Officer and Head of Anti-Financial Crime-Kuwait at National Bank of Kuwait.

The training program covered essential topics such as the creation and maintenance of various types of accounts, the issuance and usage procedures for different types of payment cards, card withdrawals and their methods of utilization, and transfers and the procedures for their establishment. Furthermore, the course extensively covered recent trends in fraudulent practices.

The program also placed significant emphasis on the latest fraudulent methods that leverage digital scanning, including the duplication of files on the payment page of a retailer's website or application. Moreover, additional fraudulent strategies, including contacting consumers via phone or social media while impersonating bank employees were also covered. The course also covered various deception techniques, including phishing attacks through the development of fraudulent websites with the intention of baiting victims. Furthermore, the training course delved into methods for hacking into accounts by acquiring usernames and passwords from bank applications, en-

abling unauthorized transfers of funds either abroad or to different accounts.

In addition to how fraudsters also encrypt bank card details on their mobile phones, utilizing the device as a payment method either in stores or through online platforms. NBK Operations Group explained the most recent fraud schemes that had proliferated recently. One method involves an intermediary account: the fraudster purchases an account from an individual who has departed the country. Upon acquiring funds, the fraudster channels this money into the purchased account, subsequently redirecting it to other accounts. Another method includes encrypting stolen cards, where the fraudster encrypts bank card details onto their mobile phone and employs the device as a payment service, either in physical stores or on online platforms.

On this occasion, Khalid Al-Matrouk, Chief Security Officer and Head of Anti-Financial Crime-Kuwait at National Bank of Kuwait said, "The training course stems from NBK's social responsibility and its commitment to raising awareness on combating cybercrime. It aims to guide society and customers in harnessing the technological revolution for secure and effortless banking transactions." Al-Matrouk stated, "We are committed to fostering financial literacy and promoting a financial culture within society. Our ongoing collaboration with the Ministry of Interior reflects our dedication to combating fraudulent activities that pose a threat to customers' personal data and bank accounts."

NBK plays a pivotal role as a significant advocate and collaborator in initiatives striving to elevate financial literacy and promote banking understanding across diverse segments of society. As a leading financial institution in Kuwait and across the region, NBK frequently organizes various activities that contribute to raising awareness about all topics related to the banking sector. It also organizes various activities and training courses on combating fraud and financial crimes. Additionally, it actively employs its electronic channels and social media platforms to raise awareness about the dangers of cybercrime and fraudulent activities.



Scan & Subscribe KD 20 a year

For Individuals Only



Scan Now

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



Tel: 24833199 Ext: 220



Biden turns 81 as voters show concern about age

Germany vows \$1.4bn for Ukraine's army

Sanitation in Gaza 'perfect storm for tragedy': UNICEF

Hospitals in northern Gaza out of service as Zionist attack on health facilities continues

GENEVA: Fuel shortages and worsening sanitation in the Gaza Strip are shaping up to be the perfect storm for tragedy through the spread of disease, the United Nations warned on Tuesday. UNICEF, the UN children's agency, said there was a serious threat of a mass disease outbreak in the besieged Palestinian territory. "Without enough fuel, we will see the collapse of sanitation services. So we have then, on top of the mortars and the bombs, a perfect storm for the spread of disease. It's a perfect storm for tragedy," UNICEF spokesman James Elder told a press briefing in Geneva.

"We have a desperate lack of water, fecal matter strewn across densely populated settlements, an unacceptable lack of latrines, and severe, severe restraints on hand-washing, personal hygiene and cleaning." Speaking via video-link from Cairo, Elder said the potential for wider loss of life in Gaza was being significantly exacerbated because an estimated 800,000 children in the enclave are displaced from their homes.

"If children's access to water and sanitation in Gaza continues to be restricted and insufficient, we will see a tragic yet entirely avoidable surge in the number of children dying," said Elder. "It's also important to note it's starting to rain in Gaza. Now combined, children face a serious threat of mass disease outbreak. This, of course, would be lethal."

The World Health Organization (WHO) has recorded more than 44,000 cases of diarrhea and 70,000 acute respiratory infections, but real numbers may be significantly higher.

"We are hearing about several hundred people per toilet at the UNRWA centers and those have been overflowing, so people are doing open defecation," Richard Brennan, regional emergency director for the Eastern Mediterranean region at WHO, told Al Jazeera in an interview. "They have to find a place to go to the bathroom in the grounds

where they are staying. That's a huge public health risk and also very humiliating."

UNICEF is particularly concerned about the risk of a cholera outbreak in the Gaza Strip, fearing an exponential rise in child deaths if an outbreak was to strike. Cholera, which has not so far been detected in Gaza, is contracted from a bacterium that is generally transmitted through contaminated food or water. It causes diarrhea and vomiting and can be especially dangerous for young children.

Stretched beyond capacity

Gaza's health ministry said Tuesday that hospitals in northern Gaza are now completely out of service. Ashraf al-Qudra, Gaza's health ministry spokesperson, said in an interview with Al Jazeera that the occupancy rate in hospitals in Gaza's north has reached 190 percent.

The Zionist entity has bombed and destroyed parts of Al-Shifa Hospital, the largest in Gaza, where more than 700 people are still held captive under a siege by the Zionist army, according to Qudra. Zionist forces had seized the hospital last week to search for what they said was a Hamas tunnel network and command center built underneath the complex. Hamas has denied the allegations.

Qudra also said that about 120 people were evacuated from northern Gaza's Indonesian Hospital to Nasser Medical Complex in the south of the Strip. There are still more than 400 injured people inside the Indonesian Hospital, in addition to about 200 medical staff and more than 2,000 others taking refuge, he added. The Zionist army has put those inside the hospital in a "circle of death", targeting anybody who moves around the hospital or inside it, Qudra said. Gaza's health ministry had said on Monday that at least 12 Palestinians were killed and dozens wounded by attacks on the hospital funded by Jakarta, which is currently surrounded by Zionist tanks.



KHAN YUNIS: Injured Palestinians evacuated from the Indonesian hospital receive care at Nasser hospital in the Palestinian territory's south on Nov 20, 2023. — AFP

The WHO says it has recorded 335 attacks on health complexes in the occupied Palestinian territory since Oct 7, the beginning of the Gaza war, including 164 attacks in the Gaza Strip and 171 attacks in the West Bank. These attacks have resulted in forced mass evacuations from hospitals, and multiple fatalities and casualties among patients, their companions, and displaced people taking refuge there, according to the WHO.

At least 13,000 Palestinians — about 5,600 of them children and 3,500 women — have been killed in Gaza since the Zionist entity launched its air and ground assault on Gaza after the Oct 7 attacks by Hamas targeting the Zionist entity, according to the enclave's health ministry. Hamas and allied groups took about 240 captives during their incursion into the southern parts of the Zionist entity that killed around 1,200 people, according to Zionist authorities. — Agencies

EU clears continued development aid to Palestinians

STRASBOURG: The EU on Tuesday gave the green light to continuing development aid to Palestinians after a review found no funds had gone to Hamas but said tighter controls could be imposed going forward. Brussels launched the assessment of its assistance following the Oct 7 Hamas attack, which targeted the Zionist entity and left 1,200 people, mostly civilians, dead and 240 held captive.

The 27-nation bloc is the biggest international aid provider supporting Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, with nearly 1.2 billion euros (\$1.3 billion) earmarked for assistance from 2021 to 2024. "The review found no indications of EU money having directly or indirectly benefited the terrorist organization Hamas," European Commission vice president

Valdis Dombrovskis said. "The review found that the control system in place has worked, and as a result payment to Palestinian beneficiaries and UNRWA (United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees) will continue without payment delays."

The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, said it had cleared contracts worth a total of 216 million euros (\$236 million) that include financial support for the Palestinian Authority and paying salaries of public servants. But Brussels announced it now may apply tougher safeguards on its projects, including increased screening for any possible anti-Semitism.

"The commission has identified some additional measures, such as the inclusion of relevant anti-incitement contractual clauses in all new contracts and ensure the monitoring of their strict application at all times," a statement said.

A senior EU official said Brussels was probing allegations of possible incitement to hatred and glorification of terrorism in the case of two of its 119 aid contracts, worth some 8 million euros. Further projects worth 75 million euros — mainly to do with building infrastructure to supply drinking water to Gaza — were now not possible due to the Zionist war on Gaza, the official said.

The issue of aid to the Palestinians had highlighted deep divisions in Brussels over the approach to the conflict in the Middle East. EU neighborhood commissioner Oliver Varhelyi, who comes from staunch Zionist supporter Hungary, said after the Hamas attack that the bloc was suspending all its development aid. Officials quickly rolled back that announcement insisting that no payments were frozen pending the review of the funds. The EU review did not concern the bloc's humanitarian support for emergency aid such as food and medical supplies for Gaza. Brussels has quadrupled its humanitarian assistance for the Palestinians to 100 million euros in recent weeks. — AFP



RAFAH: A Palestinian woman reacts as people inspect the damage following Zionist strikes on the southern Gaza Strip, on Nov 20, 2023. — AFP

Berlin calls on Muslim Germans to condemn Hamas

BERLIN: Germany's interior minister on Tuesday urged Muslim groups in the country to explicitly condemn the deadly Oct 7 attacks by Hamas and to voice solidarity with the Zionist entity. The nation is home to about 5.5 million Muslims, making up the second biggest religious group.

"I expect the Muslim organizations to clearly position themselves and uphold their responsibilities in society," interior minister Nancy Faeser said in an interview with German broadcaster ARD. The groups need to "clearly condemn" the attack by Hamas and not just with a "yes, but", she said. "It must be very clear. We stand by (the Zionist entity's) side," added Faeser. Some Muslim groups have indeed "lived up to their responsibilities", she said. "Some have not." The voices "defending our values" must get louder, said the minister. There has not yet been a public reaction from Muslim groups.

At the same time, Faeser said at a conference of German politicians, Muslim groups and representatives of the Christian and Jewish communities that

anti-Semitism allegations must not be instrumentalized for anti-Muslim sentiment. "We must not offer any space to those who declare Muslims to be the cause of all evils. Those who are now creating a mood against Muslims under the pretext of fighting anti-Semitism want to divide and not unite us."

Battling anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim racism are the main themes of the two-day meeting, which is held against the backdrop of tensions over the Zionist-Palestinian war. Large pro-Palestinian marches have been held in major cities across Germany in recent weeks, with some leading to dozens of arrests over anti-Semitic acts.

German investigators on Tuesday raided several properties in the southern state of Bavaria, where 17 people aged 18 to 62 are suspected of spreading anti-Semitic messages, mainly via the Internet and social media. Several objects were seized during the raids, including laptops and telephones.

A sharp jump in the number of anti-Semitic cases has been recorded across Germany since Oct 7. On the anniversary of the Nazi Kristallnacht pogrom that began the Holocaust, Chancellor Olaf Scholz pledged to protect Germany's Jews against a "shameful" upsurge in anti-Semitism in the wake of the Zionist war on Gaza. Germany is home to some 45 million Christians — including Protestants and Catholics, while around 200,000 Jews live in the country. — AFP

Lulu SUPER FRIDAY

UP TO 50% OFF

22 NOVEMBER - 28 NOVEMBER 2023

Indus Valley Indian Basmati Rice XL 5kg	From 22 to 25.11.2023	SAVE 45%	From 22 to 25.11.2023
Indus Valley Indian Basmati Rice XL 5kg	€3.590	€1.990	
Nutella Chocolate Spread 500g	From 22 to 25.11.2023	SAVE 30%	From 22 to 25.11.2023
Nutella Chocolate Spread 500g	€2.595	€1.995	
Ferrero Rocher T-24 300gm	From 22 to 25.11.2023	SAVE 30%	From 22 to 25.11.2023
Ferrero Rocher T-24 300gm	€2.845	€1.995	
McCain Thin Cut Fries 2.5kg	From 22 to 25.11.2023	ONE DAY WONDERS	From 22 to 25.11.2023
McCain Thin Cut Potato Fries 2.5kg	€1.995	€1.290	
Australian Chilled Local Lamb /kg	From 22 to 24.11.2023	SAVE 35%	From 22 to 24.11.2023
Australian Chilled Local Lamb /kg	€3.390	€3.390	
Indian Chilled Whole Mutton/kg	From 22 to 25.11.2023	SAVE 35%	From 22 to 25.11.2023
Indian Chilled Whole Mutton/kg	€3.190	€3.190	
Prawns (Kuwait) /kg	Only on 23 & 24.11.2023	SAVE 35%	Only on 23 & 24.11.2023
Prawns (Kuwait) /kg	€3.790	€3.790	
Norwegian Whole Salmon/kg	From 23 to 25.11.2023	SAVE 35%	From 23 to 25.11.2023
Norwegian Whole Salmon/kg	€4.390	€4.390	
Avocado (Mexico) per kg	From 22 to 25.11.2023	SAVE 35%	From 22 to 25.11.2023
Avocado (Mexico) per kg	€2.395	€1.795	
Blueberry (South Africa) 125gm	From 22 to 25.11.2023	SAVE 35%	From 22 to 25.11.2023
Blueberry (South Africa) 125gm	€0.895	€0.695	
Tomato (Kuwait) Box	From 22 to 25.11.2023	SAVE 35%	From 22 to 25.11.2023
Tomato (Kuwait) Box	€1.250	€0.795	
Ariel Washing Powder 2.5kg 2's Liquid 1 LTR	From 23 to 25.11.2023	SAVE 35%	From 23 to 25.11.2023
Ariel Washing Powder 2.5kg 2's Liquid 1 LTR	€6.685	€3.690	
Maple Leaf Blanket Embossed 160x220cm 1.6kg	From 23 to 25.11.2023	SAVE 35%	From 23 to 25.11.2023
Maple Leaf Blanket Embossed 160x220cm 1.6kg	€6.900	€2.950	
American Tourister Model Colorado	Model Colorado	55cm	Model Colorado
American Tourister Model Colorado	€19.900	€9.900	
Moulinex Meat Mincer ME6828 2000W	From 22 to 25.11.2023	SAVE 35%	From 22 to 25.11.2023
Moulinex Meat Mincer ME6828 2000W	€45.000	€27.900	
Samsung Galaxy S23 Ultra	From 22 to 25.11.2023	SAVE 80KD	From 22 to 25.11.2023
Samsung Galaxy S23 Ultra	€219.900	€139.900	
Samsung 58" 4K UHD TV UA58CU7000UXZN	From 22 to 25.11.2023	SAVE 80KD	From 22 to 25.11.2023
Samsung 58" 4K UHD TV UA58CU7000UXZN	€219.900	€139.900	
Apple iPad	From 22 to 25.11.2023	SAVE 35%	From 22 to 25.11.2023
Apple iPad	€124.900	€79.990	
Apple iPhone 15 Pro Max 256GB	From 22 to 25.11.2023	SAVE 35%	From 22 to 25.11.2023
Apple iPhone 15 Pro Max 256GB	€442.900	€393.900	
Apple iPhone 13 128GB	From 22 to 25.11.2023	SAVE 35%	From 22 to 25.11.2023
Apple iPhone 13 128GB	€290.900	€175.900	
Samsung Galaxy S23 Ultra 512GB 5G	From 22 to 25.11.2023	SAVE 35%	From 22 to 25.11.2023
Samsung Galaxy S23 Ultra 512GB 5G	€409.900	€249.900	

GET OUR WEEKLY OFFERS ON YOUR MOBILE

LuluHypermarketKW | luluperkw | luluhyperkw | lulupermarket.com

International

Germany vows \$1.4bn for Ukraine army as defence minister visits

EU officials voice support as Ukraine celebrates 10th anniversary of its 'Revolution of Dignity'

KYIV: Germany on Tuesday unveiled another large military aid package for Ukraine during an unannounced visit to Kyiv by the defense minister that coincided with the 10th anniversary of the historic Maidan protests. European Union leader Charles Michel and Moldovan leader Maia Sandu were also in the capital, Kyiv, becoming the latest officials to throw their political clout behind Ukraine during surprise trips.

A flurry of visits from senior Western officials have sought to reassure Kyiv of more military support, as the world's attention shifts to the Middle East and questions emerge over US funding for Ukraine. The German package — worth 1.3 billion euros (\$1.4 billion) and including four further IRIS T-SLM air defense systems as well as artillery ammunition — was unveiled by Defense Minister Boris Pistorius after talks with his Ukrainian counterpart, Rustem Umerov, in Kyiv.

"I am here again, firstly to pledge further support but also to express our solidarity and deep bond and also our admiration for the courageous, brave and costly fight that is being waged here," Pistorius said earlier when he laid flowers at Maidan square in central Kyiv. Michel, the president of the European Council, announced his arrival in Kyiv by posting on social media a picture of himself getting off a train. "Good to be back in Kyiv among friends," he wrote ahead of expected meetings, including with President Volodymyr Zelensky.

Zelensky earlier this week met the head of the Pentagon, who announced another \$100 in US military aid, and last week hosted UK Foreign Secretary

David Cameron, who promised continued British backing. The visits come in the wake of a disappointing Ukrainian counteroffensive in the south and east of the country that Kyiv launched this summer after building up stockpiles of Western weapons.

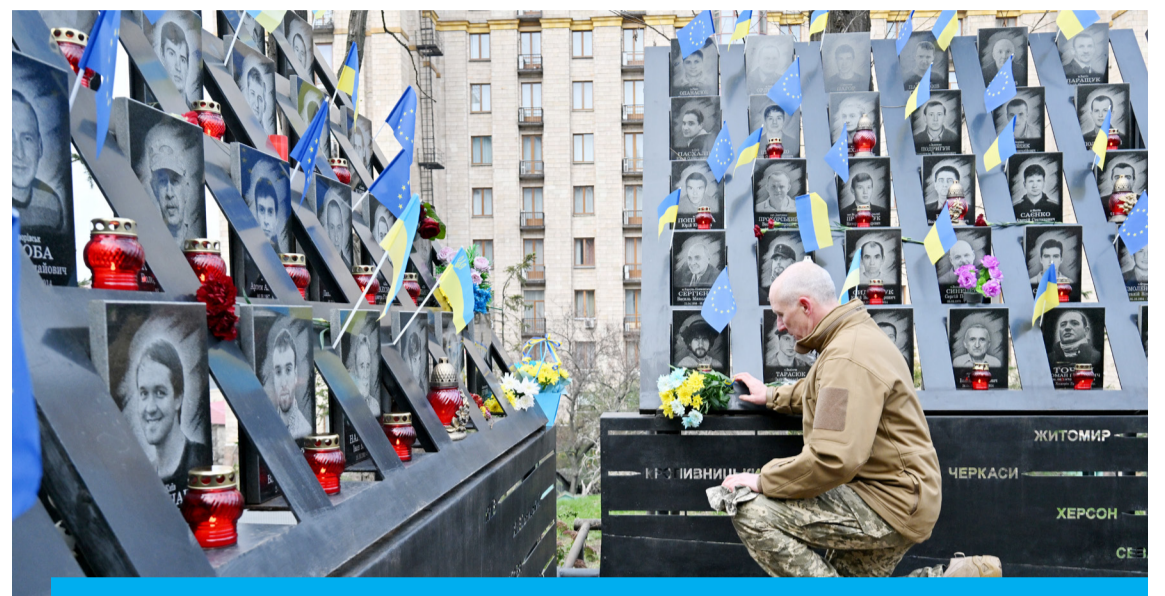
'A victory of courage'

Ukraine has nonetheless claimed recently to have recaptured several kilometers (miles) of land on the east bank of the Dnipro river, which is the de facto front line in the south of the country. Russia's defense minister dismissed those claims on Tuesday saying his troops had thwarted Ukrainian attempts to land on the occupied bank in the Kherson region and claiming Kyiv's army had suffered "colossal losses".

The Tuesday visits, which also included an announced trip by Moldovan leader Sandu, fell on the 10th anniversary of massive pro-democracy demonstrations in Kyiv that Zelensky linked to Russia's invasion. The protest movement — in which around 100 civilians died in violent clashes with security forces in the capital — ultimately led to the ouster of Kremlin-backed president Viktor Yanukovich.

"The first victory in today's war took place. A victory against indifference. A victory of courage. The victory of the Revolution of Dignity," Zelensky said in a statement marking the anniversary of the months-long protest movement. The Maidan protests erupted in late 2013 when Yanukovich ditched an association agreement trade deal with the EU.

The protests precipitated separatist fighting in the east of the country. Zelensky praised his country's progress towards gaining EU membership since



KYIV: A man lays flowers as he pays tribute at the memorial of Maidan activists, also known as "Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred", referring to the people killed in the anti-government demonstrations of 2013-2014 on Nov 21, 2023. — AFP

Russian forces launched a fully-fledged invasion in February 2022. "Year after year, step by step, we do our best to ensure that our star shines in the circle of stars on the EU flag, which symbolizes the unity of the peoples of Europe. The star of Ukraine," he said.

The EU's executive commission recommended earlier this month opening formal membership talks with Ukraine and Moldova and suggested that the

bloc's 27 member states should grant Georgia candidate status. The Kremlin however described the Maidan protests as an attempt to topple the government with the backing of foreign powers. "It was a coup. It was an overthrow of the authorities that was sponsored from abroad. Things need to be called by their names," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Tuesday. — AFP

UK rolls out red carpet for South Korea's Yoon

LONDON: South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and First Lady Kim Keon Hee began a three-day state visit to the UK on Tuesday, with a pomp-filled ceremonial welcome from King Charles III and Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. Yoon and his wife, who landed in Britain on Monday, will receive the full red-carpet treatment during the event-packed tour — the first state visit by a South Korean leader in a decade and the first to be hosted by Charles since his coronation in May.

It began with a ceremonial welcome on Tuesday morning from Queen Camilla and Charles, his son and heir Prince William and wife Catherine, as well as Sunak and Foreign Secretary David Cameron. The visiting couple moved on

to a private lunch at Buckingham Palace, before a visit to Westminster Abbey — where Charles was crowned six months ago — and parliament. They were then to attend a grand evening state banquet back at the palace.

The trip is also about business. Yoon and Sunak were set to agree on deepening cooperation and their ministers to launch negotiations on an upgraded free trade deal. "Trade and investment is expected to be a key focus of the visit," Downing Street said in advance. It added that the two countries would launch talks for "an upgraded modern, world-leading Free Trade Agreement (FTA)" on the second day. The UK government is keen to strike new deals with countries around the world following its departure from the European Union, particularly with fast-growing economies in the Indo-Pacific region.

President Yoon was to address lawmakers in parliament during his stop there. He will deliver the speech, expected to be in English, on bilateral ties between the two countries and how to boost the relationship in future, according to South Korean media. His office has said the

visit represents a "sign that London considers Seoul a key partner in global cooperation and the Indo-Pacific region". Yoon told his cabinet last week: "The upcoming visit will serve as a springboard for further deepening economic cooperation between the two countries," according to local media.

That cooperation will center on science and technology, with South Korea aiming to expand business opportunities and high-tech industry supply chains, he added. Major business figures, including Samsung Electronics Chairman Lee Jae-yong and Hyundai Motor boss Chung Eui-sun, will join Yoon on the visit. "As two nations focused on innovation, harnessing new technologies and defending the international rules-based order, the UK and Republic of Korea are natural partners," Sunak said. The UK last year launched a consultation on an enhanced free trade agreement to upgrade the existing accord, which replicates the European Union's agreement with South Korea. UK ministers are eyeing an expansion of exports in digital, business and financial services. — AFP



LONDON: (From left) South Korea's President Yoon Suk Yeol and his wife Kim Keon Hee, accompanied by Britain's Queen Camilla and Britain's King Charles III view a special exhibition of items from the Royal Collection relating to South Korea, in the Picture Gallery at Buckingham Palace. — AFP

Crown Prince hails Asiad medalists...

Continued from Page 1

congratulations for what our athletes have achieved at the 19th Asian Games held in China, achieving accomplishments and winning medals," HH the Crown Prince said in a speech.

"We have affirmed that the true wealth of the nation lies in its sons and daughters, the youth, who are the bright minds, the strong hands, and the strong pillars that our beloved country rises with, achieving more aspirations and goals. Today, we celebrate this constellation of our athletes who raised the flag of Kuwait high in this international sports event and adorned their necks with the highest medals to achieve advanced positions in this championship," he said.

"We were thrilled by your outstanding performance during your fruitful participation in the 19th Asian Games, which reflected the civilized image of Kuwaiti sports and your determination, perseverance, sportsmanship and high skills. We are proud of the athlete Faisal Al-Rajhi and what he demonstrated in terms of challenge and determination... Our mes-

sage to you is to exert more efforts and not to stop at a certain point in achieving goals and accomplishments," HH Sheikh Mishal said.

"Our sincere thanks and great appreciation to everyone who supported and assisted our athletes, creating the conditions and suitable atmosphere that had a significant impact on their success in achieving advanced positions. We thank some private sector entities that supported these athletes and honored them, appreciating this kind gesture and looking forward to everyone following suit, reinforcing the private sector's role in supporting distinguished Kuwaiti athletes. Our message to those involved in sports in our beloved country is to continue performing your duties with sincerity, good planning, and follow-up to uplift Kuwaiti sports in all its fields," he added.

"We invoke Almighty Allah to perpetuate the brilliance and excellence of our beloved Kuwait's sons and daughters and to elevate them to higher ranks, so that our flag remains fluttering in all regional and international arenas, under the wise leadership and enlightened vision of our leader and father, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, may Allah protect him and extend his life and care," HH the Crown Prince concluded. Senior officials from the Amiri Diwan and the Crown Prince's Diwan attended the meeting. — KUNA

food, water and fuel allowed to enter. According to the Hamas and Islamic Jihad sources, the proposed deal would also allow for up to 300 trucks of food and medical aid to enter Gaza. The Zionist military meanwhile said air strikes had hit "around 250" Hamas targets in the past day, destroying three underground shafts in the Jabalia area, which it said it had fully surrounded. Two Zionist soldiers were killed "in operational activity" in northern Gaza, it added.

In Lebanon, official media said two journalists from Al-Mayadeen television and two other civilians were killed in cross-border shelling in the south. The Committee to Protect Journalists said 53 journalists and media workers have now been killed since the Zionist entity declared war on Hamas. Meanwhile, the health ministry in the occupied West Bank said the Zionist army killed one Palestinian in Nabulus.

Medics and patients have been increasingly caught up in the fighting, as the Zionist entity expanded its operation across northern Gaza. The Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza said the Zionist entity had laid siege to and hit the Indonesian Hospital in Jabalia on Monday, killing dozens. Twenty-eight premature babies from Gaza's largest hospital, Al-Shifa, were taken to Egypt for treatment on Monday. Three others evacuated from Al-Shifa remain in southern Gaza, the World Health Organization said on Tuesday. Two babies died before the evacuation, the UN agency said.

The Indonesian Hospital lies near Gaza's largest refugee camp Jabalia, which has been the scene of intense Zionist bombing in recent days. The health ministry official said there were still about 400 patients inside the hospital, as well as 2,000 people seeking shelter. Around 200 people were evacuated from the hospital on Monday and bussed to the relative safety of a hospital in Khan Yunis in southern Gaza. At the packed Al-Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis, an AFP reporter saw bloodied children being carried in and lying dazed on gurneys. — AFP

BRICS urges immediate...

Continued from Page 1

urged all nations on Tuesday to cease weapon exports to the Zionist entity. Saudi Arabia demands the start of a serious and comprehensive peace process to establish a Palestinian state along the borders of 1967, the Prince Mohammed said. "The kingdom's position is constant and firm: there is no way to achieve security and stability in Palestine except through the implementation of international decisions related to the two-state solution," MBS said.

MBS reiterated the kingdom's rejection of the Zionist entity's military operations in the Gaza Strip and demanded an immediate halt to them. He said that the "brutal crimes" unfolding in Gaza demand a collective effort to bring them to an end. MBS restated Saudi Arabia's rejection of the forced displacement of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip and called for collective efforts to stop the deterioration of the humanitarian conditions in the enclave. Saudi Arabia made tireless efforts since the beginning of the war on Oct 7 to protect civilians in the Gaza Strip, he added.

BRICS, an acronym for its member countries, sees itself as a counterweight to the US and Western-led

global order. Describing Hamas' attacks and captive taking as "barbaric acts" Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said they did "not justify the use of indiscriminate and disproportionate force against civilians". Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has accused the West of stoking tensions in the Middle East and criticized the Zionist entity for its conduct in the conflict, said a "long-term and sustainable ceasefire" was key to "prevent other states from being drawn into the war".

"The concerns of the Palestinian people must be addressed in a serious and sustainable manner, this can only happen with the two-state solution that is based on peaceful coexistence," said India's foreign minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar. Representatives from Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates — countries that are all due to join BRICS in January 2024 — were also invited to the talks.

South Africa has long been a vocal supporter of the Palestinian cause, with the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party often linking it to its own struggle against apartheid. Earlier this month, it recalled all its diplomats from the Zionist entity and last week it joined four other nations in calling for an International Criminal Court investigation into the conflict. On Monday, the Zionist entity's foreign ministry said it had also recalled its ambassador to Pretoria for consultations. — AFP

Hopes mount for Gaza truce...

Continued from Page 1

when the International Committee of the Red Cross, which is often involved in prisoner exchanges and hostage releases, said on Monday its president had met Haniyeh in Qatar. Despite talk of a temporary truce, fighting raged on in Gaza's bloodiest ever war. According to the Gaza government, the war has killed more than 14,100 people, including nearly 6,000 children and close to 4,000 women. Sources from Hamas and Islamic Jihad told AFP on condition of anonymity that their groups had agreed to the terms of a truce deal.

The tentative agreement would include a five-day truce, comprised of a complete ceasefire on the ground and an end to Zionist air operations over Gaza, except in the north, where they would only halt for six hours daily. Under the deal, which the sources said could yet change, between 50 and 100 Zionist civilian and foreign captives would be released, but no military personnel. In exchange, some 300 Palestinians would be freed from Zionist jails, among them women and minors.

Rafah resident Hamza Abdel Razeq said a ceasefire would bring some respite for Gazans who have endured the Zionist entity's bombing and expanding ground offensive. "The people are really suffering," he told AFP. "If they reach a five-day truce deal now, I believe it will pave the way for longer truces or even a total ceasefire." Another resident, Mahmud Abu Najm, added: "We... pray to God for its success because the people are enduring an unbearable situation."

Large parts of Gaza have been flattened by thousands of air strikes, and the territory is under siege, with minimal

the width of a man into the entrance of the tunnel, and flashes of light as they were welded together as part of efforts to create a safe exit route.

Before the camera was introduced, rescuers had been communicating with the men inside the tunnel using radios. "All the workers are completely safe," Uttarakhand chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said in a statement. "We are trying with all our might to get them out safely soon." Dhami said he had spoken to Prime Minister Narendra Modi about the situation, adding that Modi told him it was a "top priority" to rescue the workers.

Engineers had been trying to horizontally drive a steel pipe, just wide enough to fit the increasingly desperate men, through at least 57 m of earth and rock. But the giant earth-boring machine they were using ran into boulders, and drilling on that route was paused on Friday after a cracking sound created a "panic situation", officials said. It resumed on Tuesday, the Uttarakhand state's Emergency Operation Centre said.

Rescue teams are also preparing two new approaches to reach the men. One involves drilling a vertical shaft down from the forested hill above, forcing rescuers to cut an entirely new track to the hilltop for the heavy equipment needed. Officials estimated the proposed vertical shaft would need to be 89 m deep, a potentially complex dig above the men in an area that has already suffered a collapse.

The other is to approach from the far side of the road tunnel, a much longer route estimated to be around 480 m, officials said. The tube used to deliver supplies to the men was successfully widened on Monday with the installation of a 15-cm pipe, through which the camera was sent down. It is hoped that a drone can also be sent down to assess the stability of the area where the men are trapped. — AFP

Indian workers trapped in tunnel...

Continued from Page 1

But rescue efforts have been slow, complicated by falling debris as well as repeated breakdowns of crucial heavy-drilling machines, with the air force having to twice airlift in new kit. An AFP journalist at the site on Tuesday saw trucks bringing in sections of metal tubes

Assembly panel holds meeting on...

Continued from Page 1

election system backed by a large number of reformist MPs and supported by the people.

Speaker Saadoun said the amendment should not be delayed, adding that he submitted a draft law for introducing the party-like system. The draft law proposes to divide Kuwait into five electoral districts. Registering for running in elections must be done through lists, with each list consisting of between one and 10 candidates. Each list will be designated a number by the election commission. Voters can vote for any list, whether contesting in the same constituency or in other constituencies. The voter will have only one vote.

International

Biden turns 81 as voters show concern about age

Longevity researcher says Biden's age unfairly 'weaponized' in US politics

WASHINGTON: Joe Biden joked about his age as he turned 81 on Monday, but the issue is no laughing matter for many voters who are worried he is too old for reelection next year. "By the way it's my birthday today ... It's difficult turning 60," the president said with a chuckle at the annual Thanksgiving turkey pardoning ceremony at the White House.



WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden pardons the national Thanksgiving turkey, Liberty, during a pardoning ceremony at the White House on Nov 20, 2023. - AFP

In front of an audience including schoolchildren, he then quipped: "This is the 76th anniversary of this event — and I want you to know I wasn't there for the first one." But a moment in which he mixed up US singers Taylor Swift and Britney Spears soon baffled his guests — and renewed focus on his age.

The Democrat is the oldest president in American history, and if he wins a second term next year he will be 86 by the time he leaves. Poll after poll shows that a majority of voters think he is too old to be commander-in-chief. Incidents in which he has tripped, including on the stairs of Air Force

One, repeatedly go viral. Voters don't so far have the same concerns about his likely election rival Donald Trump, despite the fact that the Republican is 77 and has been known to make similar slip-ups. Trump warned in a speech in September, for example, that the United States was on the verge of "World War II," and recently said Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban was the leader of Turkey.

'Wisdom'

"It's not about age. It's about the president's experience," White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Monday. She also hailed Biden's "wisdom" and "stamina," reminding reporters of his grueling, secret trip to war-torn Kyiv earlier this year. Biden will celebrate his birthday as he normally does with his family during their annual visit to the island of Nantucket this week — "with a coconut cake, which is something that they traditionally do," Jean-Pierre added. The White House has been dismissive of opinion polls, with Democrats notching up a series of recent electoral successes.

Yet the numbers make grim reading for the party. Seventy-four percent of people said Biden would be too old to serve a second term, compared to 50 percent for Trump, a recent ABC/Washington Post poll showed. Biden is "not doing a lot wrong" but is struggling to change perceptions on his age — as well as other issues like the economy — said David Karol, who teaches government and politics at the University of Maryland.

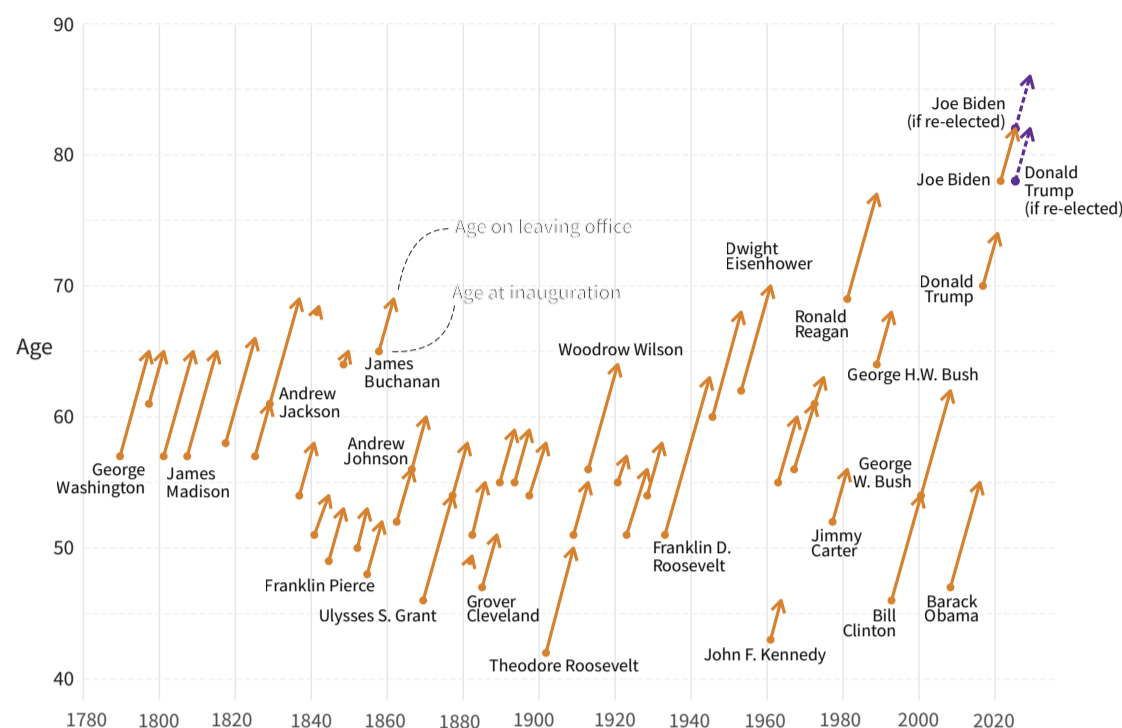
"He is lucid, but people just have this perception," Karol told AFP. The issue in general has been unfairly "weaponized" in US politics, added S. Jay Olshansky, a longevity researcher at the University of Illinois at Chicago. "Aging is not what it used to be," Olshansky told AFP.

'Super-Agers'

Biden and Trump are both likely to be "Super-Agers," a term coined by researchers to describe a small group of people who keep their full faculties until late in life, said Olshansky. His research has also found that for US presidents, "biological time seems to tick at a slower pace" than for other people, as they apparently thrive

Age of US presidents while in office

Joe Biden is already the oldest president in US history. If Donald Trump were to win the 2024 election, he would be the second oldest.



Source: US House of Representatives Archives, US Embassy in Britain

AFP

on the stress of the job.

That said, Biden's campaign has taken to highlighting Trump's own slipups ahead of a possible 2024 rematch. Eager to hit back, Trump released a doctor's letter on Monday referencing an examination two months ago in which tests showed his "cognitive exams were exceptional." Biden's age is bound to come under even deeper scrutiny during a grueling election campaign. Republicans have trained their fire on the person who is just a heartbeat

away from the presidency, should the worst happen: Vice President Kamala Harris.

Harris blazed a trail as the first woman, Black person and person of South Asian descent to hold the vice president's office, but her approval ratings are as bad as her boss's, at under 40 percent. The vice president was one of the first to offer her best wishes to Biden on his birthday on social media, saying she was "proud to be in the fight alongside you." First Lady Jill Biden followed with a simple message, adorned with a hearts emoji: "Happy Birthday, Joe! I love you." - AFP

In Iran, Zionist war on Gaza overshadows 2024 legislative vote

TEHRAN: As the Zionist assault on Palestine continues to hold public attention, Iran is gearing up for parliamentary elections next year where many conservatives are determined to tighten their grip on power. The Islamic republic has since August opened registration for candidacy in the upcoming parliamentary elections slated for March 1, 2024. Last week, officials announced that out of the 24,982 applicants, around 28 percent have been disqualified in an initial screening phase. The decision can be appealed and a final list of candidates competing for the 290-seat parliament will be announced one month ahead of the March vote.

With the preparations underway, many in Iran are preoccupied with mounting economic difficulties and the aftershocks of last year's mass protests triggered by the death of Mahsa Amini. Political scientist Ahmad Zeidabadi says he expects voters to refrain from taking to the polls "if the system cannot offer them reasons for hope and change." Another growing concern among Iranians is how the Zionist attack on Gaza could affect the election. Zeidabadi says the repercussions of the Zionist war on the besieged Gaza strip could also impact the election results especially if Hamas, which Iran supports, was defeated. It "would weaken the position of the government's supporters," he said.

'Fervent' elections

Next year's elections will be the first since nationwide protests rocked Iran following Amini's death in Sept 2022. Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian Kurd, died in police custody following her arrest over an alleged breach of the Islamic republic's strict dress code for women. Iran's current parliament, which was formed in 2020, has been dominated by conservatives after many reformists and moderates were disqualified. The country at the time saw a voter turnout of 42.57 percent — the lowest since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

On Thursday, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called for "fervent" elections. Ultra-conservative President Ebrahim Raisi, who took office in August 2021, said his government has "no candidate" in the upcoming legislative elections. "We are only looking to create the ground for wider and higher participation of all people and groups in the elections," he said. Supporters of reformist candidates fear another 2020 scenario after multiple candidates were disqualified in the initial screening. Reformist daily Ham Mihan said last month that there was a common view that "even if the known and famous reformists register as candidates, it is unlikely that they will be approved." - AFP



TEHRAN: A woman takes part in an installation featuring mock shrouded bodies of children in Palestine square in Iran's capital Tehran. - AFP



EDINBURG: Donald Trump serves meals to Texas Department of Public Safety troopers on Nov 19, 2023 in Edinburg, Texas. - AFP

Not just Biden; Trump also under age scrutiny

WASHINGTON: If either Joe Biden or Donald Trump prevails in the November 2024 US elections, the next president will be the oldest in history to take the oath of office. But while Biden's age and public slips and stumbles have been more widely scrutinized and examined, his blustery Republican rival's missteps are coming under sharper focus too.

In recent weeks, Trump has confused the Hungarian leader for the Turkish one, claimed that he defeated Barack Obama — and not Hillary Clinton, his actual rival — in the 2016 election, and warned that the world might be headed for a second, rather than a third, world war.

Rivals of the former president have been having a field day with such bloopers, quick to remind voters that Trump, the overwhelming favorite in Republican primary polls, is not so young himself. Videos of the 77-year-old real estate tycoon stammering, verbally stumbling, or looking frail and sweaty have been gleefully posted on social media by the campaign team of Ron DeSantis. The Florida governor, a youthful 45, is currently leading Trump's Republican rivals in opinion polls in most states.

'Weak and frail'

Biden's team, meantime, is not unhappy at being able, for once, to turn the spotlight on another aging candidate — especially as the current president is turning 81 on Monday. But the Trump camp has not taken such slights lightly. "The Biden campaign must be confused like their own candidate because Biden is in a constant state of confusion," Trump spokesman Steven Cheung told AFP.

In an unusually blunt and biting statement, Cheung went on to mock Biden as "weak and frail," prone to fall and even "just plain stupid." Trump, during his campaign rallies, generally appears vigorous, interacting sometimes for hours with a sea of supporters.

But critics ask whether his repeated gaffes and the videos of him gripping a railing on a ramp to keep from falling, or trembling as he holds a glass of

water, are reflections simply of fatigue — or signs of physical or mental decline.

From the outside, it is impossible to say. While the two men are not far apart in age, Biden likely comes across as older, said political scientist Kyle Kondik. The polls tend to agree: Two-thirds of Americans believe the current president is too old to serve a second term, while only half of those surveyed say the same about the slightly younger Trump.

It remains to be seen how the two will hold up once the campaign is fully under way, said Kondik. Rightly or wrongly, he added, Trump's verbal slips seem to be judged more leniently than Biden's, simply because Trump has made so many of them.

Fast food

The Republican also does not face the same scrutiny over his physical condition as does his Democratic rival. As US president, Biden — who is frequently seen biking with his Secret Service detail — faces an extensive series of annual medical tests, the results of which are reported in detail to the press.

While Biden's latest health summary described him as "healthy (and) vigorous," it also mentioned that a small lesion had been removed from his skin and that he had undergone a colonoscopy in 2021. But since Trump left office three years ago, almost no details have been provided about the health of the former president, a known lover of fast food who appears to get little exercise except on the golf course.

The age of presidents was a matter of lively debate during the second term of Ronald Reagan, in the 1980s, when some observers speculated that he seemed to be showing signs of mental decline. Years after he left office at age 77, it was announced that Reagan was suffering from Alzheimer's disease.

In 1994, former president Jimmy Carter himself sounded an alarm in an article in the Journal of the American Medical Association, warning of the "danger" to the United States if a president suffered a "neurological disease" that reduced his capacity for leadership. The DeSantis campaign has increasingly been highlighting Trump's age and slip-ups. "The president is not a job for an 80-year-old," DeSantis said Sunday on CNN. Nikki Haley, a 51-year-old currently seeking the Republican presidential nomination, has repeatedly called for mandatory mental competency tests for politicians over 75. But nothing of the kind appears likely anytime soon. - AFP

Far-right cries 'anti-white racism' after teen killed

LYON: The killing of a teenager by unknown attackers during a village dance party has sparked shock and political controversy in France, with the far-right on Tuesday claiming the assault was anti-white racism. The 16-year-old high school student, identified only as Thomas, was stabbed at the weekend when a group of outsiders descended on a festive crowd of around 400 people gathered in Crepol, in the southwestern Drome region, for a dance party in the village hall. He died on his way to hospital. Eight others were injured, two of them seriously. Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin told parliament that seven people had been arrested and investigators would now ascertain if they were behind "this odious crime". Even before the arrests, far-right politicians had been quick to seize on the issue.

Far-right activists pointed the finger at what some called "thugs from the estates", a thinly veiled reference to young people from immigrant backgrounds, even though police have not yet provided any information as to the identity of the attackers. "Now anti-white racism is hitting our countryside," Marion Marechal, the leading candidate for the far-right Reconquer! party of ex-presidential hopeful Eric Zemmour in next year's European elections, claimed on X, formerly Twitter. Marine Le Pen, the figurehead of the far-right National Rally (RN) party and a former presidential candidate, alleged in an interview with the weekly Valeurs Actuelles that "armed militia" were organizing "raids". Zemmour, also on X, claimed: "Our martyrs are innocent victims of the war of civilizations." Police have not given any information as to the possible identity of the attackers. —

Somalia flood toll climbs to 50: Disaster agency

MOGADISHU: Flash flooding in Somalia has killed 50 people and driven nearly 700,000 from their homes, a government official said, with heavy rains starting Tuesday expected to worsen the country's plight. The Horn of Africa region is experiencing torrential rainfall and floods linked to the El Nino weather phenomenon, claiming dozens of lives and causing large-scale displacement, including in Somalia, where the downpours have destroyed bridges and inundated residential areas.

"Fifty people died in the disaster ... while 687,235 people were forced to flee their homes," Somali Disaster Management Agency director Mohamad Moalim Abdullahi said at a press briefing on Monday. "The expected rains between 21st and 24th of November ... may cause more flooding which could cause death and destruction," he added. On Saturday, the UN humanitarian agency OCHA said the number of people displaced by heavy rains and floods in Somalia "has nearly doubled in one week", while 1.7 million people overall have been affected by the disaster. "In addition, roads, bridges and airstrips have been damaged in several areas, affecting the movement of people and supplies and leading to increased prices of basic commodities," OCHA said. — AFP

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2023

Antarctic ozone hole getting deeper in mid-spring: Research

'The past few years have been quite unusual'

PARIS: The hole in the Antarctic ozone layer has been getting deeper in mid-spring over the last two decades, despite a global ban on chemicals that deplete Earth's shield from deadly solar radiation, new research suggested on Tuesday. The ozone layer 11 to 40 kilometers (seven to 25 miles) above Earth's surface filters out most of the Sun's ultraviolet radiation, which can cause skin cancer and cataracts.

From the mid-1970s, chemicals called chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) -- once widely used in aerosols and refrigerators—were found to be reducing ozone levels, creating annual holes largely over the Antarctica region. The 1987 Montreal Protocol, which banned CFCs in a bid to close the hole, is considered a success story for international environmental cooperation. In January, a major UN-backed assessment found that the agreement was working. It projected the ozone layer should be restored to 1980 levels over the Antarctic by around 2066.

Smaller holes over the Arctic were projected to recover by 2045, and for the rest of the world in around two decades. But despite the decline in CFCs, there has

not yet been a significant reduction in the area covered by the Antarctic ozone hole, according to New Zealand researchers behind a new study in the journal *Nature Communications*.

And there has been less ozone at the centre of the hole over time, they added. "Six of the last nine years have had really low ozone amounts and extremely large ozone holes," study co-author Annika Seppala of New Zealand's Otago University told AFP. "What might be happening is something else is going on in the atmosphere now—possibly because of climate change—and that's masking some of the recovery," she said.

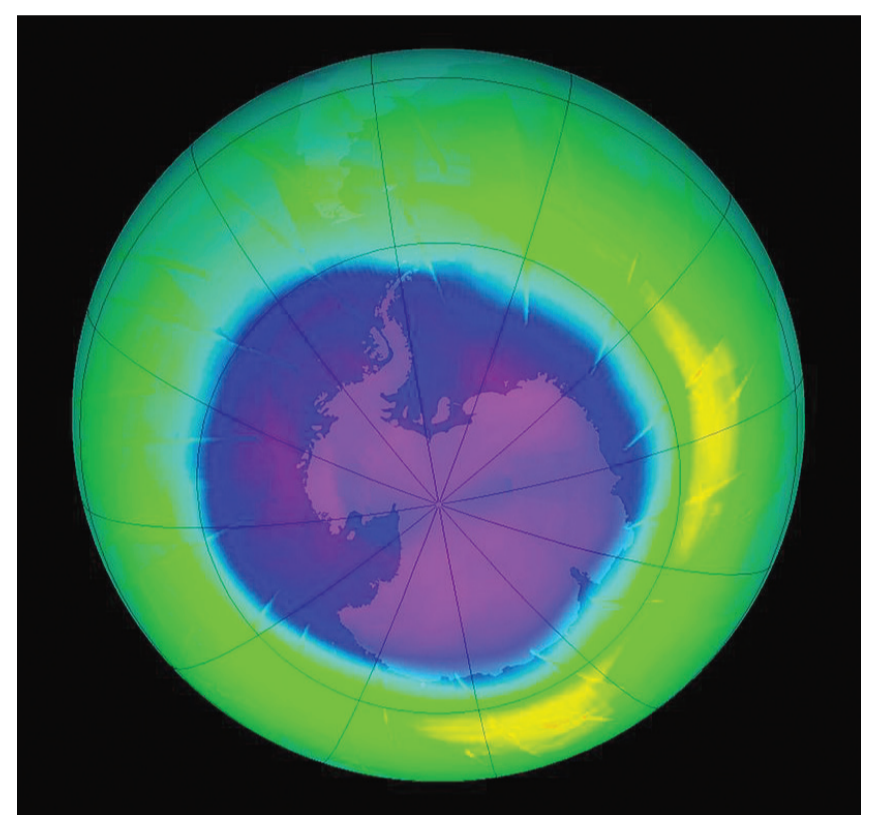
The ozone hole over Antarctica usually opens in September and lasts until November, taking in the Southern Hemisphere's spring. The researchers said the hole has been opening later in September, indicating a recovery possibly due to CFC reductions. But in October, when the hole is often largest, the ozone level in the middle stratospheric layer shrunk by 26 percent from 2004 to 2022, said the study, citing satellite data. The study's lead author Hannah Kessenich emphasized that the Montreal Protocol and CFC

reductions were still "on track". But "altogether, our findings reveal the recent, large ozone holes may not be caused just by CFCs," she added.

The analysis excluded data from the years 2002 and 2019, when "sudden break-ups of the polar vortex" led to significantly smaller ozone holes, Kessenich added. Leading ozone scientist Susan Solomon, who was not involved in the research, told AFP that the study should be viewed through the lens that "the past few years have been quite unusual".

Solomon led previous research showing that 2020's ozone hole was made 10 percent wider by the massive "Black Saturday" wildfires in Australia. The gigantic eruption of the Hunga-Tonga-Hunga-Ha'apai volcano off Tonga in 2022 is also believed to have affected recent ozone levels.

Martin Jucker, an expert at Australia's University of New South Wales, was not convinced by the study's results. "It is questionable how the authors can remove 2002 and 2019 from the record but not 2020-22, given that all of these years have been shown to be dominated by very special and rare events," he said. —AFP



AI doomsayers blamed in OpenAI's undoing

SAN FRANCISCO: OpenAI has gone from ruling the world of artificial intelligence with ChatGPT to chaos, its chief executive ousted seemingly for advancing too fast and too far with the risky technology. The exit of Sam Altman set in motion a series of events that saw the upstart company's biggest investor, Microsoft, swoop in to hire the toppled CEO and begin a process of building an OpenAI clone in the Redmond, Washington-based tech giant. In some ways the looming result to the weekend saga is hardly a surprise, with many wondering how the board members could be naive enough to think they could outmaneuver Altman.

Silicon Valley was left aghast by Altman's firing, with the investor community and OpenAI's own staff furious that the four-person board got in the way of going faster into the AI age.

"We are not happy about it. We want stability here," said Ryan Steelberg, CEO of Veritone, a company that helps firms develop artificial intelligence. Instead of OpenAI becoming the new Apple or Google, the harsh critics see a deeply troubled startup that fell victim to the pearl-clutching of an incompetent board.

"We reached this point because minuscule risks have been hysterically amplified by the exotic thinking of sci-fi mindsets, and clickbait journalism



PARIS: This combination of file pictures show Sam Altman (right) and Emmett Shear. —AFP

from the press," veteran venture capitalist Vinod Khosla, an early investor in OpenAI, wrote in *The Information*. Other observers warned that the drama in San Francisco proved that AI was too vital to be left in the hands of its creators. "This is an important reminder that as brilliant as the designers of tech like AI—scientists or engineers—are, they are still just fallible people," said Paul Barrett, deputy director of the NYU Stern Center for Business and Human Rights.

"That is why it is important not to just defer to them on a technology that everyone agrees has significant risks even as it promises tremendous benefits," he added.

Gary Marcus, a respected AI expert, said OpenAI's civil war "highlights the fact that we can't really trust the companies to self-regulate AI where

even their own internal governance can be deeply conflicted." Government regulation, notably by the tougher-minded European Union, was needed more than ever, he added. OpenAI was actually created in 2015 with the goal of being a counterweight to Google, which was by far the leader in developing AI technologies that mimic the operations of the human brain. Though nothing is known for sure, assumptions are rife that Altman's increased efforts to monetize the company's leading GPT-4 model, all while keeping its inner functioning a secret, was becoming too problematic for the company's board.

Already, several senior staff at OpenAI deserted the enterprise in 2021 to build rival Anthropic over concerns that Altman was moving ahead too recklessly. Many are shocked that the board had the power it did, or were naive enough to think they could actually use it. Three of those board members are thought to have connections to the effective altruism movement, which frets over the risks of AI, but that critics say is cut off from reality.

Whatever their beliefs, by Monday the board were overseeing a company in name only, with virtually the whole staff committed to a pledge of quitting the firm for Altman's project at Microsoft if the board refused to go. "Unless OpenAI can block those departures, OpenAI is pretty much done at this point," analyst Rob Enderle told AFP.

This could mean a history-making victory for Microsoft, which has already seen its share price reach record levels over its ties to OpenAI. "This is like the best possible scenario for them, and the OpenAI board I am sure is kicking itself. They were clearly detached from reality," said Carolina Milanesi, analyst at Creative Strategies. —AFP

Global markets stumble as traders await Fed minutes

LONDON: Global stock markets mostly fell Tuesday as investors awaited minutes from the US Federal Reserve's most recent meeting for a steer on interest rates in the world's biggest economy. The Fed will later publish minutes from its November gathering, when policymakers held rates, and investors will analyze comments from officials. Investors are becoming increasingly optimistic that the US central bank is finished hiking rates, with expectations growing that financial conditions will become easier in the new year as inflation comes down.

That has fanned a rush back into risk assets in recent weeks and also pushed the dollar down against its peers. "Traders will scrutinize the minutes closely, hoping to find clues for the timing of the next Fed move, which is now widely assumed to be a cut," said ActivTrades senior analyst Ricardo Evangelista.

"Against this background, dovish minutes could bring forward the market's expectations for when the Fed will begin cutting rates and trigger further dollar weakness." A drop in yields on US government bonds is a clear indication that the markets believe the Fed is done with rate hikes despite public comments by policymakers that work remains to be done to reduce inflation, said market analyst Patrick O'Hare at Briefing.com. "It is unmistakable that the Fed funds futures market has its mind made up, no matter what anyone says, that the Fed is done raising rates," he said.

Weak results from US retailers Best Buy and Lowe's ahead of the peak-demand Christmas shopping season were an indication that the Fed's efforts to slow the economy and inflation were working.

New York's three main indices opened lower a day after the Nasdaq hitting a 22-month high thanks to an advance in tech giants including Amazon, Microsoft and Nvidia. Shares in Nvidia, which reports earnings after the market closes, dipped at the start of trading.

Monday's rally was boosted by the successful sale of 20-year US Treasuries that sent yields on other notes lower. Talk is now growing that the Fed could cut borrowing costs as early as March, much earlier than previous bets on the second half of 2024. In Europe, London and Paris both retreated somewhat while Frankfurt edged upwards. Asian markets started Tuesday on the front foot but ran out of gas as the day progressed.

Hong Kong dipped even after market heavyweight Alibaba jumped more than two percent to extend its rebound after diving 10 percent Friday on news it had cancelled the spinoff of its cloud computing arm.

World oil prices slid as traders awaited this Sunday's upcoming output meeting of OPEC+ crude-producing nations. "The main question the market is asking is whether OPEC will cut production further in response to softening oil prices," noted Economist Intelligence Unit analyst Matt Sherwood. "These have returned to the levels they were at before the Israel-Hamas war broke out in early October." —AFP

COP28 turns attention to potent methane emissions

DUBAI: Climate talks often revolve around reducing the most dangerous greenhouse gas CO2. But other powerful heat-trapping emissions—of methane—are also likely to be in the crosshairs of negotiators at the crucial COP28 meeting in Dubai next week.

Methane—which is potent but relatively short-lived—is a key target for countries wanting to slash emissions quickly and slow climate change. That is particularly because large amounts of methane are simply leaking into the atmosphere from fossil fuel infrastructure.

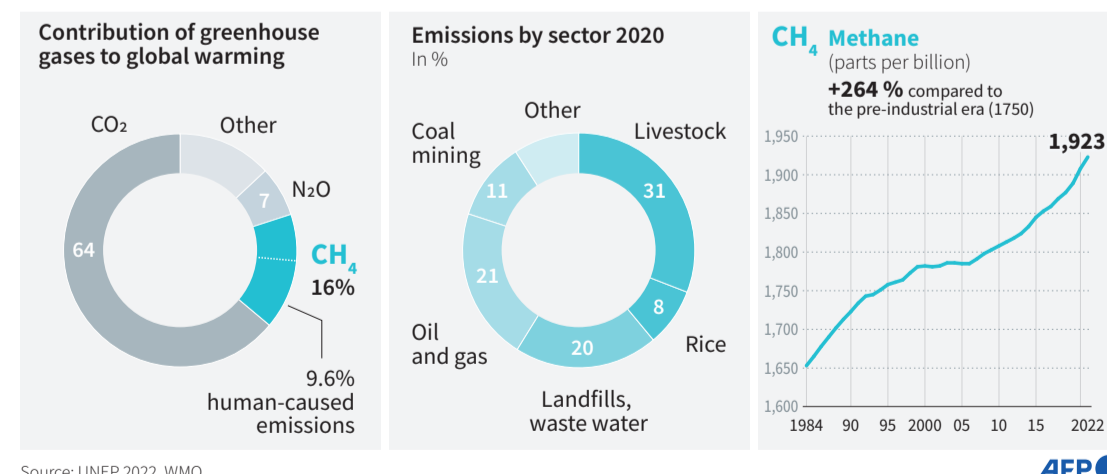
Atmospheric methane (CH4) occurs abundantly in nature as the primary component of natural gas. It is the second largest contributor to climate change, accounting for around 16 percent of the warming effect. Methane remains in the atmosphere for only about 10 years, but has a much more powerful warming impact than CO2. Its warming effect is 28 times greater than CO2 over a 100-year timescale (and 80 times over 20 years).

Exactly how much methane is released in the atmosphere remains subject to "significant uncertainty", according to the International Energy Agency (IEA), despite progress in the monitoring of emissions through the use of satellites. And scientists are puzzling over a steady increase of methane in the atmosphere, with concentrations currently over two-and-a-half times greater than pre-industrial levels.

The majority of methane emissions—around 60 percent—are linked to human activity, the IEA says, while some 40 percent is from natural sources, mainly wetlands. Agriculture is the biggest culprit,

Methane: a potent greenhouse gas

CH4 has 80 times the warming power of CO2 over a 20-year time scale



Source: UNEP 2022, WMO

responsible for roughly a quarter of emissions. Most of that is from livestock—cows and sheep release methane during digestion and in their manure—and rice cultivation, where flooded fields create ideal conditions for methane-emitting bacteria. The energy sector—coal, oil and gas—is the second largest source of human caused methane emissions.

Methane leaks from energy infrastructure—such as gas pipelines—and from deliberate releases during maintenance. Discarded household waste also releases large quantities of methane when it decomposes, if left to rot in landfills.

A recent IEA report estimates that rapid cuts in methane emissions linked to the fossil fuel sector could prevent up to 0.1 degrees Celsius of warming by mid-century. That might sound like a modest reduction, but such a reduction would have an impact greater than "immediately taking all cars and trucks

in the world off the road", said the report authors.

IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol called it "one of the best and most affordable" options for reducing global warming. It could be achieved by repairing leaky infrastructure and eliminating routine flaring and venting during pipeline maintenance.

"Leakage is far too high in many areas where natural gas is extracted but some countries, notably Norway, have shown that it is possible to extract and supply natural gas with minimal levels of leakage," Energy Programme Director William Gillett at the European Academies Science Advisory Council (EASAC) told AFP. In the case of agriculture, it is possible to modify animal diets by, for example, adding a compound to improve their health and that of the planet. For rice fields, changes to water management are the "most promising" way to reduce emissions, according to a FAO report. —AFP

Business

AU urges 'positive competition' from Europe on investment

Germany commits \$4.37bn for green energy in African projects

BERLIN: The African Union defended past investments from China that have drawn criticism for saddling poor countries with huge debts while calling for "positive competition" from Europe. AU chairman Azali Assoumani was addressing a meeting in Berlin of a G20 initiative aimed at mobilizing more private, sustainable investments in African countries. China has been pouring huge investments into the continent in recent years, helping fund projects from railways to ports.

Assoumani said there was "a high demand in African states", and "sometimes we take on debt in less than ideal conditions". However he continued: "I can assure you that everything is changing... we are trying to correct mistakes".

There was a need for "positive competition. There is no monopoly anywhere... Everyone has a place," he said at the "Compact for Africa" initiative, launched in 2017 when Germany held the G20 presidency. "The problem we sometimes have in Africa is that we are unable to invest because we are paying debts". Beijing has been accused of using its creditor status for gaining diplomatic or trade concessions in its relations with African countries.

But China, the world's number two economy, rejects practicing "debt-trap diplomacy" as an unfair criticism from Western rivals who have themselves burdened nations with huge debts.

The "Compact for Africa" brings together the G20 and 13 African countries, with support from organizations including the World Bank and International Monetary fund. The G20 itself comprises 19 of the world's largest economies plus the European Union and the AU. The German government pledged Monday to invest 4 billion euros (\$4.37 billion) in African green energy projects until 2030, with Chancellor Olaf Scholz saying that countries in Africa should benefit more from their wealth of raw materials. Scholz discussed the pledge at a news conference on the G20 Compact with Africa summit taking place in Berlin. He did not mention any specific projects



BERLIN: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz (back center) chairs a session of the Conference on the G20 Compact with Africa, at the Chancellery in Berlin on November 20, 2023. — AFP

but said the materials used in green energy should be processed in the African nations they come from.

"This creates jobs and prosperity in these countries," Scholz said. "And the German industry gets reliable suppliers." Compact with Africa is based on an initiative launched by Germany during its chairmanship of the Group of 20 leading rich and developing nations. It aims to improve the economic conditions in the participating countries in order to make them more attractive for foreign private investment. Scholz said Germany should become a long-term and reliable partner to countries in Africa.

able partner to countries in Africa.

"Africa is our partner of choice when it comes to intensifying our economic relations and moving toward a climate-neutral future together," he said. The Compact with Africa countries include Egypt, Ethiopia, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Guinea, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo and Tunisia, according to German news agency DPA. Asked about China's strong presence in Africa, several African leaders said the continent was open to other partnerships.

"Perhaps China was more audacious, perhaps they have more vision and perhaps they trusted the potential in Africa," Moussa Faki, the chairperson of the African Union Commission, said. "The African continent is open to different partnerships," he added. "Our wish is for you to place your trust in us, to impose less conditions and to create the conditions together." "Improving governance, that's our responsibility, and therefore this shared vision could allow, I'm certain of it, for a large capital that could be invested in the continent," Faki said. — Agencies

Indonesia unveils \$20bn plan for energy transition pact

JAKARTA: Indonesia on Tuesday launched an investment plan to attract \$20 billion pledged by Western nations in a renewable energy transition pact agreed last year for the archipelago to slash emissions and wean itself off coal.

The roadmap, which comes less than two weeks before the COP28 summit in Dubai, outlines Jakarta's vision to reach net-zero power sector emissions by 2050 using cash from the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP). Under the Comprehensive Investment and Policy Plan (CIPP), the Southeast Asian nation will seek to slash its carbon dioxide emissions to 250 million metric tons for its on-grid power sector by 2030. That is down from a previous cap of 290 million.

"The CIPP provides a strategic roadmap for the ambitious energy transition in Indonesia by considering challenges including technical, financial, and social justice," acting minister of maritime and investments, Erick Thohir said during the launch in Jakarta. "We need to move quickly because 2030 is less than seven years away," he said. Indonesia also plans to boost its renewable energy generation share to 44 percent by 2030, up from an initial target of 34 percent. Jakarta has said it would need at least \$97.3 billion worth of investments, nearly five times more than the funding promised by the JETP investors, to achieve its target.

The public and private financing for the JETP, released last year, follows a model first trialed in South Africa and then announced for Vietnam and Senegal, with rich countries pledging funds for the developing world's energy transition. But Jakarta is reportedly unhappy about the deal's proposed mix of financing, worried it will be offered mostly market-rate loans that saddle it with heavy debt.

The United States, Japan, Canada, and six European nations signed the deal with Indonesia — one of the world's top coal exporters and coal power generators — to shift it away from its coal reliance.

Indonesia has pledged to stop building new coal-fired power plants but, despite an outcry from activists, it is continuing to build those that were already planned. It is also trying to position itself as a key player in the electric vehicle market as the world's largest nickel producer, but some industrial parks that host energy-guzzling nickel smelters are powered by coal. Nickel is a crucial component in batteries used for EVs. The JETP deal has failed to include the captive coal power stations in its calculations, prompting concerns from experts and environmentalists. — AFP



HASAKEH, Syria: Syrian farmer Mohamed Ali Al-Hussein, 22, waters a watermelon patch with a hose near solar panels used to power field irrigation at a farm on the outskirts of Syria's northeastern city of Hasakeh, on September 24, 2023. — AFP

Thousands of fossil fuel lobbyists attend COP meetings: NGOs

PARIS: Delegates openly affiliated with oil, gas and coal firms have attended the UN climate talks to address the escalating global impacts of human-induced climate change at least 7,200 times over the last 20 years, a coalition of NGOs said Tuesday.

The Kick Big Polluters Out coalition analyzed the official lists of COP participants going back to 2003 and found that out of the thousands of accreditations affiliated with fossil fuel industries, 945 were directly linked to employees of oil and gas companies. Major oil giants, including ExxonMobil, Chevron and Shell were granted "a minimum of 267 accreditations," according to a statement by the coalition.

The analysis comes just days ahead of COP28, hosted in Dubai and spearheaded by Sultan Al-Jaber, also head of the United Arab Emirates' national oil company. Sultan Al-Jaber's designation for the COP presidency has been controversial, with proponents defending fossil fuel producers' right to participate in discussions aimed at reducing their use, and critics denouncing the active lobbying of oil and gas companies to water down negotiations.

on rising benefit and interest payments. That was the second-highest October borrowing since monthly records began in 1993 and overshot the OBR forecast of £13.7 billion.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Hunt's budget update, or Autumn Statement, is due on Wednesday and could determine his Conservative government's chances of re-election — or the size of its defeat.

The party is lagging badly in the polls before a general election expected next year. "October's public finances figures won't deter the chancellor from embarking on a pre-election fiscal giveaway," said Capital Economics analyst Ruth Gregory.

"Cumulative borrowing in the first seven months of the fiscal year is still £16.9 billion lower than the OBR expected at this stage." The ONS added on Tuesday that public sector net debt totalled £2.64 trillion at the end of October, or about 97.8 percent of Britain's annual gross domestic product.

That was 2.3 percentage points higher than a year earlier and remains at levels last seen in the early 1960s. "October's figures provide a timely

reminder that the task of restoring the public finances to a sustainable footing is far from complete," cautioned Pantheon Macroeconomics analyst Samuel Tombs. Britain's Conservative government, headed by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, hopes that Wednesday's fiscal plans will narrow the gap with the main opposition Labour party, which is led by Keir Starmer.

Sunak was buoyed last week by news that UK inflation slowed sharply to 4.6 percent in October, down from 10.1 percent in January. Yet the rate remains the highest of the G7 world's richest nations, with Britain blighted by a cost-of-living crisis.

"We met our pledge to halve inflation but we must keep on supporting the Bank of England to drive inflation down to 2.0 percent," Hunt said in response to Tuesday's data.

"That means being responsible with the nation's finances. "At my Autumn Statement tomorrow, I will focus on how we boost business investment and get people back into work to deliver the growth our country needs." — AFP

Germany freezes parts of budget after court blow

FRANKFURT: The German government has frozen future spending pledges across almost its whole budget for the rest of 2023, a finance ministry source said Tuesday, after a court ruling blew a massive hole in its finances.

The Constitutional Court decided last week Chancellor Olaf Scholz's coalition had broken debt rules when it transferred 60 billion euros (\$65 billion) in loan authorizations earmarked for pandemic support to a climate fund. The move upended the government's spending plans, and the finance ministry of Europe's biggest economy immediately suspended most projects under the fund from 2024. But now, so-called "commitment authorizations" for 2023 were also being suspended, a finance ministry source said. These are commitments in the current budget that result in expenditure in later financial years. "Existing liabilities will continue to be honored, but no new ones may be incurred," the source said.

Authorizations could still be allowed in "exceptional cases", it added. Der Spiegel quoted a letter from a senior official sent to all ministries and the chancellery, saying the freeze applied "with immediate effect" and impacted the budgets of all ministries.



BERLIN: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz chairs a session of the Conference on the G20 Compact with Africa, at the Chancellery in Berlin on November 20, 2023. — AFP

Government spokesman Steffen Hebestreit told a regular press briefing in Berlin on Monday that the coalition was examining the consequences of the ruling to work out how big the budget hole was.

The climate fund — which was worth 212 billion euros prior to the ruling — was aimed at speeding Germany's shift to an emissions-free economy.

Cash had also been earmarked for other purposes, however, such as boosting domestic semiconductor production as Europe seeks to reduce its reliance on Asian chip imports.

The parliamentary budget committee had been due to rubberstamp the federal budget for 2024 on Thursday during a special session. But that may be in doubt after last week's court ruling.

In their judgement, the court in Karlsruhe, southwest Germany, ruled that the government's actions had breached the so-called "debt brake", which caps new borrowing in German budgets. The brake was suspended from 2020 to 2022 during the pandemic and energy crisis, but came back into force this year.

The ruling has also further fuelled tensions in Scholz's uneasy coalition, particularly with the pro-market FDP, a key supporter of the debt rules, and the other two parties, which argue they should be reformed. — AFP

UK borrowing data boosts govt before budget

LONDON: The British government's year-to-date borrowing undershot forecasts despite a jump in October, official data showed on Tuesday, boosting finance minister Jeremy Hunt on the eve of a key budget update.

Public sector net borrowing reached £98.3 billion (\$123.2 billion) in the seven months to October, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said in a statement. That was less than the £115.2 billion forecast by fiscal watchdog the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) but was £21.9 billion more than the same period a year earlier.

The ONS also revealed that borrowing hit £14.9 billion in October, up £4.4 billion from a year earlier

Business

KIPCO announces deal that brings together OSN+ and Anghami

Combined entity will transform MENA media & entertainment

KUWAIT: KIPCO – Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) – announced that its subsidiary, OSN, has reached a deal to combine its premium content streaming platform in the region, OSN+, with Anghami Inc, the region's leading music and entertainment streaming platform.

A first of its kind in the region, the combination of the two local home-grown streaming platforms will offer consumers unprecedented aggregation of the best and latest in premium movies, TV shows, music, podcasts and more while providing a rich and seamless user experience. Backed by an investment of up to \$50 million (KD 15.4 million) from OSN in Anghami, the deal will bring together over 120 million registered users, 2.5 million paying subscribers with \$100 million (KD 31 million) in revenue at closing, transforming Anghami Inc (NASDAQ: ANGH) into one of the region's largest streaming entities.

Anghami boasts a catalogue of over 100 million songs and podcasts, with exclusives from artists such as Amr Diab, while OSN+ has over 18,000 hours of content and exclusive partnership deals with HBO, NBC Universal, Paramount, and leading Arab and Turkish studios.

With customer-centricity at the core, the new platform will be committed to offering the best and most unique product and content experience in the region. Recognizing the power of both brands,

the platform will leverage Anghami's strong tech stack coupled with OSN+'s library of premium content to deliver an enriched experience with AI-driven hyper-personalization that prioritizes recommendation based on user preferences.

Sheikha Dana Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, KIPCO's Group Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson of OSN, said: "One of KIPCO's strategic objectives is to achieve digital transformation and optimization across its companies, with the aim of leveraging technology to evolve business models. In line with this, we have been focused on growing OSN's streaming business through optimal use of technology, digital marketing and content diversification. Bringing OSN+ together with Anghami will not only create the region's largest streaming platform, but also form a media tech company with AI at its core, playing a pivotal role in the growth of this venture. With an immediate offering that combines premium content, music and entertainment on one application, media technology would allow us to expand into even further verticals based on the anticipated needs of our clients. We strongly believe that this venture will transform the way that media and entertainment are consumed in the MENA region."

Joe Kawkabani, OSN's Chief Executive Officer, commented: "This is a major milestone in OSN's journey as we continue to



Sheikha Dana Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah



Elie Habib (left) and Joe Kawkabani (right)

scale up our streaming business. Combining OSN+ content with Anghami's technology enables us to deliver the best of entertainment all in one place for our customers, ensuring we are continuously evolving our offering to meet their needs. As two home-grown entities with an unmatched understanding of the market, we are confident that this new offering will change the face of the streaming landscape."

Elie Habib, Co-Founder of Anghami and set to be the CEO of the combined entity, added: "Joining forces with OSN+ is a leap in Anghami's journey to reinvent entertainment in the Arab World. We're bringing together technology, music and video to build a comprehensive media ecosystem. It's a chance to deepen our connection with our users and to create something they'll truly love."

Anghami Inc will continue to be listed on the NASDAQ. Closing of the transaction is subject to obtaining customary regulatory and anti-trust approvals, with the integration expected to be finalized in early 2024 once those are received. OSN will own a majority stake in Anghami Inc and will continue to run its linear business, OSNtv, separately with Joe Kawkabani as Group CEO.

Deliveroo riders not entitled to union rights: UK's top court

LONDON: Food delivery riders for the firm Deliveroo are not entitled to trade union rights such as collective bargaining, the UK Supreme Court ruled on Tuesday.

The Independent Workers Union of Great Britain (IWGB) had tried to represent Deliveroo riders in north London in order to negotiate on issues of pay, hours and holiday with the company.

But in a unanimous ruling, five judges at the UK's highest court dismissed the appeal.

They said they agreed with lower court judgments that the staff are not in an "employment relationship" with Deliveroo and are therefore not entitled to collective bargaining rights. Its judges said multiple factors, including that riders are free to reject offers of work and to work for Deliveroo's competitors, are "fundamentally inconsistent" with such a relationship. However, the judges noted there is "nothing in the UK legislation to stop the riders from forming their own union or joining the union as they have done".

"There is also nothing to prevent Deliveroo from engaging in collective bargaining with the union to seek to agree the terms and conditions applied to the riders if they so choose," they stated. After losing a bid for recognition at a specialist tribunal in 2017, the IWGB unsuccessfully challenged that decision at the High Court and Court of Appeal. In April the union took its case to the Supreme Court.

A Deliveroo spokesperson welcomed the judgment, saying UK courts had repeatedly and "at every level" confirmed that Deliveroo riders are self-employed. "This is a positive judgment for Deliveroo riders, who value the flexibility that self-employed work offers," the spokesperson said. "Thousands apply each week to work with Deliveroo because they want to be able to decide for themselves when, where and whether to work. "We are proud to be able to offer tens of thousands of riders this flexibility alongside the security of free insurance, sickness coverage, support for new parents and a unique union recognition agreement."

The IWGB said the ruling came as a "disappointment". "As a union we cannot accept that thousands of riders should be working without key protections like the right to collective bargaining," it said. "We will continue to make that case using all avenues available to us, including considering our options under international law." — AFP

Living in a box: For young Dutch, housing a key election topic

AMSTERDAM: Living in a 20-square-metre (215-square-foot) container house project on an old sports ground north of Amsterdam, 26-year-old Youri Hermes considers himself lucky: at least he has a roof over his head.

Many young people in the Netherlands "don't have that luxury", said the leadership coach, as a crippling housing crisis shapes up to be a key topic in Wednesday's knife-edge election, especially with the youth vote. Hermes lives with 540 other young people, half of them refugees with a residence permit, in one of the "Startblokken" ("Starting Blocks") facilities that have sprung up recently in the Netherlands to ease the housing shortage.

The "Startblokken" project started in 2015 using refurbished metal shipping containers.

Now for around 400 euros (\$440) per month, youngsters can rent a small studio within striking distance of Amsterdam, in a "container house" made of wood and recycled materials.

Available for people between 18 and 27, the studios each have a small kitchen and bathroom and are stacked on top of each other in large blocks. The maximum rental period is five years and project manager Arnold Hooiveld says he gets "hundreds of applications" every time a studio becomes available. "There is a huge shortage of housing in Amsterdam. This is one of the solutions," Hooiveld told AFP.

The complex was also conceived to encourage young people from all walks of life to live together.

"For me, the multicultural aspect is important — living with people from different backgrounds, of the same age," Junia Kersten, a 29-year-old construction engineering student, told AFP. "You sometimes have the feeling you're living in a big house with your brother and sister. You can knock on anyone's door."

But the Starting Blocks project is a drop in the ocean of the Dutch housing crisis. The Netherlands needs around 400,000 more houses, reckons Marc van der Lee, spokesman for the Dutch Association of Real Estate Agents (NVM), with demand "continuing to rise".

With just under one fifth of the Netherlands standing on reclaimed land, space is at a premium in the country, one of the world's most densely populated. Adding to the crisis is a growing



GARMERWOLDE, Netherlands: Chairman of the Groninger Gasberaad, Jan Wigboldus, poses at the organization's offices in Garmerwolde, northern Groningen on October 31, 2023. — AFP

population, rising immigration and smaller family units, said Van der Lee.

Red tape is not helping, with new housing permits often taking 10 years to come through. And the country's top administrative court, the Council of State, has nixed major construction projects due to nitrogen emissions. "When there's a shortage, prices rise. It's difficult" for young people in the Netherlands, admits Van der Lee.

The average house price in the third quarter of 2022 was 422,000 euros, said Van der Lee, who said the situation for young people in the major cities was "disastrous". A report on the state of the Dutch housing market last week said that to buy an average house required an annual income of more than 80,000 euros, twice the median. Youri Hermes says a monthly rent of up to 1,500 euros for a single person in Amsterdam is commonplace. Cheap social housing is available but the average waiting list is currently more than 13 years, according to official figures. Students in particular are finding it tough, with some forced into squatting, or living on campsites or in hostels.

Others have moved in with pensioners

who have a spare room.

The issue is one of the crunch battlegrounds in the November 22 election. A survey of 38,000 people by broadcaster RTL found the housing crisis was the top election topic, especially among young people.

The centre-right VVD, currently leading the polls, has pledged to build "hundreds of thousands of houses so that pleasant and affordable housing is again possible for everyone".

The New Social Contract party, which has come from nowhere to be challenging for power, promises 350,000 new houses. A left-wing Green/Labour coalition pledges more houses too but also proposes a cap on rental prices and more social housing.

Parties on the right have stressed that a reduction in net immigration to the Netherlands is needed, partly to improve the housing situation. Hermes told AFP that among people of his generation, housing was the key issue in determining their vote.

The link between immigration and the housing shortage was a difficult question, he said, especially for people like him whose friends and neighbors were often refugees. "Of course, we are dealing with a lot of people from different backgrounds here." — AFP

Hyundai opens electric car factory in Singapore

SINGAPORE: Hyundai opened a high-tech electric vehicle factory in Singapore on Tuesday that the South Korean auto giant says will be a "pillar" of its electrification strategy in the coming decades. Half of the tasks at the Hyundai Motor Group Innovation Center Singapore will be done by 200 robots, and it will use new production methods that will move away from traditional conveyor belts, the company said in a statement.

The facility, which has been in operation since early this year but formally opened on Tuesday, can build 30,000 electric vehicles a year, according to the company. The Singapore plant "will establish itself as one of two Hyundai Motor Group innovation pillars that will lead the company's future in the electrification era over the next 50 years", the statement said.

The facility "synchronizes the virtual and physical worlds in real time", enabling humans and robots "to cooperate in ways not seen before", it added. Human employees "can simulate tasks in the digital virtual space — or metaverse — while robots physically move components on the production line". The robots will do assembly, inspection and production facility organization and perform more than 60 percent of component process management, ordering and transportation.

This will free up humans to focus on "more creative and productive duties", the company said. It did not give a value for the investment but previous media reports put it at



SINGAPORE: Chang Jae-hoon, President and CEO of Hyundai Motor (left), and Lawrence Wong, Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister (center), attend the opening of Hyundai Motor Group's first smart urban mobility hub on Nov 21, 2023. — AFP

400 million Singapore dollars (\$300 million). The facility currently produces the IONIQ 5 electric vehicle and the fully autonomous IONIQ 5 "robotaxi", which can operate without a driver. Hyundai will start building the IONIQ 6 sedan at the plant from next year. Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, who spoke at the opening ceremony,

noted that decades ago Singapore was an assembly centre for vehicles, but high costs forced auto firms to shift to cheaper countries. "Now quite unexpectedly we see some high-value automated industries coming back to Singapore again because... there is a paradigm shift in the entire automotive industry," he said. — AFP

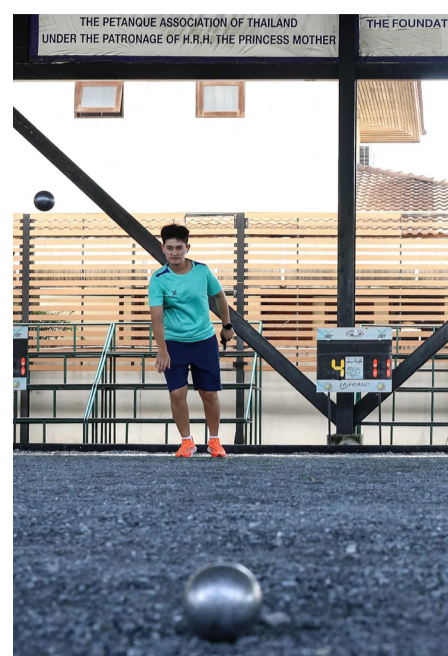
Tax havens only half the story: OECD

PARIS: Tax havens are blamed for lower public revenues elsewhere as they lure away multinational firms but a study published Tuesday showed that tax breaks in high-rate countries are also heavily exploited.

Half the profits booked by multinationals benefitting from low tax rates were from countries that have high rates but offer various tax breaks to attract investments, the study by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) found. "Many jurisdictions typically considered (to be) 'high tax' offer various incentives which can lead to substantially reduced tax rates," said the report. The study found that \$2.1 trillion in profits were booked by multinationals with an effective tax rate of below 15 percent.

But slightly over half of that was earned in countries that have statutory or average effective tax rates above 15 percent. The OECD, along with the G20, has spearheaded a reform of the global corporate tax system to introduce a minimum global rate of 15 percent to combat efforts by firms to shift profits to countries with low rates. The debate has usually been framed in terms of countries with high tax rates versus those with lower rates, but the OECD said the study shows those with higher rates stand to gain from a minimum rate. — AFP

Lifestyle



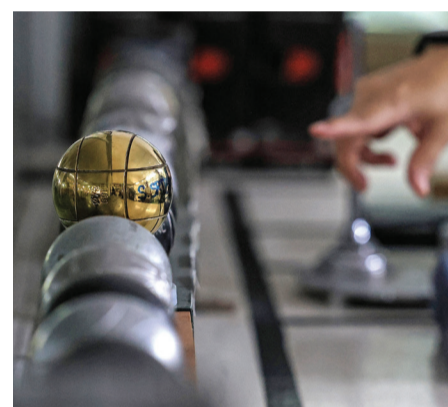
Petanque players train at a court in Bangkok.



These photos show petanque players training at a court in Bangkok.



A worker checks petanque balls at Football Thai (FBT) Factory Sporting Goods in Bangkok.



This photo shows petanque balls in the inspection room at Football Thai (FBT) Factory Sporting Goods in Bangkok.



This photo shows a worker polishing a petanque ball at Football Thai (FBT) Factory Sporting Goods in Bangkok.



This photo shows Ratchata Khamdee, 20, winner of the men's single and men triple categories of the last Petanque World Championship, training at a petanque court in Bangkok.

On a shaded practice court in the sticky heat of rainy season in Bangkok, Ratchata Khamdee half-crouches, pauses and launches a petanque boule at the jack. Aged just 20, he is already a double world champion, the latest winner to come off Thailand's production line of top petanque players.

Half a world away from its home in the squares of southern France, the quintessentially Gallic sport has found an unlikely hotbed of talent in the land of kickboxing, helped by royal approval and support from the armed forces. Thailand finished top of the medals table at the world championships in Benin in September—beating France—with three golds, two of them won by Ratchata.

"It was my goal to become a world champion," Ratchata told AFP. The shy Ratchata grew up in Sukhothai, a rural province 400 kilometers (250 miles) north of Bangkok, picking up petanque by playing with his neighbors. By 18, he was competing at the national level and now studies in Bangkok on a petanque scholarship, with the promise of a career in the air force when he graduates.

Every day he gets up at 6:00 am, jogs for up to an hour and practices for seven hours. "Petanque requires a lot of leg muscles and technique," he said. Ratchata's prize money—about \$8,000 for each of his titles—has been a boon to his mother Kanta Khamdee, who raised Ratchata alone. "I can pay for my house loan," she said.

As well as producing fine players, Thailand is also home to one of the only officially approved boule-making factories outside France. On the edge of Bangkok, 17 workers assemble, polish and engrave the boules, turning out up to 400 a day.

Steady hands, steady jobs

Petanque demands precision, power and strategy. Players try to land their hollow steel boules, about the size of a tennis ball, as close as possible to a jack—and to knock their opponents' boules away. Groups of older men, of-

ten with a cloudy glass of pastis nearby, playing on tracks in village squares have been a common sight across southern France for generations, but the sport is a more recent arrival to Thailand.

It came to the kingdom through a Thai educated in France in 1975, but

armed forces, which offer them jobs paying enough that they can devote their time to training.

Suphonnarth Lamlert, vice-president of the International Federation of Petanque, said that for lower-income Thais, petanque can be a way to get a job that brings prestige and security.

with half a dozen world championship medals at the age of just 29 thanks to a 9-5 desk job with the air force, obtained through her petanque skills.

Her steady job means she can support herself and help her parents, who are farmers. "I support my family financially. They are way better off than be-



Soldiers and royals: How Thailand became world champions at petanque

its popularity took off thanks to the support of Princess Srinagarindra, the grandmother of current King Maha Vajiralongkorn. The princess promoted petanque as an inexpensive way for Thais of all ages to get active, and the royal backing gave it standing with the police and military—bastions of Thai royalist conservatism.

Now the kingdom boasts 30,000 to 40,000 registered club players, and the best are snapped up by the

"The army and police force would offer the best deals to snatch the best petanque players," she told AFP.

Women's powerhouse

Military support has helped Thailand establish itself as a powerhouse in women's petanque, led for years by Thongsri Thanakord—multiple world champion, legend of the sport and officer in the Royal Thai Navy. Nantawan Fuangsanit is taking the baton now,

fore," Nantawan said. At the Foundation for Petanque Development in east Bangkok, the next generation of champions is being groomed. The youngest national player, Saharat Aramros, 13, has his sights on the top but his feet on the ground. "I want to be a policeman," he tells AFP. "I love petanque, but I want to have a job so I can help my parents."—AFP



This photo shows workers checking the weight and circumference of petanque balls before assembling them into a set at Football Thai (FBT) Factory Sporting Goods in Bangkok.



This photo shows Saharat Aramros, 13, training at a petanque court in Bangkok.

UK car show Top Gear paused for 'foreseeable future': BBC

Motor show Top Gear, one of the BBC's most successful global exports, will be shelved for the "foreseeable future" following last year's crash that seriously injured host Andrew Flintoff, the broadcaster said Tuesday. The former England cricket captain, 45, suffered facial injuries in the crash last December, and has only recently been seen again in public.

The BBC announced a pause in production immediately after the crash, saying it would be "inappropriate" to carry on and adding it was holding a health and safety review. It has now shelved the show indefinitely. "Given the exceptional circumstances, the BBC has decided to rest the UK show for the foreseeable future," it said in a statement.

"We will have more to say in the near future on this. We know resting the show will be disappointing news for fans, but it is the right thing to do." "All other Top Gear activity remains unaffected by this hiatus including international formats, digital, magazines and licensing."

The show is sold to more than 150 territories, with 11 local format versions in countries such as the United States and France. It made household names of previous presenters Jeremy Clarkson, James May and Richard Hammond, who all left to host another show, "the Grand Tour", on Amazon.

Flintoff, who began hosting the show in June 2019, had another accident when he crashed into a market stall. The BBC said last month it had agreed a financial settlement with Flintoff over last year's accident. The British broadcaster's commercial arm BBC Studios did not specify the settlement figure, but it reportedly totals £9 million (\$11 million).—AFP



Rapper A\$AP Rocky to stand trial over allegedly shooting at old friend

US rapper A\$AP Rocky will stand trial for twice pulling a gun on a former friend and shooting at him once, a court in Los Angeles ruled Monday. The 35-year-old, who has two children with R&B star Rihanna, is being prosecuted on two counts of assault with a semiautomatic firearm. He has denied the charges. The court heard how Terrell Ephron, one of the founding members of the A\$AP collective, was left slightly injured after the confrontation in Hollywood in November 2021.

At a hearing last week, Ephron, known by his stage name A\$AP Relli, said the friendship between the two men had soured, accusing him of abandoning other members of the group, which was founded in New York in 2008. While A\$AP Rocky—whose real name is Rakim Mayers—had gone on to fame and fortune, other members of the collective have descended into poverty and drug use, he said.

After the death of one member of the group, the two men clashed in an encounter partially caught on surveillance camera. Ephron said Mayers pulled a gun and thrust it towards his

stomach, saying "I'll kill you right now." In a later altercation, Ephron said he told his former friend he had "failed everybody" but that nobody was brave enough to tell him. "I just wanted him to hear my side," Ephron said, adding that Mayers had then shot at him, with the bullet grazing his left hand. Mayers, who is free on bail, was ordered to be arraigned on January 8.—AFP



Rakim Mayers, aka A\$AP Rocky, departs the Clara Shortridge Foltz Criminal Justice Center after a preliminary hearing in his assault with a semiautomatic firearm case in Los Angeles, California.—AFP



This photo shows a restaurant employee taking away a pot of oily broth, which will be recycled, at an eatery in Chengdu, China's southwest Sichuan province.--AFP photos



This photo shows a view at the Sichuan Jinshang Environmental Technology company, where used oil collected from restaurants are recycled and turned in a precursor to produce fuel, in Chengdu, China's southwest Sichuan province.



This photo shows a worker carting away used oil to be recycled from a hotpot restaurant.

CHINESE COMPANY GIVES LEFTOVER HOTPOT OIL SECOND LIFE AS JET FUEL

At an upmarket restaurant in the hotpot-loving Chinese city of Chengdu, diners plunge sliced meat and vegetables into cauldrons of spicy, oily broth, largely unaware that their leftovers are set to take on a second life as jet fuel. With around 150,000 tons of used hotpot oil thrown out by restaurants in the city each year, local business Sichuan Jinshang Environmental Protection has found a niche processing the greasy waste and exporting it to be turned into aviation fuel.

"Our motto is, let oil from the gutter soar in the sky," Ye Bin, the company's general manager, told AFP. Ye said his company, which launched in 2017, was now producing up to 150,000 tons of industrial-grade oil annually from a combination of hotpot restaurants and other eateries across Chengdu, including KFC outlets.

On a typical night, collectors hired by Jinshang visit hundreds of these restaurants around the southwestern metropolis. The process begins right after customers leave, with waiters emptying their hotpot broth—so rich it is used purely as a cooking medium—into a special filter that separates oil from water.

Donning thick aprons and elbow-length rubber gloves, collectors then arrive to pick up jerrycans of the scarlet grease. "It's a great job—I play mahjong during the day and work at night," one collector named Zheng told AFP as he packed a minivan with containers of the pungent sludge. That sludge is then ferried



This photo shows workers in the kitchen of a hotpot restaurant in Chengdu.

to a business park on the city's outskirts where Jinshang's mostly spotless plant is based.

The only trace of the oil there is a faint scent of hotpot at the unloading dock and telltale orange stains at the bottom of some equipment. The oil is piped into massive vats and undergoes a refining process that removes remaining water and impurities, resulting in a clear, yellow-tinged industrial-grade oil.

That is exported to clients based mainly in Europe, the United States and Singapore, who further process it to make what industry insiders call "sustainable aviation fuel" (SAF). SAFs are critical to decarbonizing the aviation sector, which was responsible for two percent of global energy-related CO2 emissions in 2022, according to the International Energy Agency.

But they are still not widely used—making up less than 0.1 percent of all aviation fuels consumed—because of processing costs and the relatively small number of suppliers.

The International Air Transport Association estimates their widespread adoption could "contribute around 65 percent of the reduction in emissions needed by aviation to reach net-zero in 2050". Jinshang has plans to expand into its own SAF-producing facility soon, using equipment from US firm Honeywell to produce 300,000 tons annually.

Food waste problem

Jinshang's business model is part of wider efforts in China to tackle the mountains of food waste generated by its population of 1.4 billion. Around 350 million tons of farm produce—



This photo shows a worker carting away used oil to be recycled from a hotpot restaurant in Chengdu.

over a quarter of annual output—goes to waste in the country each year, discarded by restaurants, supermarkets or consumers, according to a 2021 Nature study. In landfills, rotting food waste emits atmosphere-warming methane gas more quickly than most other materials, according to the US Environmental Protection Agency.

It's a massive headache for Chinese cities and a major threat to global climate goals—one Beijing has vowed to tackle in a recent methane emissions plan that calls for the construction of innovative food waste processing projects across the country in the next few years. In Shanghai, municipal waste treatment facilities have turned to the humble black soldier fly to turn tons of food waste each year into fertilizer and animal feed.

At the Laogang waste treatment plant, a cavernous sealed room houses 500 million maggots, which chomp their way through up to 2,500 tons of food waste each day, according to plant deputy director Wu Yuefeng. The wriggling grubs excrete a fine, black, dirt-like substance that is repurposed as fertilizer, while the larvae themselves are killed and harvested at peak plumpness to be turned into livestock feed.

Back in Chengdu, the thought that his dinner will have a long, productive afterlife brings comfort to hotpot fan Dong. "This utilization and circulation of waste throughout the whole of society is more beneficial," he told AFP.—AFP



This photo shows a restaurant employee taking away a pot of oily broth, which will be recycled, at an eatery in Chengdu.



This photo shows a restaurant employee pouring a pot of oily broth down a funnel for recycling, at an eatery in Chengdu.



This photo shows samples of used oil in various stages of refining at the Sichuan Jinshang Environmental Technology company.

Maldives to battle rising seas by building fortress islands

Rising sea levels threaten to swamp the Maldives and the Indian Ocean archipelago is already out of drinking water, but the new president says he has scrapped plans to relocate citizens. Instead, President Mohamed Muizzu promises the low-lying nation will beat back the waves through ambitious land reclamation and building islands higher—policies, however, that environmental and rights groups warn could even exacerbate flooding risks.

The upmarket holiday destination is famed for its white sand beaches, turquoise lagoons and vast coral reefs, but the chain of 1,192 tiny islands is on the frontlines of the climate crisis and battling for survival. Former president Mohamed Nasheed began his administration 15 years ago warning citizens they might become the world's first environmental refugees needing relocation to another country.

He wanted the Maldives to start saving to buy land in neighboring India, Sri Lanka or even far away in Australia. But Muizzu, 45, while asking for \$500 million in foreign funding to protect vulnerable coasts, said his citizens will not be leaving their homeland. "If

we need to increase the area for living or other economic activity, we can do that," Muizzu told AFP, speaking from the crowded capital Male, which is ringed with concrete sea walls. "We are self-sufficient to look after ourselves".

'Out of fresh water'

The tiny nation of Tuvalu this month inked a deal to give citizens the right to live in Australia when their Pacific homeland is lost beneath the seas. But Muizzu said the Maldives would not follow that route. "I can categorically

say that we definitely don't need to buy land or even lease land from any country," Muizzu said.

Sea walls will ensure risk areas can be "categorized as a safe island", he said. But 80 percent of the Maldives is less than a meter (three feet) above sea level. And while fortress-like walls ringing tightly-packed settlements can keep the waves at bay, the fate of the beach islands the tourists come for are uncertain.

Tourism accounts for almost one-third of the economy, according to the

World Bank. Nasheed's predecessor, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, was the first to ring the alarm of the possible "death of a nation", warning the United Nations in 1985 of the threat posed by rising sea levels linked to climate change.

The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned in 2007 that rises of 18 to 59 centimeters (7.2 to 23.2 inches) would make the Maldives virtually uninhabitable by the end of the century. The warning lights are already flashing red.

Gayoom's fear of his country running out of drinking water has already come true, as rising salt levels seep into land, corrupting potable water. "Every island in the Maldives has run out of fresh water," said Shauna Aminath, 38, the environment minister until last week, when Muizzu's government took power. Almost all of the 187 inhabited islets in the archipelago depend on expensive desalination plants, she told AFP. "Finding ways as to how we protect our islands has been a huge part of how we are trying to adapt to these changes", Aminath said.

Environmental regulations 'ignored'

The capital Male, where a third of the country's 380,000 citizens are squeezed onto a tiny island, is "one of the most densely populated pieces of land in the world" with 65,700 people per square kilometer, according to the environment ministry. A giant sea wall already surrounds the city, but Muizzu said there is potential to expand elsewhere. Reclamation projects have already increased the country's land-

mass by about 10 percent in the past four decades, using sand pumped onto submerged coral platforms, totaling 30 square kilometers (11 square miles).

Muizzu, a British-educated civil engineer and former construction minister for seven years, played a key part in that, overseeing the expansion of the artificial island of Hulhumale. Linked to the capital by a Chinese-built 1.4-kilometre (0.8-mile) bridge, with tower blocks rising high over the blue seas, Hulhumale is double the area of Male, home to about 100,000 people.

But environmental and rights groups warn that, while reclamation is needed, it must be done with care. In a recent report, Human Rights Watch (HRW) accused the authorities of failing to implement their own environmental regulations, saying reclamation projects were "often rushed" and lacked proper mitigation policies.

It gave the example of an airport on Kulhudhuffushi, where 70 percent of the island's mangroves were "buried", and a reclamation project at Addu which damaged the coral reefs fisherman depended on. "The Maldives government has ignored or undermined environmental protection laws, increasing flooding risks and other harm to island communities," HRW said.

Ahmed Fizal, who heads the environmental campaign group Marine Journal Maldives (MJM), said he feared politicians and businessmen saw shallow lagoons as potential reclamation sites to turn a quick profit. "You have to ask 'what is the limit, what is the actual cost of reclamation?'," he said.—AFP



Lifestyle



This picture shows 100 years old beauty advisor Tomoko Horino doing make up at her house before heading to the office.



This picture shows a Guinness World Record Certificate for the oldest beauty advisor as 100 years old beauty advisor Tomoko Horino (right) talks during an interview with AFP at her house in Fukushima city.



This picture shows 100 years old beauty advisor Tomoko Horino checking old photos at her house in Fukushima city.

World's oldest beauty adviser sitting pretty

Tomoko Horino's neighbors gossiped when she first went out to work in patriarchal 1960s Japan, but now, at age 100, the world's oldest beauty adviser is having the last laugh. "It was a time when married women stayed home and only did housekeeping, but I had to work," Horino told AFP after officially being crowned by Guinness World Records.

Others in the eastern town of Fukushima saw her leaving the house in full make-up and thought she was working in a hostess bar. "What kind of a bar hostess leaves as the sun rises and comes home as the sun sets?" she laughed. Born in 1923, the same year as Japan's Great Kanto Earthquake, Horino married a local government official and expected to be a housewife.

"It was a mistake to be married to my husband," she said, recalling the man she lived with until his death 16 years ago. "He grew up in a very wealthy family and didn't care about spending money," she said. "He would take his colleagues out for wining and dining on the day he got his salary and use it all up."

To make ends meet while raising



This picture shows 100 years old beauty advisor Tomoko Horino (left) presenting products to her client Yuriko Abe (right) at Abe's house in Fukushima city.

their three children, Horino would work on the side assembling gift boxes. At 39, she started working for the cosmetics company Pola, going door to door in high heels—a style choice she kept up for 41 years—selling facial lotions and make-up while giving beauty pointers to clients. "When my husband was making a salary of 10,000 yen, I was making three times more. I worked very hard," she said.

Top performer

According to Pola, Horino's total revenue has amounted to more than 125 million yen (\$835,000), and she still nails her sales goals. Women's participation in the world's third-biggest economy has grown significantly in recent years. But the gender pay gap remains one of the largest among rich economies, and men still dominate politics, business and academia.

Japan is also one of the most rapidly ageing countries in the world, with some 90,000 people over 100 and the average life expectancy for women projected to hit 90 by 2050. With the normal working-age population shrinking, older people are being encouraged to work to fill gaps in the labor market. Pola has nearly 250 beauty advisers aged 80 or more, including four centenarians. But the firm nominated Horino to Guinness "because she remains the most active in communicating with clients and participating in training sessions for new products", company spokesperson Aya Katsuda told AFP. "She is wonderful."

Baseball banter

Horino has her own strict routine for keeping wrinkles at bay. Every night she takes a bath, stretches her limbs and shoulders in the hot tub, and cleanses her face by splashing it 20 times. This is followed by an array of lotions, two kinds of wrinkle fillers, beauty serum, milky lotion and cream.

"I wear my make-up every day," she added. And to ensure that her banter remains in top form, Horino watches the news every night, including the sports segments. "I need to keep up with a

wide range of subjects. I need to know about baseball so I can talk about it with a person who loves baseball," she said.

'Big sister'

Most recently, she visited the house of 75-year-old client Yuriko Abe and recommended a sunscreen lotion to wear while gardening. "It's always wonderful to see her being so well," Abe said, describing her beauty adviser as a "big sister". But it gets harder and harder for Horino to keep her clients, no matter how hard she works.

"Many of my good clients have passed away around the age of 80," she said. "I will continue working as long as my life goes," she said, adding she still gets a kick from helping people "get beautiful and become happier". But beauty isn't everything, and nowadays women going to work isn't quite as out of the ordinary as it was when Horino was starting out.

"Women used to be only given an assisting position under men," she said. "Now women can even become a president. The world has become a much better place now." —AFP



This picture shows 100 years old beauty advisor Tomoko Horino working at the office in Fukushima city.



This picture shows 100 years old beauty advisor Tomoko Horino talking during an interview with AFP at her house in Fukushima city. --AFP photos



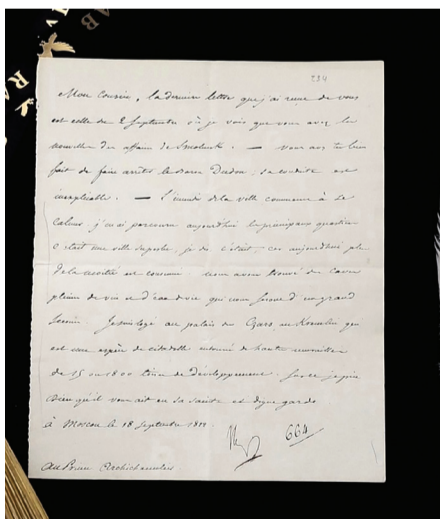
This picture shows 100 years old beauty advisor Tomoko Horino checking the old photos at her house.

Napoleon letters from Russian campaign on sale as hat bags record

Eleven letters sent by Napoleon Bonaparte, including dispatches from the Kremlin, have gone on sale following the blockbuster auction of the diminutive French emperor's hat for \$2.1 million. Among them is one dated September 18, 1812, in which he arrives in Moscow at the height of his Russian campaign and reports that the city is ablaze amid a scorched-earth policy adopted by the Russian side. "Today I toured the main quarters. It was a spectacular city; I say 'was' because today more than half has been consumed by fire," the French emperor wrote.

In the missive, on sale for \$58,300, he also remarked on the city's inventory of alcohol. "We have found cellars full of wine and eau de vie (liquor), which will be of great need to us," he wrote. Napoleon ordered the largest European military force ever assembled up until then into Russia in 1812, when the French ruler was at the height of his prestige. But around a million soldiers and civilians died in the course of the invasion.

Nathan Raab, president of the Raab



Collection, a Philadelphia-based dealer of historical papers handling the sale, said that "the letter from Moscow is so rare, it's just extraordinary". "Napoleon is an enormous figure with immense admiration from Americans. He is seen as an emperor with a strong leadership.

"But his legacy is not black or white,

it's very gray." Napoleon later went on to destroy several towers and sections of wall at the Kremlin, at the time both an imperial palace and military fortress. He had vowed to do so in another letter dated October 20, 1812.

That note does not feature in the latest sale, having been sold for 187,500 euros at a French auction in 2012. In another, now on sale for \$79,500, Napoleon itemizes the munitions he needed for a final assault on Toulon in southern France after he had been elevated into a leadership position, setting him on course to eventually become emperor.

'Great coincidences'?

"In what may go down as one of the great coincidences in history, he happened to be in the area as the French gathered for the assault on Toulon and was given the command of artillery," according to the Raab Collection. "This seemingly insignificant event at the time would make his career, and changed the history of Western Europe."

Interest in Napoleon's life has soared

as a biopic of the leader's rise to power directed by Ridley Scott is released in cinemas this week. Starring Joaquin Phoenix as Napoleon, the film also chronicles his relationship with Empress Josephine played, by Vanessa Kirby. "He wanted to be heartfelt, but in his letters... he seems like a teenager in love, almost plagiarizing poetry," Phoenix told AFP in Paris recently.

"There's something almost endearing about it—if he wasn't also responsible for the deaths of millions of people," Phoenix added. "I imagined that he was cold and calculated as a great military strategist. What I was surprised by was the sense of humor and how child-like he was."

A hat belonging to Napoleon sold for a record of nearly two million euros at a French auction on Sunday. It broke the previous record for a Napoleonic hat, held by the same auction house, of 1.88 million euros in 2014, shelled out by a South Korean businessman. —AFP



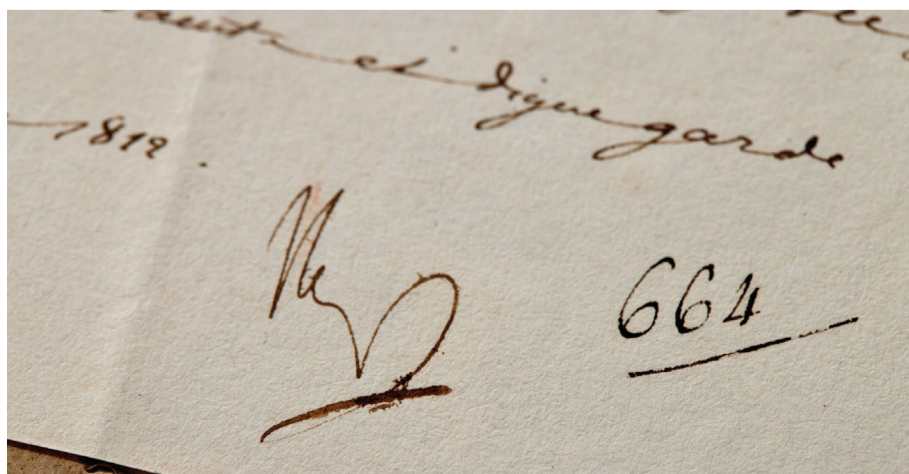
US musician Prince performs during half-time February 4, 2007 at Super Bowl XLI at Dolphin Stadium in Miami between the Chicago Bears and the Indianapolis Colts. --AFP

Prince's ruffled shirt sells for \$33,000

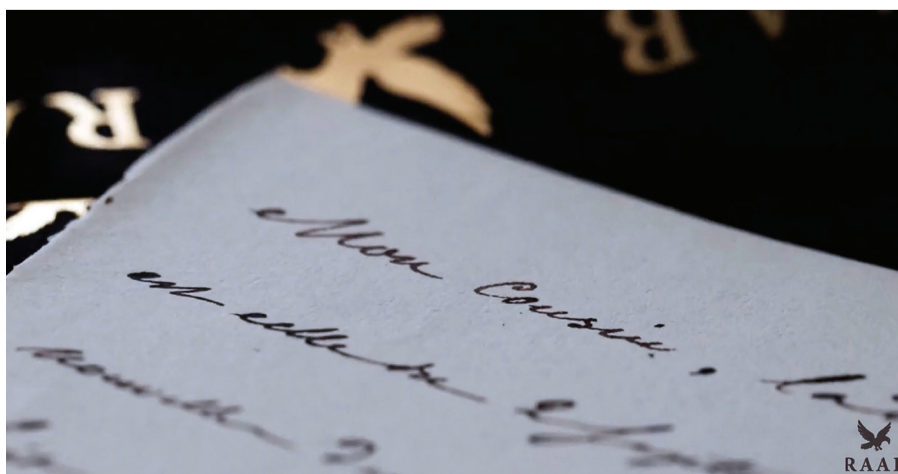
A silk shirt with a ruffled collar that helped define late music legend Prince's distinctive style has sold for \$33,000. It was among a trove of 164 items linked to the mercurial rock sensation, who died aged 57 in 2016, sold at a Boston auction house by a Parisian businessman for a total of \$675,000.

The "Kid from Minneapolis" wore the white shirt complete with faux French cuffs and imitation pearl buttons during his 98-show Purple Rain Tour of North America in 1984 and 1985. "Curated by a French businessman who cultivated ties with Prince's inner circle two decades ago... The extensive collection showcased the evolution of Prince's wardrobe throughout his career," RR Auction said.

Other items to go under the hammer included Prince's gold-tone cross necklace which fetched \$40,514 and high-heeled blue boots from his Act I Tour which sold for \$24,079. A long white cashmere coat from Prince's "Under the Cherry Moon" romcom brought in \$18,750. The auction concluded on Thursday. —AFP



This image courtesy the Raab Collection in Philadelphia shows a letter sent by Napoleon during the Russian campaign.



Sports

Australia's Warner out of India T20 series after WCup exploits

Cricket to trial stop clocks to speed up play in ODIs, T20s

NEW DELHI: Veteran opener David Warner withdrew on Tuesday from Australia's squad for the Twenty20 series in India following his exploits in their victorious ODI World Cup campaign. Australia defeated the hosts by six wickets in front of nearly 100,000 in Ahmedabad on Sunday to clinch their sixth one-day World Cup crown.

The two countries meet again in a five-match T20 series starting on Thursday in Visakhapatnam, but the 37-year-old Warner will not stay on after all. His withdrawal means just seven of Australia's World Cup-winning one-day squad will remain in India for the series, among them Travis Head, Glenn Maxwell and Steve Smith.

All-rounder Aaron Hardie replaces Warner, who is gearing up to say farewell to Test cricket. "Selectors decided Warner would return home on the back of a successful yet demanding World Cup campaign," Cricket Australia said in a statement.

Warner was Australia's leading scorer at the World Cup with 535 runs at 48.63. For the hosts, Suryakumar Yadav will captain India for the first time in the absence of regular skipper Rohit Sharma. Just three of India's World Cup squad will remain for the T20 series.

The open match in Visakhapatnam is followed by games in Thiruvananthapuram on November 26 and Guwahati on November 28. Shreyas Iyer will join the squad as vice-captain for the last two T20s, in Raipur on December 1 and in Bengaluru on December 5, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said.

India squad: Suryakumar Yadav (Capt), Ruturaj Gaikwad (vice-captain), Ishan Kishan, Yashas-

vi Jaiswal, Tilak Varma, Rinku Singh, Jitesh Sharma (wk), Washington Sundar, Axar Patel, Shivam Dube, Ravi Bishnoi, Arshdeep Singh, Prasidh Krishna, Avesh Khan, Mukesh Kumar.

Australia squad: Matthew Wade (Capt), Aaron Hardie, Jason Behrendorff, Sean Abbott, Tim David, Nathan Ellis, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Glenn Maxwell, Tanveer Sangha, Matt Short, Steve Smith, Marcus Stoinis, Kane Richardson, Adam Zampa.

Meanwhile, the International Cricket Council on Tuesday said it will trial stop clocks between overs in men's one-day and T20 internationals in a bid to speed up the game. The move, approved after a meeting of the ICC board in the Indian city of Ahmedabad, will be put to the test from December to April.

If the bowling team is not ready to bowl the next over within 60 seconds of the previous over being completed, a five-run penalty will be imposed the third time it happens in an innings. "The clock will be used to regulate the amount of time taken between overs," the ICC said in a statement.

Slow-over rates in limited-over cricket have been a perennial concern and last year the ICC introduced penalties in both men's and women's cricket. Currently, if the fielding team fails to start the final over by the stipulated time, they are docked one fielder from outside the 30-yard circle.

This is in addition to the fines teams have to pay for slow over-rates. Stop clocks are used in other sports including tennis in an effort to speed up games. The issue of speeding-up play in cricket hit the headlines after Sri Lanka's Angelo Mathews



David Warner

became the first batsman to be dismissed "timed out" in an international match during the just-concluded World Cup.

Mathews was declared out after he failed to take strike within the stipulated time of two min-

utes during Sri Lanka's group match against Bangladesh. Mathews attempted to argue he had a problem with his helmet strap, but the umpires had to uphold the decision when Bangladesh chose not to withdraw their appeal. — AFP

Zain sponsors the thrills of GulfRun Grand Prix 2023

KUWAIT: In an exciting setting at the renowned Kuwait Motor Town, Zain sponsored for the sixth time the thrills of the GulfRun Grand Prix 2023, one of the most popular motorsport gatherings in Kuwait and the GCC. The much-anticipated event offered a safe and professional environment for motorsport enthusiasts to practice their favorite sport, attended by large crowds of visitors and spectators.

Zain's ongoing support to this annual gathering reflects its commitment to supporting the sports sector and encouraging promising projects that offer a world-class, safe environment for professional racers, giving them the chance to unleash their talents and grow their passion in all sports, especially motorsports that are very popular among Kuwait's youth.

This year, the GulfRun Grand Prix featured four different classes: Street, Super, GT, and Unlimited, where tens of local, regional, and international professionals raced and competed for the highest scores, thrilling the attending crowds. During the event's closing ceremony, Zain joined the stage to award the winners in one of the race's classes.

The event also featured numerous other segments that joyed families and young people alike. These programs included the Zain Junior Race for children, a special exhibition for car dealers to showcase their latest vehicles and offer a chance for test drives, and a community market with many unique brands, cafes, and restaurants offering their services to visitors.

GulfRun provides an ideal and safe alternative to street racing, which threatens the lives of many people, many of them young drivers. Motorsport enthusiasts are able to showcase their talents within professional and certified grounds at the Kuwait Motor Town's race circuit, in addition to taking advantage of the opportunity to gain valuable insights with the help of qualified trainers and experienced professional instructors.

Under-19 Cricket World Cup moved to South Africa

NEW DELHI: Sri Lanka has been stripped of the Under-19 World Cup next year, the International Cricket Council said Tuesday, after suspending the island nation's board over alleged political meddling. The tournament will now be held in South Africa, the game's governing body said following a meeting of its board in the Indian city of Ahmedabad.

The 16-nation tournament is scheduled to be held from January 13 to February 4. As a result of losing the right to host the competition, Sri Lanka stands to lose a \$2.4 million grant from

Mendy to sue Man City for unpaid wages

LONDON: Former Manchester City defender Benjamin Mendy is set to sue the Premier League champions after claiming he is owed millions of pounds in unpaid wages. Mendy will take City to an employment tribunal in a bid to recoup what the French left-back believes were "unauthorised deductions from



Waleed Al Khashti awards the winners in one of the race's classes.



Event was joined by numerous pro racers.

the ICC to develop venues, the local cricket board has claimed.

The ICC suspended Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) earlier this month, saying it had failed to ensure there was no government interference in its affairs. Sri Lanka can continue to compete internationally but funding to SLC will be controlled by the ICC.

The suspension came after Sri Lanka's parliament asked the board to resign over allegations made by sports minister Roshan Ranasinghe that it had siphoned off millions of dollars. The ICC has rules against political interference and has suspended Sri Lanka before. Sri Lanka Cricket said the loss of the U-19 tournament was a "big blow" to the morale of young players, and a substantial financial loss to the country.

"This decision is something that makes the entire nation sad," the board's assistant secretary Krishantha Kapuwatte told reporters in Colombo. "We have been working diligently in the past four months to prepare our venues for the tournament". — AFP

wages" after he was charged with rape and sexual assault two years ago. The 29-year-old was cleared of the rape and attempted rape charges and left City when his contract expired in June. It is alleged City stopped paying Mendy in September 2021 after he was initially charged and held in custody.

"Nick De Marco KC... is acting for the former Manchester City player Benjamin Mendy in a multi-million-pound claim for unauthorised deductions from wages," a statement on behalf of Mendy told Sky Sports and The Guardian. "Manchester City FC failed to pay Mr Mendy any wages at all from September 2021, following Mr Mendy being charged with various offences all of which he was subsequently acquitted of, until the end of his contract in June 2023. — AFP

Jahra champions of athletics road race

KUWAIT: The Athletics team of Jahra Sports Club won first place in the "Road Race" of the open category for (5) kilometers. Qadisiya Club was second and Kuwait was third. Secretary General of Athletics Federation Hussein and member of the board Dr Mane Al-Ajmi handed the winners their prizes.

There were 60 players from 14 clubs who participated in the race, as Jahra runners Ibrahim Rameedh, Khalid Al-Harby, Yousuf Harby, Hulayel Abdallah, Abdelwahab Al-Enezi and Abdelkareem Sheikh won first places ensuring the lead for their club following a very strong competition near the end.

Athletics coach at Jahra Club Sultan Al-Mutairi said winning first place in the first open championship is a good opening omen for the club and promises outstanding results in championships.

He said "Jahra are considered the youngest (age wise) among all clubs and this promises an outstanding future for the medium and long distances.

Sultan Al-Mutairi lauded the major support of the board of directors of Jahra Club and Chairman Khalid Al-Jarallah, saying "we appreciate the continued support and keenness on removing all obstacles facing the athletes, and we look forward for more support in the future to achieve best results".



FUCHU: New Zealand rugby player Richie Mo'unga (R) and Shannon Frizell pose during a press conference hosted by the Toshiba Brave Lupus Tokyo in Fuchu, Tokyo Metropolis, on November 21, 2023. — AFP

Mo'unga ready to forget All Blacks after Japan switch

TOKYO: New Zealand playmaker Richie Mo'unga said Tuesday that he can imagine playing in Japan "until I retire" and is not thinking about a future return to the All Blacks. Mo'unga has moved to Toshiba Brave Lupus on a three-year deal, meaning he cannot play for the All Blacks during that time unless eligibility rules change to allow overseas-based players.

The 29-year-old, who played a pivotal role in New Zealand's run to last month's World Cup final, said he was "fully involved" in his move to Toshiba. "I'm focused on the present, I just want to give all I can to Toshiba," the fly half told reporters.

"I really can see myself playing here as long as I can until I retire." Mo'unga is one of several All Blacks moving to Japan, including captain Sam Cane and newly crowned World Rugby player of the year Ardie Savea. Flanker Shannon Frizell has also joined Mo'unga at Tokyo-based Toshiba.

Cane and Savea have signed short-term deals that mean they will not miss any games for New Zealand. In Mo'unga's case, he said that "at this very point, the All Blacks is over there." "I don't like using the term 'sabbatical'," he said.

"This isn't a rest for me, it's not a one-year thing. I'm fully involved and fully committed." Mo'unga was outstanding as New Zealand shrugged off a difficult build-up to reach the World Cup final, where they lost 12-11 to South Africa.

He said he believes he can play "the best footy of my career" at Toshiba, who finished fifth in last season's Japan Rugby League One table. The new campaign kicks off on December 9. Mo'unga said he was looking forward to a change of scenery after playing for Canterbury and the Crusaders in his native Christchurch. "Every year for a long number of years, it's been the same, same, same," he said. "This is an experience for myself to test my abilities in a different environment." — AFP

Sports

Hurts at the double as Eagles avenge Chiefs Super Bowl loss

NFL bans Denver defender Jackson four games for risky hits

LOS ANGELES: Jalen Hurts led a second-half comeback as the Philadelphia Eagles turned the tables on the Kansas City Chiefs to claim a hardfought 21-17 victory in their Super Bowl rematch on Monday. Eagles quarterback Hurts rushed for two touchdowns—including the go-ahead score via Philadelphia's signature 'brotherly shove' move in the fourth quarter—to seal a gritty win at the Chiefs' Arrowhead Stadium.

The game was a repeat of the two teams' high-scoring 38-35 Super Bowl classic last season, when Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes led his team back from a 10-point half-time deficit to claim victory. But while February's Super Bowl was a free-scoring shoot-out, Monday's game, played out in driving rain, was dominated by defense, with occasional flashes of inspiration from Hurts and opposite number Mahomes.

This time however it was the Eagles who came back from 10 points down, shutting out the Chiefs in the second half after trailing 17-7 at the break with a superb defensive display.

Hurts—who was sacked five times by a rampant Chiefs defense—came up with the decisive play when it mattered, dropping a 41-yard completion into the arms of receiver DeVonta Smith to leave the Eagles with a first and goal from the one-yard line midway through the fourth quarter.

On the next play, Hurts burrowed over for the

touchdown to give the Eagles their first lead of the game. The Chiefs came within a whisker of snatching victory on their final possession, but Mahomes' superb long-range pass intended for Marquez Valdes-Scantling was dropped by the receiver at the Eagles goal-line.

'We found a way'

The Chiefs subsequently turned over the ball on downs to leave Philadelphia celebrating a win that takes them to 9-1 -- the best record in the NFL.

"It was two teams going at it in a hostile environment, and we showed up when it mattered the most," said Hurts, who finished with 150 passing yards but scored two rushing touchdowns.

"That was a complete team win, a complete team effort. Sloppy weather, but we found a way." The Eagles quarterback was quick to praise the defense's contribution for the victory. "We didn't play well offensively," Hurts said. "Our defense definitely had us strong in that game. They did a great job. "In this league you get to this time of the year you just want to find ways to win and that's the only thing that matters."

"We're winning games but we're yet to play our best ball. There's a lot to be encouraged by. But we're far from the finished product." Kansas City took the lead in the first quarter, Mahomes finding Justin Watson with a three-yard pass into the end zone to cap a 10-play 80-yard drive.



Kareem Jackson

But the Eagles responded via a D'Andre Swift rushing touchdown to level it up. The Chiefs went 10 points clear at the break after a Travis Kelce touchdown and a 43-yard Harrison Butker turnover.

The Eagles defense took over after the break though, and Hurts rushed over from 10 yards to close the Chiefs' lead to three points at 17-14.

Hurts' fourth quarter touchdown completed the comeback. "We haven't played great football in the second half all season," Mahomes said. "We've got to find a way to finish off games offensively."

Earlier, Denver Broncos safety Kareem Jackson

was suspended four games by the NFL on Monday for repeated violations of league rules meant to protect players, including a fumble-forcing hit in a Sunday victory. Jackson slammed the top of his helmet into the chest and face mask of Minnesota quarterback Josh Dobbs only 82 seconds into the first quarter, knocking loose a fumble that led to a Denver field goal in a 21-20 home triumph.

Jon Runyan, the NFL vice president of football operations, issued the ban for a violation when "a player lowers his head and makes forcible contact with his helmet against an opponent."

The Broncos, 5-5 and one game out of an AFC playoff spot, will be without Jackson for games against Cleveland, Houston, the Los Angeles Chargers and Detroit. He can return ahead of a December 24 game against New England. In a letter to Jackson, Runyan called his hit on Dobbs "a serious violation of the playing rules." "You had an unobstructed path to your opponent and the illegal contact could have been avoided," Runyan added.

"Illegal acts that are flagrant and jeopardize the safety of players will not be tolerated. "On the play in question, you lowered your head and delivered a forceful blow to the shoulder and head/neck area of an opponent when you had time and space to avoid such contact," Runyan told Jackson. "You could have made contact with your opponent within the rules, yet you chose not to." — AFP



Kuwait and Golden Eagle players in action.



Qadisiya and Al Jaish players fight for ball.

Kuwait defeat Golden Eagle from India in handball league

KUWAIT: The Third round of the 26th Asian Men's Handball Club League Championship (Qualification for Super Globe - 2024) resulted in Al-Khaleej from Saudi Arabia defeating the title holder Al-Najma from Bahrain with the score of 25-21, and is now leading the group with 6 points while Al-Najma remained in third place with 2 points.

The host Al-Qadisiya defeated Al-Jaish from Iraq 25-23, Al-Arabi from Qatar defeated Shabab Saïda from Lebanon 36-23, Al-Sharja from UAE defeated Sai from India 51-20 and Kuwait defeated Golden Eagle from India 43-19.

The standings of the first group is Al-Khaleej first with 6 points, Kuwait with 4 points, Al-Najma 2

points, Al-Gharrafa and Golden Eagle pointless.

The second group is lead by Al-Arabi from Qatar and Al-Sharja from UAE with 6 points each, then Al-Qadisiya with 4 points, Shabab Saïda 2 points, Al-Jaish from Iraq and Sai from India pointless.

Al-Khaleej goalkeeper Mohammad Abdelhussein said his club's fans proved to be number one in the current tournament. He said "the fans support from the start had a very good effect on the players and gave them the motive to give the best performance in every match", and asked them to stay with the team until the end of the tournament.

Meanwhile coordinator of the medical emergencies at the Asian Men's Club League Championship Ali Mukhtar said Health Ministry is keen on supporting Sports Championships in Kuwait through providing paramedics, advanced equipment and ambulances.

He said "we have a fully equipped clinic at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdallah Complex", adding that so far there were no incidents except for one of the referees who became exhausted.

all the matches every weekend until the end of the season. "Competing for an Olympic medal is really motivating. "Sacrifices will have to be made to be able to spend time with the team," he added.

Dupont, 27, collected his second player of the year award - he also won in 2021 - having helping his club Toulouse to a record-extending 22nd French championship. The scrum-half pipped France team-mate and La Rochelle No 8 Greg Aldritt as well as Bayonne's former Les Bleus fly-half Camille Lopez to the award during a glamorous ceremony in the French capital. French rugby's poster boy Dupont has played two Toulouse games since hosts France were knocked out of the Rugby World Cup by eventual winners South Africa.

The men's sevens at the Olympics will be held at the Stade de France in July, months after October's disappointing result in the 15-a-side code in the same stadium. Former Australia captain Michael Hooper will also be bidding for a place at the sevens tournament. Dupont's France football counterpart, the Paris Saint-Germain superstar Kylian Mbappe is also keen to take part in the Games on home soil. — AFP

Skipper Dupont to make 'sacrifices' for Olympics bid

PARIS: France captain Antoine Dupont said on Monday he will have to make "sacrifices" if he is to feature for his country at next year's Olympic Games in Paris. Last week, it was announced he would miss the Six Nations and a chunk of the club season to focus on preparing to play seven-a-side rugby at the Games.

The 27-year-old is set to join France's sevens squad in January before World Rugby sevens circuit events in Vancouver on February 23-24 and Los Angeles on March 2-3. "It's been a while that discussions have been underway for me to be made available for this team," Dupont told Canal+ after being named the Top 14's player of the season.

"We'll have to adjust things, I won't be able to play

Italy pledge to 'repeat something fantastic' at Euro 2024

LEVERKUSEN: A relieved Italy midfielder Davide Frattesi said the European champions will try and "repeat something fantastic" in Germany next year after Monday's 0-0 draw with Ukraine in Leverkusen secured qualification for Euro 2024. The result means Italy, who failed to qualify for both the 2018 and 2022 World Cups either side of their Euro 2020 triumph, avoid another embarrassing tournament miss.

The two nations finish level on 14 points behind England in Group C, but Italy have the better head-to-head record having won 2-1 in Milan in September. "We knew if we were unable to break the deadlock in the first hour, it would become really tough. Ukraine then made it a more physical match," Frattesi told RAI Sport. "We were under pressure, but overall it was a good performance. What mattered was that we qualified..."

"We suffered, but it was important to get through. Now we'll try to repeat something fantastic." The final score belied the true nature of the match, with Italy's high-octane attack and Ukraine's counter-attacking threat creating several chances for both teams.

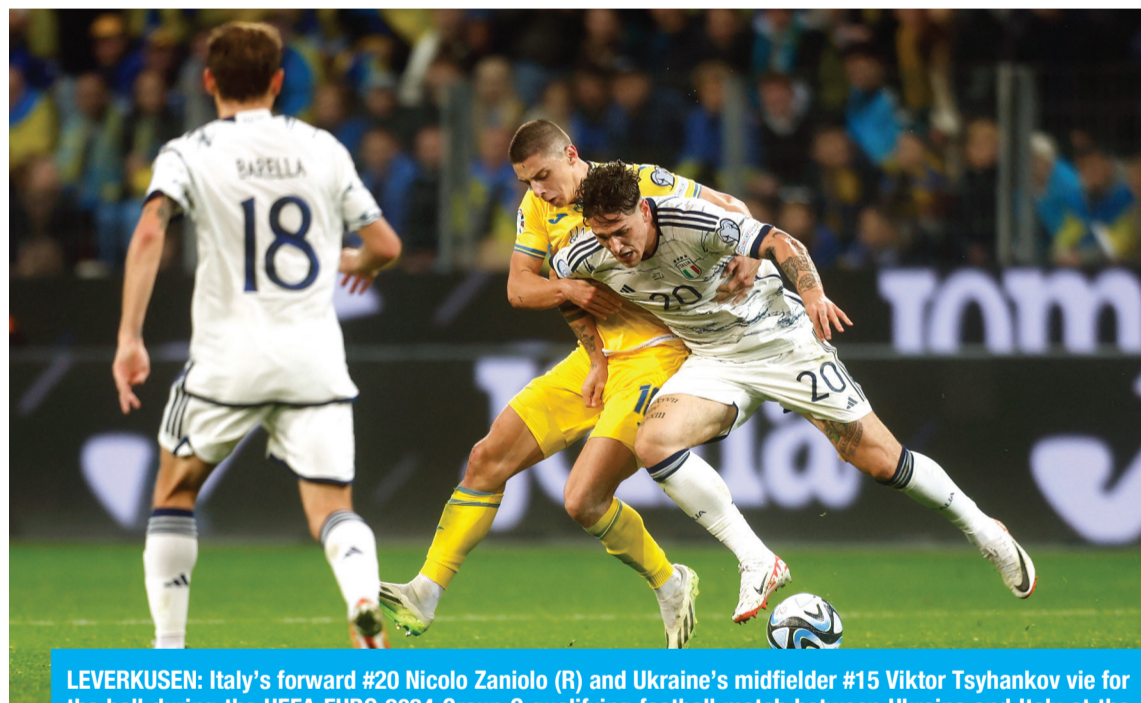
Ukraine had a late penalty appeal turned down, despite Italy midfielder Bryan Cristante looking to have made contact with Mykhailo Mudryk's foot in

injury time. "From my point of view that was a penalty, but again I was not there and it's only about my emotions," Ukraine coach Serhiy Rebrov told a post-match press conference.

Italy travelled to Leverkusen knowing they would progress by avoiding defeat, while Ukraine knew only a win would suffice. New Italy coach Luciano Spalletti has only been in charge for three months after Roberto Mancini surprisingly left for the Saudi Arabia national team job. "We had to keep attacking—but Ukraine proved they are a very good team who gave us a lot of problems," Spalletti, who led Napoli to their first Serie A title since 1990 last season, said. Italy will go into either pot three or four for the tournament draw, which will take place on December 2 in Hamburg.

Spalletti added his team would "have a moment to pat ourselves on the back" before turning their focus to the finals in Germany, the site of their 2006 World Cup triumph. "Now, the level will step up. Now, the fun begins." Midfielder Nicolò Zaniolo said his side's nery qualification campaign, which included two losses to England and a draw with North Macedonia, would not dampen their hopes of defending the title.

"We had the right motivation. Italy must go to the Euros not just to take part, but to compete as reigning champions." Ukraine, forced to take the fixture to Germany due to the ongoing conflict with Russia, can still qualify, but will need to navigate the play-offs in March 2024. Mudryk was lively down the left for Ukraine and crafted a number of half-chances early, with his side denied by poor finishing. — AFP



LEVERKUSEN: Italy's forward #20 Nicolò Zaniolo (R) and Ukraine's midfielder #15 Viktor Tsyhankov vie for the ball during the UEFA EURO 2024 Group C qualifying football match between Ukraine and Italy at the BayArena Stadium in Leverkusen, western Germany. — AFP

Classifieds

Clinics & Hospitals

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadisiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381

Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir 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, Harvinder Singh S/o Baldev Singh, holder of Indian Passport No. W4660240, permanent address is Ward Number 7, Patti Nissoki, Mudki, Tehsil & Dist. Ferozpur (Pb.), India, now residing in Kuwait hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as Harvinder Singh. **#4562 - 22-11-2023**

I, MAHABOOB BASHA SHAIK, holder of Indian Passport No L8616981, issue at Kuwait, Indian permanent address 5/46 GUNTIKADADA PALLI, PULIKUNTA, GALIVEEDU, CUDDAPAH, ANDHRA PRADESH, 516267, INDIA, present hereby declare that henceforth my name will be reads as under

Given name MINUDDIN and Surname SHAIK. **#4561 - 22-11-2023**

I, Deva Lenil, Holder of Indian Passport No. T8278498, issued at Kuwait Indian permanent address 100, 1 Palavesa Muthan Thattu Naduvakurichi Vill, Thayyarmadam- Post, Sathankulam Taluk, Thoothukudi-Pin- 628653 Tamilnadu, India present hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name Deva Lenil and surname Antony Jegan Raja. **#4560 - 22-11-2023**

I, Musthafa Kamal Malik Batcha S/o Musthafa Kamal holder of Indian Passport No. L4906329 having permanent address 8/2067,2068, KMS Nagar, Mel-

acauvery, Kumbakonam, Thanjavur, Melakaveri, Tamil Nadu, 612002, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: Nazeer Ahamed (given name) and Musthafa Kamal (surname). **(C#4070) 21-11-2023**

I, Miqdad S/o Abbas Ali, Holder of Indian Passport No. Z2815566, having permanent address 132/4 Kotawala Baag Ratlam, 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 **(C#4559) 20-11-2023**



KUWAIT: Australia's forward #15 Mitchell Duke (center) jumps for the ball with Palestine's defender #05 Mohammed Saleh (center right) during the 2026 FIFA World Cup AFC qualifiers football match between Palestine and Australia at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium in Kuwait City on November 21, 2023. — AFP photos



KUWAIT: Supporters wave Palestinian flags prior to the 2026 FIFA World Cup AFC qualifiers football match between Palestine and Australia at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium in Kuwait City on November 21, 2023.

Souttar scores again as Australia labour to victory over Palestine

Son scores twice as S Korea outclass China

By Abdellatif Sharaa and Agencies

KUWAIT: It was another day of love for Palestine at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium during the match between Palestine and Australia in the second round of qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup to be held in the US, Canada and Mexico, and Asia Cup in Saudi Arabia in 2027. Kuwait fans gave full support to the Palestine team in agreement with the political leadership that instructed Kuwait Football Association to host matches of the Palestinian team due to the Zionist entity's assault on Gaza.

Omani referee Qasim Al-Hatimi asked for one minute of silence before the start of the match in support of Palestine and Palestinians. The match was strongly competitive, with

the Palestinians giving a gallant performance and were very close to win the match, but luck went against them as the Australians were able to score their only winning goal through defender Harry Souttar in the 18th minute of the first half.

This result gives Australia 6 points out of two matches in first place of Group I, while Palestine is in third place with 1 point, as Lebanon has two points after drawing with Bangladesh 1-1. The first half was of medium technical level as the Palestinians wasted several chances, most dangerous of which was in the first minute of added time by Tamer Siyam.

Earlier, skipper Son Heung-min scored a brace and set up the other as South Korea made it two victories from two for the 2026 World Cup qualifying with a 3-0 win in China on Tuesday. Son

silenced a sell-out crowd of more than 40,000 in Shenzhen with two goals in the first half, the first a penalty and the second a clever header from a corner just before half-time.

South Korea wrapped the game up in the dying minutes through a bullet header by Jung Seung-hyun—from a Son free-kick — and they top Group C with a perfect six points. Jurgen Klinsmann's side thumped Singapore 5-0 last week to begin their qualifying campaign in style and they were in much the same mood against an outclassed China.

With attacker Son looking in the groove, the Koreans dominated and were ahead after 11 minutes. Wolverhampton Wanderers forward Hwang Hee-chan was brought down in the box and Tottenham Hotspur's Son duly stroked home the penalty.

It was all South Korea. Forward

Cho Gue-sung headed just over the bar when unmarked from a corner and Son stung the palms of overworked goalkeeper Yan Junling. Hwang In-beom's direct free-kick fizzed just past Yan's post midway through the half but China should have been level three minutes before the break with their first real chance.

South Korean full-back Lee Ki-je was dispossessed and Liu Binbin crossed for Tan Long, but the Chinese forward's first-time snap shot went narrowly wide. They were to regret it on the stroke of half-time. Son, who had been denied moments earlier by the legs of Yan, leapt unmarked from a corner to direct his deft header back across the China goal and into the far corner.

South Korea, who reached the last

16 of the 2022 World Cup, should have gone 3-0 ahead soon after the restart but China defender Zhu Chenjie cleared off the line, before Jung put the game to bed late on. Thailand are level on three points with China after winning 3-1 away at Singapore.

The top two from each of the nine groups in Asian qualifying for the World Cup in North America will progress through to the final qualifying stage. In other qualifiers in the region, substitute Mohanad Ali scored in the 97th minute for Iraq as they won 1-0 at Vietnam and top Group F with six points.

Iran surrendered a two-goal lead and had to settle for a point with a 2-2 draw at Uzbekistan. North Korea thrashed Myanmar 6-1 away and Tajikistan won in Pakistan by the same scoreline.

England held by North Macedonia in Euro qualifier

SKOPJE: England narrowly avoided an embarrassing defeat against North Macedonia as they wrapped up a place among the top seeds at Euro 2024 with a 1-1 draw in Skopje on Monday. Gareth Southgate's side trailed to Enis Bardhi's first-half strike before Jani Atanasov's own goal gifted the visitors their second-half equalizer at the Tose Proeski Arena.

Having finished as Group C winners with six victories and two draws, England will be in the first pot of Euro 2024 seeds alongside Germany, Portugal, France, Spain and Belgium. That should increase their chances of landing a favorable group when the draw for next year's tournament in Germany is made on December 2.

But whoever England are pitted against, Southgate will know they need a significant improvement on this spluttering display to live up to their billing as one of the favorites to win the Euros. "I thought that given we had already qualified and everything had been achieved the mentality of the players was excellent," Southgate insisted.

"The quality on the ball was good on a difficult pitch. Just that final pass or finish was difficult to find." Southgate this week challenged fourth-placed England to leapfrog Argentina, France and Brazil to become FIFA's number one team in the world rankings.

But even beating North Macedonia, 66th in the rankings, proved beyond Southgate's injury-hit side. The current international break has appeared an unwanted distraction for England players in the midst of draining Premier League and Champions League campaigns.

Southgate admitted England had been "flat" in their lacklustre 2-0 win over Malta on Friday and once again they were unable to impose themselves on inferior opposition. The initial signs were promising for England as Declan Rice smashed a fierce drive against the post from 20 yards.

England crushed North Macedonia 7-0 at Old Trafford in June, but it soon became obvious there



SKOPJE: England's midfielder #11 Jack Grealish fights for the ball with North Macedonia's midfielder #21 Jani Atanasov (L) during the UEFA Euro 2024 group C qualification football match between North Macedonia and England at National Arena "Todor Proeski" in Skopje. — AFP

would be no repeat. The ineffective Ollie Watkins, deputizing for rested England striker Harry Kane, headed wide when he should have hit the target.

England frustration

For all their territorial dominance, England were fortunate not to concede a penalty when Harry Maguire stumbled and clearly shoved Elif Elmas. Referee Filip Glova waved play on and VAR upheld his decision to North Macedonia's intense frustration.

If that was a debatable call, North Macedonia's luck quickly turned as they benefitted from an equally dubious decision in the 41st minute. When Rico Lewis jumped to head the ball away from Bojan Miovski, the England left-back's out-stretched arm caught the striker in the head, sending him sprawling in the area.

It looked like accidental contact by Lewis and a theatrical fall from Miovski, yet Glova awarded a penalty after checking the pitchside monitor. Jordan Pickford dived to his left to save Bardhi's spot-kick, but the Macedonian alertly pounced on the rebound to fire home from close range.

Faced with an England debut to forget, Manchester City left-back Lewis tried to make amends with a low strike from the edge of the area, but Stole Dimitrievski was equal to the teenager's effort. Trent Alexander-Arnold was again playing in a central midfield role rather than the right-back position he occupies for Liverpool. — AFP

Hornets sting Celtics, Jokic tossed in Denver win

LOS ANGELES: The Charlotte Hornets overcame a 45-point display from Jayson Tatum to end Boston's six-game winning streak with a thrilling 121-118 overtime victory in the NBA on Monday. The Celtics arrived in Charlotte as the hottest team in the league after surging to the top of the Eastern Conference with an 11-2 record.

Joe Mazzulla's side looked to be cruising towards a seventh straight victory after opening up an 18-point lead midway through the second quarter before taking an 11-point lead into half-time. But a resurgent Charlotte side hit back in the final two quarters, outscoring Boston 54-43 in the second half to send a pulsating clash into overtime.

Miles Bridges then drained a 25-foot three-pointer to put Charlotte 119-116 up with seven seconds remaining. Tatum earned three free-throws with five seconds left but after sinking the first two, he missed the third, which would have tied the game, before Gordon Hayward made two free throws for Charlotte to seal victory.

"We just played physical," Bridges said after the Hornets win. "We know they're the best team in the league so we knew we'd have to play physical to give us a chance. "It feels like this could be the start of something for us," added Bridges after what was only Charlotte's fourth win of the season.

Bridges finished with 14 points while point guard LaMelo Ball led the Charlotte scoring with 36, including five three-pointers from 11 attempts. Hayward added 20 points while Mark Williams had 18. Tatum's 45-point haul included seven three-pointers and came from 15-of-28 shooting from the field, with 13 rebounds and six assists. Kristaps Porzingis added 17 for the Celtics, who remain top of the Eastern Conference at 11-3.

Jokic, Malone ejected

The Denver Nuggets overcame the ejection of two-time Most Valuable Player Nikola Jokic and head coach Michael Malone to dig out a 107-103 road win over the Detroit Pistons. Jokic was tossed in the first half after giving up two technical fouls for disputing calls on separate incidents.

Malone was ejected after arguing a call late in the first quarter. With Jokic playing no part in the second half, it was left to Reggie Jackson to help shepherd the NBA champions to victory. Jackson led the Nuggets scoring with 21 points while Kentavious Caldwell-Pope added 20 points.

Elsewhere, Giannis Antetokounmpo delivered another monster performance, scoring 42 points as the Milwaukee Bucks blew out the Washington Wizards on the road, winning 142-129. Antetokounmpo shot 20 of 23 from the field and finished with 13 rebounds and eight assists in a virtuoso individual display which came after a 40-point performance in Saturday's win over Dallas.

Antetokounmpo has averaged 29.9 points per game in November. Damian Lillard added 22 points for Milwaukee, while Khris Middleton finished with 18. Six Milwaukee players posted double-digit points totals. In San Francisco, the Golden State Warriors ended a run of six straight defeats with a 121-116 win over the Houston Rockets.

Stephen Curry, who brought home the win after playing the entire fourth quarter, led the Warriors scoring with 32 points while Klay Thompson returned to form with a 20-point haul which included five three-pointers.

"At this stage you just need to win a game," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "That was the focus tonight. That's why I played Steph the whole fourth. He was brilliant all night." In Texas the San Antonio Spurs slumped to a ninth straight loss in a 124-99 defeat to the Los Angeles Clippers.

The defeat leaves San Antonio bottom of the Western Conference. French No.1 draft pick Victor Wembanyama was restricted to nine points, with Keldon Johnson leading San Antonio's scoring with 22. Paul George's 28-point display helped the Clippers bag their second straight win. — AFP