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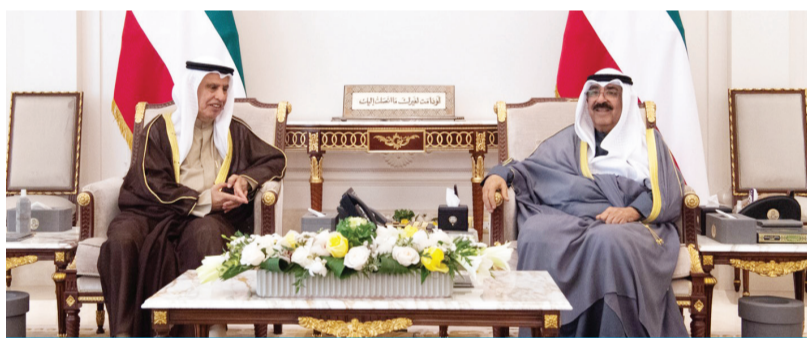


# Cabinet approves amnesty, restoration of citizenships

National Assembly to debate grilling against prime minister

By B Izzak

## Crown Prince meets stateless agency chief



KUWAIT: HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives on Monday at Bayan Palace Chairman of the Central System for the Remedy of the Situation of Illegal Residents Saleh Al-Fadhlah. — KUNA

KUWAIT: The Cabinet on Monday approved an Amiri decree granting amnesty to a number of prisoners and ordering the restoration of citizenships that were revoked a decade ago for political reasons. The decree grants amnesty to about two dozen tribesmen, including a former lawmaker, who are serving a two-year jail term after they were convicted of holding outlawed tribal primary elections ahead of last year's general polls that were later annulled by the constitutional court. Around 22 of the tribe will benefit from the amnesty and are expected to be freed within days.

The decree also returned Kuwaiti citizenship to Ahmad Al-Jabr, the owner of a local television station that backed opposition groups. Jabr's citizenship was

revoked a decade ago, among a large number of Kuwaitis who were seen supporting the opposition. Writing on his X account, Jabr thanked HH the Amir and the political leadership for reinstating his citizenship. The decree also grants amnesty to a number of Kuwaitis serving various jail terms for illegally collecting donations for the Syrian revolution against President Bashar Al-Assad.

Meanwhile, the National Assembly is scheduled to debate a grilling against HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah filed by MP Muhallal Al-Mudhaf over allegations he failed to implement contents of the historic address of HH the Amir delivered in June 2022, and that he refused to answer questions sent by MPs. The lawmaker also charged that there is uncertainty and confusion about the public policies of the prime minister.

The prime minister has the right to demand a delay for two weeks, and it is up to the National Assembly to decide. After the grilling debate, MPs can file a non-cooperation motion against the prime minister, which if approved by a simple majority of the elected members, will go to HH the Amir, who will decide whether to dismiss the prime minister or dissolve the Assembly.

The lawmaker also alleged that the prime minister has failed to carry out necessary political reforms envisaged by HH the Amir in his address. Mudhaf also charged that public policies adopted by the prime minister have been characterized with uncertainty, ambiguity and confusion. He also said the prime minister has refused to answer a host of questions sent to him by several lawmakers under the pretext that they were unconstitutional.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### 66,584 driving licenses revoked

KUWAIT: The interior ministry is sending messages to 66,584 expatriates notifying them of the cancellation of their driving licenses due to reasons such as death, being out of the country or changes in conditions. Holders have been instructed to surrender their licenses, and failure to do so may result in fines and immediate revocation if caught driving. Expatriates with expired residencies abroad must follow procedures for obtaining new licenses upon their return.

#### Lightning strikes kill 18 in India

AHMEDABAD: At least 18 people were killed in lightning strikes across western India's Gujarat state during unseasonably intense storms on Sunday, officials said. At least 20 people were killed during the heavy rains, with at least 18 of them due to lightning, Gujarat state authorities said in a statement late Sunday. At least 40 animals were also killed. Such big rainstorms are not expected in Gujarat during winter months, and fierce downpours caught many off guard. — AFP

#### First human case of H1N2 in UK

LONDON: UK public health officials on Monday said they had confirmed the first human case of a swine flu strain similar to one that has been circulating in pigs. The variant of the H1N2 virus was confirmed in an individual who had been tested by their doctor after experiencing respiratory symptoms. It has not previously been detected in humans in the country, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) said. The H1N1 pandemic in 2009 was the first major influenza outbreak in the 21st century. — AFP

## Truce in Gaza extended by 2 more days

GAZA: The Zionist entity and Hamas will agree to prolong a truce in Gaza that had been due to expire on Tuesday, mediator Qatar said, as captive and prisoner exchanges were set to continue. With just hours to go before the so-called "humanitarian pause" was to end, both Hamas and the Zionist entity had been under international pressure to avoid

a return to battle. Qatari foreign ministry spokesman Majed Al-Ansari said "an agreement has been reached to extend the humanitarian truce for an additional two days in the Gaza Strip".

Hamas confirmed in a statement "that an agreement has been reached with the brothers in Qatar and Egypt for an extension of the temporary humanitarian pause for an additional two days, with the same conditions as the previous truce." Qatar — with the support of the United States and Egypt — has been engaged in intense negotiations to establish and prolong the truce in Gaza. Hamas, which runs Gaza and triggered the latest round of fighting by launching a bloody cross-border raid last month, said it was drawing up a new list of hostages for release.

Meanwhile, the office of Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said it had informed families of the identities of hostages to be released on Monday, the last day of the initial four-day truce. The Zionist entity has been clear that the pause is designed to allow Hamas to free more of the hostages it is holding since the Oct 7 attack. But both sides are under pressure to build on the break in hostilities to allow humanitarian aid to reach civilians in Gaza, where the Zionist entity's campaign against Hamas has left almost 15,000 dead, mostly Palestinian civilians.

The Qatari announcement came after US President Joe Biden, top EU envoy Josep Borrell and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg all joined

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## Support for Hamas soars in West Bank

RAMALLAH: In Palestinian cities in the occupied West Bank, long the turf of president Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah party, the green flag of Islamist rival Hamas is flying ever higher thanks to prisoner-captive exchanges. For three nights, Palestinians have celebrated the return of dozens of detainees freed from Zionist jails, in exchange for women and children seized during Oct 7 attacks by Hamas fighters.

That has seen the popularity of Hamas soar in the West Bank, run by Abbas' Ramallah-based Palestinian Author-

ity (PA). Ahmed Abdelaziz, 63, joined the celebrations on Sunday. "I'm here in solidarity, and because I appreciate what Hamas has done. Seeing these young people get out of prison thanks to the resistance, I'm overjoyed," he said. "The joy of the prisoners' families, the mobilization of the people, all that is pushing me towards supporting Hamas."

In Ramallah, freed prisoners carried on the shoulders of their supporters and draped in the Hamas flag said they prayed for "God to give strength to the resistance" — referring to Hamas and the other armed groups in Gaza. "They say Hamas are terrorists, but we are all Hamas," shouted the crowd. In Al Birch, a Ramallah suburb where the elected Hamas mayor was detained by the Zionist entity at the start of the war, a few yellow Fatah flags can be seen.

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RAMALLAH: A bus transporting Red Cross staff and Palestinian prisoners released from Zionist jails drives through supporters holding Hamas flags in the occupied West Bank early on Nov 26, 2023. — AFP

## US Palestinian students shot in hate crime

NEW YORK: US President Joe Biden is "horrified" by the shooting of three university students of Palestinian descent in the US state of Vermont in what authorities believe was a hate crime, the White House said Monday. "The president and the first lady were horrified," Press Secretary Kar-

ine Jean-Pierre told reporters. "These students were taking part in a uniquely American tradition, gathering with family and loved ones to celebrate Thanksgiving. They should be back in school with their classmates, not in a hospital room."

US Attorney General Merrick Garland warned Monday of increasing threats from "domestic violent extremists" amid growing attacks against minority groups, as he vowed a full investigation into the shooting of the three men. Police said a man

had been arrested in connection with the wounding of the three university students in Burlington, Vermont, as authorities probe what they believe was a "hate-motivated crime". Burlington Police Chief Jon Murad said the suspect, 48-year-old Jason Eaton, was expected to appear before a judge Monday.

Garland said the Department of Justice was closely monitoring the impact that the Zionist-Hamas war may have in "inspiring foreign terrorist

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This undated handout photo shows Hisham Awartani, Tahseen Ali and Kenan Abdulhamid, who were shot on their way to a family dinner. — AFP



## Local

# Your campsite can harm the environment

## Kuwait's annual camping season lasts till March 15



A camping site on the outskirts of Kuwait City.



By Passant Hisham

**KUWAIT:** The eagerly anticipated camping season in Kuwait has become a highlight for residents, offering a unique escape from the monotonous routine of the year. The four-month camping season in Kuwait began on Nov 15 and ends on March 15.

However, beyond the enjoyment, concerns arise about the sustainability of campsites due to the misuse of nature and environmentally unfriendly activities, posing severe threats to the ecosystem. Several factors contribute to these risks, with plastic waste, organic waste, soil erosion and a lack of awareness about camping regulations being the most perilous.

### Plastic waste

Jenan Bahzad, Secretary-General of the Kuwait Environment Protection Society, warned against the use of single-use plastic items during camping, such as plates, bags, spoons and cups. Disposing of these items introduces unnatural and toxic components into the environment, persisting for over 400 years. This not only harms the soil's quality and fertility in the long term but also endangers living organisms, as animals may mistake these plastic tools as food, leading to their eventual demise.

### Organic waste

Bahzad emphasized the adverse consequences of leaving food residues as organic waste in the envi-

ronment. These remnants create visual and odor pollution, causing hygiene problems that may discourage campers from revisiting the same area. Each individual's impact results in the degradation of camping spaces, forcing campers to explore new areas that eventually suffer the same pollution fate. This cycle continues until there are no clean camping spaces left.



Jenan Bahzad

### Soil erosion

Soil erosion, as outlined by Bahzad, is a complex issue exacerbated by various camping activities, including riding motorcycles, buggies, random camping in non-designated areas, use of cement for constructing camps and making earthen fences or mounds to define the camp boundaries. These actions damage the upper soil layer, disrupting the food cycle for animals and insects dependent on plant growth. Furthermore, soil erosion can lead to accidents and deaths on public streets, desertification and a loss of fertile land, contributing to hunger, poverty, unemployment, forced migration and



increased climate change-related risks, according to the World Health Organization.

### Lack of awareness about camping regulations

Bahzad underscored that the aforementioned environmental effects result from a disregard for camping regulations enforced by the Kuwait Municipality and Kuwait Environment Protection Society. These regulations prohibit activities such as damaging the natural environment, constructing fixed facilities, making

earthen boundaries, soil dredging, open dumping or burning of waste, hunting wildlife and paving camps with harmful materials like asphalt or cement.

Human intrusion emerges as a significant factor behind these negative impacts on the environment. It is crucial to recognize that enjoying the camping season without considering the consequences of one's actions on the surroundings is not worth jeopardizing the lives of people, animals and plants, ultimately risking the overall quality of life on land.

In my view

## A human being's message



Dr Khalid Al-Saleh

Local@kuwaittimes.com

Compassionate mother, how did you receive your children, as they kept them away from you out of fear for your well-being. You the child who has been away from his mother and returned and did not find her. You the elderly man who lived all your life with your companion until you saw her motionless between the rubble, who did not answer your call for the first time.

You the father who buried his children though you kept them for this mission. You the friend from whom I knew everything about — what made you be in the middle of the storm? I no longer know anything about you...how can we deal with those tragedies and this misery with papers full of letters and words — words motionless bodies cannot read!

These are stories of human beings born to dream but trapped in the nightmare of a heroism whose price is measured in souls. Born to hate, yet burdened by anger and curses, they are thrust into the tumult of a world that demands sacrifice without asking permission. They become symbols of others' greed and history's retribution, confronted with doors of death each bearing a name and a slogan.

People speak of the fate of heroes and the cost of success, chanting "Long live my country" without some knowing its location on a map or others holding the identity of its occupiers. All carry its flags, screaming away from its pain, only to return weeks later, thirsty for shouts I can no longer hear. Rockets roar overhead, and they all become my substitutes, judging my death while preoccupied with righteous calls. How can I disappoint those who guided me, offering advice and wisdom?

It is a duty to fulfill, a fate to embrace and my story will die only to be reborn in another time, in the same place. The scene repeats, chants grow louder, and phrases are written in all languages, conveying a simple truth: "I am still a human being searching for happiness, organizing my dreams," absent from the vast array of alphabets and words.

Mercy for me on earth and heavens, but for you, dreams and wishes endure.

## Workshop to shed light on novel trends in cardiac imaging

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwait Cancer Control Center at the Ministry of Health announced the holding of a workshop next Saturday on the latest developments in nuclear medicine in imaging heart diseases. The head of the Nuclear Medicine Department at the center, Dr Abdul Redha Abbas, said in a press statement on Monday that the workshop aims to help reduce catheterization operations in light of the presence of a large number of diabetic and heart patients. He added that the workshop revolves around heart diseases by diagnosing them in general and using nuclear imaging to per-



Dr Abdul Redha Abbas



Dr Al-Shaima Al-Shammari

fuse the heart muscle in a way directed to serve the patient in particular.

He pointed out that the workshop will enable participating doctors to learn about the applications of nuclear medicine in the field of cardiac im-

aging, explaining that these applications are carried out in a non-invasive (non-surgical) manner. This will help in identifying cardiovascular diseases and determining optimal treatment methods.

He stated that diagnostic procedures using nuclear medicine play a pivotal role in the management of cardiovascular diseases and contribute to reducing death rates as these diseases are among the most common causes of death according to the World Health Organization.

Nuclear Medicine Consultant and Head of the Nuclear Medicine Department at Amiri Hospital Dr Al-Shaima Al-Shammari said that the workshop addresses the latest developments in imaging heart diseases, such as arterial disease, sarcoidosis, and carditis, and aims to educate nuclear medicine and cardiology doctors, technicians, and radiologists about the latest devices and protocols in diagnosing and following up on the treatment of patients. — KUNA



CAIRO: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), in cooperation with the Egyptian Red Crescent, launched on Monday a new humanitarian relief aid convoy to help ease the suffering of Palestinians in Gaza Strip.

## KRCS and Egypt launch new aid convoy to Gaza

**CAIRO:** Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), in cooperation with the Egyptian Red Crescent, launched on Monday a new humanitarian relief aid convoy to help ease the suffering of Palestinians in Gaza Strip. In a statement, KRCS Vice President, Anwar Al-Hasawi, said that the humanitarian aid convoy provided to Gaza Strip includes 35 trucks loaded with medical supplies, food, and



clothing materials, amounting to about 500 tons.

Al-Hasawi added that these trucks will be directed to the city of Al-Arish in preparation for their delivery to Palestinian brothers in Gaza Strip, stressing that they come to meet the needs of the Palestinian Red Crescent.

The Kuwaiti official stated that the total aid from the State of Kuwait until this moment amounted to about 1,300 tons, which included, in addition to about 40 ambulances equipped with full medical equipment. He pointed out that more than 80 percent of the aid entered Gaza Strip, expressing his appreciation to the Egyptian Red Crescent for the continuous cooperation and coordination to deliver this humanitarian aid. Al-Hasawi stressed the continuation of the aid that comes from the perspective of the humanitarian and social responsibility of the State of Kuwait, expressing his thanks to all the parties supporting this work, including donors, banks, companies and charitable societies.

In turn, the Executive Director of the Egyptian Red Crescent Society, Dr Rami Al-Nazer, said in a similar statement to KUNA that immediately after the outbreak of events in Gaza Strip, coordination kicked off between the Egyptian Red Crescent Society and the National Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the world to coordinate the provision of the necessary aid according to the needs received from the Palestinian Red Crescent. Al-Nazer noted the rapid response of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society in providing relief aid and humanitarian support by land and air. This aid included relief materials and ambulances via the air bridge coming from the State of Kuwait with 28 aircraft to Al-Arish Airport. — KUNA

## Ghazali Road to be closed on Tuesday

**KUWAIT:** The Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport announced that it will, in coordination with the General Traffic Department, close Al-Ghazali Road in both directions on Tuesday and Wednesday for specific hours at night. The authority said in a press statement Sunday that the closure period will last four hours during the two days from one in the morning until five in the morning. —KUNA



# Zain Kuwait showcases digitization solutions to transform oil facilities

## Company sponsors 6th Kuwait Corrosion Conference



Wadha Al-Khateeb with Zain officials at the company's booth.



Zain presents its most advanced solutions.

**KUWAIT:** In a move to reflect its role in accelerating the digital transformation of Kuwait's key industries, Zain announced its sponsorship and participation in the 6th Kuwait Corrosion Conference and Exhibition, organized by the Association for Materials Protection and Performance (AMPP) – Kuwait Chapter. The event hosted some of the country and region's biggest oil, gas, and energy players, and was attended by CEO of the Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) Wadha Al-Khateeb.

The company's participation in this prominent event reflected the role it continues to play as one of the private sector's main digital transformation

enablers, empowering companies and government agencies from across key industries to embrace digitization. This is especially true within the local oil & gas sector, which is considered the backbone of the nation's economy, as Kuwait is one of the world's biggest oil producers.

Through its dedicated booth at the event, Zain showcased a wide range of digital solutions, cloud services, and other key applications it offers to oil, gas, and energy companies to digitize their workflows and elevate efficiency. This includes solutions to monitor and evaluate the integrity of oil assets, reduce risks of corrosion in pipelines and other fa-

cilities, and more by using drones and other advanced tech tools. In recent years, Zain has doubled down on its strategic efforts to digitalize the local oil & gas industry. The company heavily invested in tech solutions such as 5G, drones, digital applications, managed cloud services, and more to empower companies to embrace digitalization.

Zain offers a number of key tools to oil & gas companies, including migrating infrastructures to more agile ones on the cloud, leveraging on 5G technologies, as well as a wide range of reliable, secure and efficient datacenter, cloud, and connectivity solutions. The company also covers an

extensive range of cybersecurity solutions, as well as rig connectivity tools through its UAV division, Zain Drones.

The 6th Kuwait Corrosion Conference and Exhibition covered a wide range of topics that are having an increasing impact on the oil, gas, and energy industries, such as digital transformation, artificial intelligence, big data, and cloud computing. These technologies and more are paving the way for a new era for this vital industry, helping companies and governments elevate efficiency, increase productivity, reduce risks, and achieve sustainable goals.



UAE's frigate 'Al-Hesen' docked at Kuwait's Shuwaikh Port.



Kuwait's Rear Admiral Brigadier Hazza Al-Alatti, UAE Ambassador Dr Matar Al-Nayadi and other officials during the ceremonial reception of UAE frigate Al-Hesen.



UAE Ambassador Dr Matar Al-Nayadi



The ceremonial reception



Kuwait's Rear Admiral Brigadier Hazza Al-Alatti

## UAE frigate Al-Hesen docks at Shuwaikh Port

**KUWAIT:** UAE's frigate 'Al-Hesen' docked at Kuwait's Shuwaikh Port on Sunday in a visit to the country to bolster the relations between the two navies and exchange of skills. Kuwait's Rear Admiral Brigadier Hazza Al-Alatti gave a statement during the reception of UAE Ambassador Dr Matar Al-Nayadi saying, Al-Hesen's visit is a great opportunity for both forces to partake in an exchange of capabilities and to foresee systems and devices of

the latest tech being used.

Al-Alatti welcomed Al-Hesen and its crew embodying the essence of camaraderie and deep-rooted ties between both fleets. On his behalf, the UAE ambassador mentioned that bilateral relations have a bearing of cooperative means encompassing the GCC initiative. He said he looks forward to the launching of the joint Takamol I exercise.

His statement to KUNA was furthered with his manifestation of the vessel as it stands as one of the most important facets of their Naval Fleet, manufactured by the Abu Dhabi Co. for ship building subsidiary of EDGE Military Industries Group. He said, "Bilateral cooperation with Kuwait continues in a wide variety of sectors that offer a lot of opportunities, noting that the trade exchange between the countries climbed to \$11.9 billion in 2022. — KUNA

## Gulf Center at KU, Awqaf hold lecture on need of moderation

**KUWAIT:** The Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies Center at Kuwait University held a lecture regarding moderation in the presence of Dr Yaqoub Al-Kandari, Acting Director of the Center for Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies at Kuwait University as well as University employees and a number of diplomats.

At the outset, Dr Al-Mutawa welcomed the attendees and stressed the importance of holding these valuable lectures that benefit everyone. Dr Abdullah Al-Sharika seemed to touch on moderation, stating that Islamic law regulated the existing relationship between Muslims and others. "It was based on good dealing, justice and fairness, considering that spreading and promoting the culture of coexistence." "Moderation and combating extremism is everyone's responsibility. Moderation is an Islamic principle stated in the Holy Quran and the Sunnah," Al-Sharika said.

He considered moderation as one of the most important governing values in institutional work, stressing that moderation aims to spread tolerance between religions and sects, unify national unity, preserve the rights of non-Muslims in Kuwait, and also fight racism and discrimination as well as bullying in its forms. The lecture had a role in identifying the successful Kuwaiti experience in the field of promoting the values of moderation and exploring the mechanisms as well as discussing the main elements that contributed to the success of the Kuwaiti model and its applicability to other societies.

Dr Al-Sharika stressed that the Center works to consolidate moderation concepts in society according to methods and programs based on Islam that would enhance national unity, renounce violence and extremism, pointing out "the concept of moderation from a religious perspective is an approach based on moderation based on wisdom and exhortation."



Dr Al-Mutawa and Dr Abdullah Al-Sharika.

## Men over 50 likely to get prostatic hyperplasia: Expert

**KUWAIT:** Head of urology unit at Jaber Armed Forces Hospital Dr Mohammad Al-Ghanim said benign prostatic hyperplasia affects about 85 percent of men above 50 years old, adding the older men have more chances to get this disease. For example, the possibility of getting the disease may reach 90 percent after the age of 70. Dr Al-Ghanim spoke during his participation in the 16th conference of Kuwait Urological Association in cooperation with the Arab Association.

He said a workshop was held on the scientific solutions through the use of laser in prostate and it was held in the presence of specialists from the UK. The most modern medical technologies including laser and evaporation are available in Kuwait and are being done pro-



Dr Mohammad Al-Ghanim

professionally and with high efficiency in the country.

He said complications of BPH can be urinary symptoms, infections, painful urination, which also includes weak urine flow, repeated urination and possible urine retention. Among the risks of this case is weakened bladder muscle which leads to permanent retention, formation of bladder stones, while some patients may suffer renal failure, he said.

As for the treatment, Al-Ghanim said it is treated in conservative way or by drugs or surgery. It is largely a doctor's decision depending on the stage of the disease and the diagnosis. The treatment also depends on the patient's medical history and tests to ascertain the size of the bladder and prostate, renal function and urine tract to make sure no infections are there, he added.



MODERATOR  
Dr. Jawad Feghalli

PANELISTS

## Photo of the day



KUWAIT: A commercial aircraft flies against the backdrop of the rising Beaver full moon on Nov 27, 2023. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Syrian writer Ahed Sabiha speaks during the symposium.

## Translation links civilizations and cultures: Writer

KUWAIT: The 46th Kuwait International Book Fair discussed within its cultural activities the topic, 'Translation Between Theory and Practice' during a symposium that was held at the Culture Gallery on the sidelines of the book fair which continues until Dec 2.

Well-known Syrian translator and writer Ahed Sabiha, participating in the symposium said, translation plays a fundamental role in connecting civilizations and cultures. He cited the inter-connections between the Greek and Arab civilizations. "This is evident in even modern Western civilizations," he said. Sabiha said, "The language changes with time and that the translated text is lost between the two languages. It is a dynamic language that I learned," he said.

"From experience and reading," he said if one has to work in the field of translation, one needs to be an avid reader. A good translator is one who translates the text literally and not in spirit, pointing out that "in translation there are no theories because it is considered a relationship between two languages."

It is noteworthy that Sabiha is a Syrian translator and writer licensed in English Language and Literature from the University of Damascus. He wrote articles and screenplays, translated dozens of articles into Syrian and Arab newspapers and magazines. He translated a number of books into Arabic as well. He also runs a workshop for training in literary translation and qualifying translators. — KUNA

# Kuwait demands immediate end of aggression on Gaza

## Mahdi denounces international silence amid Zionist brutality

CAIRO: Kuwait demanded on Monday the need to end the Zionist entity's aggression on Gaza, calling for the importance of opening borders to bring humanitarian aids to the people. This came during the General Secretary of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development Dr Khaled Mahdi's speech in the fifth session of the Arab population and development council, held at the Arab League's headquarter.

Mahdi added that the meeting comes in light of the situation Gaza is going through, including killing children, women and elderly, brutally demolishing homes and violating international laws. He denounced the clear international silence that goes against all humanitarian values, which will have criminal effects in the future on international humanitarian laws' respect.

Mahdi condemned the brutal aggression committed by Zionist entity on the Palestinian people, including preventing the entry of humanitarian aid, targeting hospitals, schools, shelters and killing thousands of people. He also praised the role of the Arab-Islamic Ministerial committee, which aims to stop the aggression on Gaza.

Mahdi pointed out that the suffering the region is experiencing comes as a result of climate change, namely the disaster on Libya's city of Derna, as well as other natural disasters that killed thousands of people. Mahdi also announced, as part of Kuwait's follow-up, launching the report "Sensing the Social Risks Associated with Demographic Changes in the Population of the Arab World," which was proposed by Kuwait previously. He added that the report was prepared with the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, in co-operation with the Technical Secretariat of the Arab Council for Population and Development.

He also added that the report aims to identify a variety of social risks that the Arab region suffers from, including population growth and distribution and discussing the new challenges facing the Arab countries' social policies in light of a new global economic arrangement.

He pointed out that these issues come from the weak performance of social safety networks, the spread of multidimensional poverty, high unemployment rates, with various other issues.



CAIRO: Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, Dr Khaled Mahdi addresses the fifth session of the Arab Council for Population and Development in Cairo. — KUNA

Dr Khaled Mahdi heads the Kuwaiti delegation to the Arab ministerial meeting, which includes Dr Mona Al-Alban from the general secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development. — KUNA

## NBK holds masterclass in partnership with IE Business School

KUWAIT: Reflecting its dedication to develop its human capital with the best-in-class training and development programs, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continues the series of masterclasses provided for its employees in collaboration with IE Business School, Madrid. This series covers a variety of topics relevant to the banking business, including digital transformation, innovation, effective change management, communication and negotiation skills.

Titled "Effective Change Leadership", this masterclass is the fifth in this series, which was delivered by Prof. Art Uprety, an experienced strategy, business transformation and leadership coach at IE Business School, Madrid.

The masterclass shed light on the radical transformations in business and operating models due to rapid technological advances, changes in consumer behavior, seismic geopolitical shifts, and the climate crisis, and organizations need to be able to adapt them to the needs of the changing environment on all levels. The lecturer showcased a study of sponsoring and having overall ownership for implementation of strategic transformations across geographies, industries and change contexts which revealed that leading transformational change is mentally, emotionally and physically demanding for leaders and therefore stressful.

Art also shared with participants some practical ideas on how to become a more effective change leader by avoiding the 'doom loop' of ineffective behavior, and how the leader can break free of the doom loop to enter the gain loop.

Speaking on this, Maryam Al-Nasralla, Talent Management Manager, Group Human Resource-



Maryam Al-Nasralla



es at National Bank of Kuwait, said: "Investing in the human capital is instrumental in NBK's culture and strategies, as well as a fundamental part of its endeavors to achieve sustainable growth and build a generation of qualified banking leaders for the future."

"We firmly believe that raising the efficiency of our employees and qualifying them with the latest training and development programs ensures the continued growth of NBK's business in the future at all levels, especially that the bank's local and regional leadership is mainly based on developing high-caliber human capital," she added. "NBK makes its utmost endeavors to develop its human resources, harnessing all capabilities to drive their career development; and therefore, places the initiatives for learning, training and upskilling the youth at the heart of its strategic plans," she noted.

Art brings with him over 30 years of business experience in strategy, business transformation, leadership and top management consulting. He has worked with top management consulting firms in UK, Western Europe, Asia, Middle East and the CIS region. Art was a Partner and Managing Director at the Boston Consulting Group (BCG). He also specializes in supporting CEOs and their senior teams in developing and executing winning strategies to create competitive advantage in the changing business environment. Founded in 1973, IE Business School is one of the largest business schools in the world, consistently ranked among the top international educational institutions by international magazines and newspapers, Forbes, The Economist, Financial Times and Bloomberg.



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6 teens go on trial over 2020 beheading of French teacher

## Curfew partially lifted in Sierra Leone capital; calm restored

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Zionist soldiers transfer detained Palestinians out of the Gaza Strip on Nov 21, 2023. — AFP

# Palestinians demand news of Gazans held by Zionist entity

## 10 doctors from Al-Shifa, Indonesian hospitals likely among more than 100 detained

**RAMALLAH:** Palestinian authorities have demanded the Zionist military release information about more than 100 people thought to have been detained in Gaza during its assault on the territory following Hamas attacks. The head of the Palestinian Authority's commission for prisoners, Qaddura Fares, said on Sunday that Zionist officials had told him at one point their side had made 105 arrests. But he said the Zionist entity had not announced the number publicly and there was "no detail about what has become of these people". "We fear they may have been killed after being detained and interrogated," he told AFP.

The Zionist military told AFP on Monday that it could not comment on the issue at this stage. The UN humanitarian affairs office OCHA said in a report that Zionist forces had detained people walking to southern Gaza from the north on the Salah al-Din Road during the Zionist

military campaign on Gaza. The Zionist entity had ordered Palestinians to evacuate the north through the road, claiming it was a safe corridor.

Red Cross medical worker Ramadan Hossu said in a video released by his organization that Zionist forces strip-searched and handcuffed him after detaining him on the road. One displaced Gaza resident, Sahar Awwad, told AFP that Zionist soldiers detained her son Mohammed as he tried to leave southern Gaza on Nov 12. "He was freed after nine days" after "undergoing torture," Awwad said. OCHA said families had been separated by Zionist forces at a checkpoint on the Salah al-Din road. One child "had to cross through the checkpoint on his own following his father's arrest," it said.

Healthcare Workers Watch, an independent NGO monitoring the Zionist attacks on healthcare workers and healthcare facilities in Palestine, said 10 Gazan

doctors were detained by Zionist forces after heading south through the Zionist-designated safe route.

The doctors include five who worked at the Indonesian hospital: Dr Mohammed Abu Al-Jubain, general practitioner, Dr Iyad Abed, consultant vascular surgeon, Dr Akram Abu Odeh, head of orthopedics, Dr Akram Hussein, head of surgery and Dr Ahmed Abu Aita, a general practitioner. The Indonesian hospital, one of northern Gaza's largest healthcare facilities, was so severely damaged in Zionist attacks that it may never open again, according to Al Jazeera.

Zionist tanks and snipers had laid siege to the hospital in Beit Lahia for days, before targeting its main generator and raiding it in the early hours of Friday, shortly before a four-day truce between the Zionist entity and Hamas came into effect.

Also among the detained doctors

are Momin Abu Khudair, a dentist, and four physicians with Al-Shifa hospital, including hospital director Mohammad Abu Salmiya. The World Health Organization voiced concern on Friday about the fate of Abu Salmiya, whom Zionist forces detained over the facility's alleged use by Hamas.

The WHO said in a statement that the chief of the biggest hospital in the besieged Palestinian territory had been arrested last Wednesday along with five other health workers, while they were taking part in a UN mission to evacuate patients.

Since then two of the six have reportedly been released, but "we do not have information about the well-being of the four remaining health staff, including the director of Al-Shifa hospital," the statement added. The UN agency called for "their legal and human rights to be fully observed during their detention".

A spokesperson for the Zionist army said on Saturday that hospital director Mohammad Abu Salmiya was being questioned. "We are currently moving forward with ... questioning him over the fact that he was the head of a hospital that was really sitting on top of an entire terror network," Doron Spielman said. "How could he not know what's happening? We have hostages that were on, you know, CCTV in his hospital."

The Zionist entity launched bombardments and a ground offensive in Gaza after Hamas men infiltrated the Gaza-Zionist border on Oct 7 in an attack which the Zionist entity says killed around 1,200 people. The Gaza health ministry says the Zionist offensive has killed nearly 15,000 people, mostly civilians. The bombardments have flattened homes and displaced 1.7 million of Gaza's 2.4 million people, according to the United Nations. — Agencies



CASABLANCA: Thousands of Moroccans demonstrate on Nov 26, 2023 in Casablanca, calling for a permanent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and the suspension of diplomatic ties with the Zionist entity. — AFP photos



A woman carries a flag with a picture of Handala, an emblem of the Palestinian spirit, as she marches alongside Moroccans wearing keffiyehs and scarves adorned with Palestinian symbols during the demonstration.

## Tens of thousands of Moroccans rally against normalization

**CASABLANCA:** Tens of thousands of Moroccans demonstrated Sunday in the country's commercial capital Casablanca, calling for a permanent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and the suspension of diplomatic ties with the Zionist entity. The fledgling rapprochement between the North African country and the Zionist entity had made steady progress since 2020 when the two governments normalized relations, but that has been thrown into reverse by the deadly conflict in the Palestinian territory.

Morocco, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain all established diplomatic ties with the Zionist entity under the Abraham Accords in 2020, which were negotiated under the administration of former US

president Donald Trump. An AFP journalist reported Sunday that demonstrators in Casablanca waved Palestinian flags and demanded that Rabat suspend ties with the entity.

"It is not a truce that we need, but a permanent ceasefire" to give a chance "for peace, for the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state, with its capital in Jerusalem," socialist MIP Nabila Mounib told AFP on Sunday. She said she hoped to see "the return of all those exiled in the Palestinian diaspora" and the release of Palestinian prisoners. Hassan Bahadou of the anti-normalization alliance of leftist parties and Islamists that organized the protest said: "We also condemn the silence of negligent Arab regimes allied with the Zionist entity."

Pro-Palestinian demonstrations had declined in recent years in Morocco but have surged since the Gaza war broke out. Moroccan cardiologist Safae Abderazzak told AFP she was demonstrating "to condemn the (Zionist) aggression against our Palestinian brothers and against our fellow doctors who are being tortured and martyred in Gaza".

Analysts say scrapping the normalization deal with the Zionist entity is unlikely given the huge diplomatic reward Rabat obtained from then US president Donald Trump in return for signing the deal.

Trump gave US recognition to Morocco's sovereignty over Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony whose status has been disputed with the pro-independence Polisario Front for decades. "Morocco is in a very delicate situation," Aboudahab told AFP. On the one hand, there was "a profound desire to maintain a win-win relationship" with the Zionist entity and, on the other, "the pressure of the street."

Public support for the normalization deal inside Morocco has been on the decline, said Morocco-Zionist relations specialist, Jamal Amiar. It stood at just 31 percent last year, according to a poll published by Arab Barometer, and is likely to have fallen much lower since Oct 7. But he said he expected the government to stand by the agreement regardless, because the alternative was a "diplomatic mess" with the United States and the potential loss of the "huge prize" it had secured in Western Sahara. — AFP

## Calls for war crimes probe in Palestine, Zionist entity

**GENEVA:** UN rights experts called Monday for independent investigations into alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity carried out in the Zionist entity and the Palestinian territories since Oct 7.

Morris Tidball-Binz, the United Nations special rapporteur on extrajudicial executions, and Alice Jill Edwards, the special rapporteur on torture, issued a joint statement stressing the need for "prompt, transparent and independent investigations" and accountability. "Independent investigators must be given the necessary resources, support and access required to conduct prompt, thorough and impartial investigations into crimes allegedly committed by all parties to the conflict," they said in the statement.

"The duty to investigate war crimes and crimes against humanity, including any act of summary or extrajudicial killing, torture or other outrages on human dignity, is a fundamental legal obligation." The independent experts are appointed by the UN Human Rights Council but do not speak on behalf of the United Nations.

Their statement urged the international community to ensure that all those responsible for the most serious rights violations — especially those with command responsibility — be "promptly brought to justice". They pointed out that "there is no statute of limitation" for war crimes and crimes against humanity, which fall under so-called universal jurisdiction.

That means that courts in any country can prosecute those responsible, regardless of their nationality and the country where the crimes were committed. "We encourage all states to play a proactive role in identifying key suspected perpetrators and helping to facilitate prosecutions through the principle of mutual legal assistance," they said. — AFP

## International

# Curfew partially lifted in Sierra Leone capital; calm restored

## No information made public on identity, motives of armed assailants who caused unrest

**FREETOWN:** Daily life began to resume amid a heavy security presence in Sierra Leone's capital Freetown on Monday, as the government partially lifted a curfew imposed after armed clashes erupted in the city. Early on Sunday, armed assailants stormed a military armory and several prisons, sparking battles with security forces that lasted for hours in the capital.

Sierra Leone is an English-speaking West African country that has been going through a political crisis following elections in June. On Monday, the government lifted the daytime curfew that it had imposed and urged people to resume their daily lives while remaining vigilant. It said a curfew would remain in place between 9:00 pm (2100 GMT) and 6:00 am.

"While we encourage citizens to return to their normal activities ... we continue to urge everyone to remain calm but vigilant, and to report any suspicious or unusual activity to the nearest police station", the information ministry said in a statement overnight.

In Freetown, some stores and banks opened and traffic had restarted on Monday, but schools remained shut, according to an AFP correspondent in the city. Checkpoints had been set up on the main roads, where members of the security forces were searching vehicles.

Meanwhile, many questions remained over what happened in the country, amid fears of another coup in West Africa, where Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Guinea have all experienced putsches since 2020. The current president, President Julius Maada Bio, himself led a coup in the 1990s before handing over power and returning to politics as a civilian years later.

Early on Sunday, armed assailants tried to break into a military armory in Freetown, sparking clashes with security forces. Several prisons were also stormed, with some prisoners reportedly escaping. Late on Sunday, Bio said that calm had been restored after what he described as an attempt to undermine peace and stability.

"Most of the leaders have been arrested. Security operations and investigations are ongoing," Bio said on national television, adding that the government would "ensure that those responsible are held accountable". The government has not identified the attackers or their motives. No death toll from the violence, nor any information on those arrested, has been officially released. Videos posted on social media appeared to show men in uniform under arrest in the back or beside a military pick-up truck.

### American support

West African bloc ECOWAS described Sunday's events as an attempt to "disrupt peace and constitutional order", language commonly used for political coups. Sierra Leone's various partners called for "constitutional order" to be respected.

Former president Ernest Bai Koromo of the opposition APC said in a statement that one of the soldiers assigned to guard him had been shot dead at close range and that another had been abducted. He said he strongly condemned Sunday's attacks and called for calm and order. The US embassy said it "strongly supports President Bio in his call for national unity", in a message posted on social media. "We honor and remember those who gave their lives yesterday in defense of Sierra



**FREETOWN:** A soldier with the Sierra Leonean military police greets a man along an empty road on Nov 26, 2023 as a national curfew was imposed following an armed attack. — AFP

Leone's Constitution and government", it said. Bio was in June re-elected to a second term as president, winning 56.17 percent of the vote, according to the results published by the electoral commission. The main opposition party disputes

the results of the presidential election, as well as legislative and local elections in June. A political crisis ensued until an agreement was reached in October following mediation by the Commonwealth, the African Union and ECOWAS. — AFP

## Bangladesh arrests thousands in 'violent' crackdown: HRW

**DHAKA:** Bangladesh has launched a sweeping and violent crackdown on opposition parties to "eliminate competition" ahead of general elections, including arresting almost 10,000 activists, Human Rights Watch said Monday.

As well as the thousands arrested, many from the key Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), a staggering number also face charges. According to the BNP, about half of its five million members "face politically motivated prosecution", HRW said. "The arrests, they are not leaving anyone behind, from senior level to the ground level," one activist told HRW.

Prisons are now at more than double their capacity, the rights group said. The South Asian nation of

around 170 million people holds a general election on Jan 7, with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina eyeing her fourth consecutive term in power.

The BNP and other parties have held mass protests calling on Hasina to quit power and let a neutral government run the polls, demands the government has said are unconstitutional. "Bangladesh authorities are carrying out mass arrests of political opposition in a clear attempt to quash the opposition and eliminate competition ahead of the general elections", HRW said.

New York-based HRW, who called it a "violent autocratic crackdown", said at least 16 people have been killed since protests escalated in October, including two police officers. More than 5,500 people have been wounded. There was no immediate response by the government to the HRW report, but authorities say that those arrested should face justice for a range of violent crimes.

The police, who have not said how many people they have arrested, accuse the opposition of torching nearly 290 vehicles, mostly buses, during nationwide strikes and transport blockades since October 29. Police said

at least six people had been killed in the violence.

HRW based its report on multiple witness interviews, as well as analysis of videos and police reports. It said it had found "evidence that security forces are responsible for using excessive force, mass arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, torture, and extrajudicial killings".

Bangladesh is one of the world's largest garment exporters — accounting for around 85 percent of its \$55 billion in annual exports — with many global brands purchasing clothes from its factories. "Diplomatic partners should make clear that the crackdown will jeopardize economic cooperation", HRW said.

Julia Bleckner, senior Asia researcher at Human Rights Watch, said credible elections could not be held under such conditions. "A free election is impossible when the government stifles free expression and systematically incapacitates the opposition, critics, and activists through arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearance, harassment, and intimidation," Bleckner said.

The BNP on Sunday said at least 16,625 members had been arrested since October. They include most of its leadership, most notably the BNP's de

facto chief Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir. "Bangladesh has not seen such a massive crackdown on the opposition in the country's history," BNP spokesman A.K.M Wahiduzzaman told AFP. "A blanket of fear has spread all over the country".

Prosecutors and lawyers said in the past two weeks at least 526 BNP officials and activists were convicted and sentenced, mostly in absentia, over what the party said were "trumped up" charges. Wahiduzzaman said that thousands of BNP members were now in hiding.

Party officials said that when the police raided a house looking for them, they had beaten or arrested family members in their place. "Fearing arrest and torture, they've fled their homes," he said. "Many are living on grain fields under open sky."

A.R. Khan Liton, a BNP student leader in the southern coastal district of Satkhira, said he and other party members were terrified. "Almost every BNP activist I know has fled their homes," Liton told AFP. "They don't spend more than two nights in one place. Some are spending the night in paddy or sugarcane fields." — AFP

## Truce in Gaza extended by...

### Continued from Page 1

a global chorus urging the parties to extend their temporary break in fighting. As part of the truce deal, Hamas has so far released 39 Zionist captives, with more expected later Monday. The Zionist entity has freed 117 Palestinian prisoners under the terms of the agreement. In parallel, 19 foreign nationals have also been released by Palestinian fighters.

Tearful reunions of families and captives have brought relief from images of civilian death and suffering in the seven-week war. "That's our goal, to keep this pause going beyond tomorrow so that we can continue to see more hostages come out and surge more humanitarian relief in to those in need," Biden said Sunday. The White House welcomed the agreement to extend the truce. "We would of course hope to see the pause extended further, and that will depend upon Hamas continuing to release hostages," National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told reporters. Borrell called for the pause to be prolonged "to make it sustainable and long lasting while working for a political solution".

Inside Gaza, the health ministry complained that, despite the four-day pause, no fuel had been taken to generators in hospitals in the north of the Gaza Strip. And Yahya Al-Siraj, the mayor of Gaza City, complained that without fuel the territory could not pump clean water nor clear waste accumulating in the streets, warning of a potential public health "catastrophe".

The Zionist entity has faced mounting pressure to extend the pause mediated by Qatar, the United States and Egypt, though its leaders have dismissed any suggestions of a lasting halt to the offensive.

"We continue until the end — until victory," Netanyahu said in Gaza on Sunday, on the first visit by a Zionist premier since 2005. Wearing military fatigues and surrounded by soldiers, Netanyahu vowed to free all the hostages and "eliminate Hamas", in footage posted online by his office.

In another sign of mounting international concern, UN rights experts called Monday for independent investigations into alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity carried out in the Zionist entity and the Palestinian territories since Oct 7. Morris Tidball-Binz, the United Nations special rapporteur on extrajudicial executions, and Alice Jill Edwards, the special rapporteur on torture, issued a joint statement stressing the need for "prompt, transparent and independent investigations". — AFP

where in the United States over the Zionist-Hamas war. A police statement said two of the victims were in stable condition, and the third suffered "much more serious injuries." It said two are US citizens and one a legal resident. Police confirmed that two of the young men were wearing keffiyehs, the traditional black and white Palestinian scarf. "In this charged moment, no one can look at this incident and not suspect that it may have been a hate-motivated crime," Murad said.

All three victims — Hisham Awartani, Tahseen Ali and Kenan Abdulhamid — were graduates of the Ramallah Friends School, a private Quaker school in the West Bank, and are now attending different universities in the northeastern United States, according to a statement from a spokesman for the victims' families. "As parents," it read, "we are devastated by the horrific news that our children were targeted and shot.... We call on law enforcement to conduct a thorough investigation. We will not be comfortable until the shooter is brought to justice."

The Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee said, "We have reason to believe this shooting occurred because the victims are Arab." Bernie Sanders, the independent US senator from Vermont and a past presidential candidate, called the attack "shocking and deeply upsetting," adding, "Hate has no place here, or anywhere." The shooting came as civil rights groups have warned of a rise in hate crimes against Arab and Muslim Americans — as well as growing anti-Semitism. Last month, a six-year-old Palestinian-American boy was stabbed to death in Illinois and his mother was wounded. A 71-year-old suspect has pleaded not guilty. — AFP

## Support for Hamas soars...

### Continued from Page 1

But for marcher Tareq Al-Omla, Hamas — listed as a terrorist organization by the United States, the Zionist entity and the European Union — has more legitimacy than Fatah. The group was acting on "behalf of the Palestinian people who are attacked every day by (Zionist) soldiers and settlers", he said. Asked about the violence against civilians at Zionist kibbutzim and a rave during the Hamas attacks, demonstrator Jihad Ayuch told AFP: "The story started before that, and the real question is what (the Zionist entity) has been doing to the Palestinians before October 7."

Observers expect the crowds marching in the West Bank to swell in coming weeks. Hamas still holds around 200 captives, among them soldiers who are excluded from the exchange agreement, and will want to use them to secure the release of all or some of the more than 7,000 Palestinian prisoners still detained in the Zionist entity, many of them far more prominent than the youngsters and women freed so far.

The agreement in force since Friday effectively only concerns women prisoners and those under 19 years of age, almost all of whom are unknown to the wider public. In 2011, more than 1,000 Palestinians were exchanged for Zionist soldier Gilad Shalit, who had been taken prisoner by Hamas five years earlier. Among those released was Yahya Sinwar, Hamas' leader in Gaza, who is suspected of master-

minding the Oct 7 attack and is now being lauded in the West Bank.

"The prisoners are what have always united all Palestinians," said Qaddura Fares, head of the PA's commission for prisoners. The PA has itself been largely silent on the subject of the releases and, like the image of its president Abbas, conspicuously absent from the recent celebrations. It is a political choice, according to one of its officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "The Authority doesn't want to be associated with what Hamas is doing."

Political commentator Jihad Harb said the West Bank crowds "want to stand up to the (Zionist) authorities, who don't want any celebrations or shows of support for the Palestinian resistance". If even more releases follow after the current agreement, he predicted, "the popularity of Hamas will double". No election has been held in either the Gaza Strip or the West Bank since 2006, and support for rival parties can only be measured in the street.

The last vote was won by Hamas in both parts of the Palestinian territories and was followed by factional fighting that saw them split — Hamas in power in Gaza, and secular Fatah running the West Bank. Years of political stagnation have followed, while Zionist settlements and army raids have expanded in the West Bank. The Zionist entity has normalized ties with some Arab states whose governments are de-prioritizing the Palestinian issue.

Hamas has put it back on the international agenda, though at a high human cost. "We Palestinians were all waiting for this day," said Um Muhammad, mother of freed Palestinian prisoner Noorhan Awad. "We thank the resistance who made an effort so they get released thanks to the blood of the martyrs." — AFP

## US Palestinian students shot...

### Continued from Page 1

organizations, home-grown violent extremists and domestic violent extremists both here in the United States and abroad". "There is understandable fear," Garland said, as the United States experiences a "sharp increase" in threats and attacks against Jewish, Muslim and Arab communities across the country since Oct 7.

The FBI and other federal agencies "are investigating the tragic shooting of three men of Palestinian descent in Vermont. That investigation, including whether this is a hate crime, is ongoing," Garland said in remarks delivered in New York city. The Justice Department "is remaining vigilant in the face of the potential threats of hate-fueled violence and terrorism," he said.

In Burlington, police searched Eaton's apartment, outside of which the shooting took place on Saturday. Evidence seized there "gave investigators and prosecutors probable cause to believe that Mr Eaton perpetrated the shooting," Murad said in a statement. Police had earlier described the shooter as a white man with a handgun. "Without speaking," police said, "he discharged at least four rounds from the pistol and is believed to have fled on foot."

The incident occurred during high tensions, and occasional violence, on college campuses and else-



**GAZA:** Palestinians inspect the destruction caused by Zionist strikes on their homes in the village of Khuzaa, east of Khan Yunis, near the border fence between the Zionist entity and the southern Gaza Strip on Nov 27, 2023. — AFP

## International

# 6 teens go on trial over 2020 beheading of French teacher

## Teens never imagined identifying teacher to killer would 'go as far as murder'

PARIS: Six teenagers went on trial in Paris on Monday for their role in the 2020 beheading of teacher Samuel Paty, the first of two trials in a case that horrified France. The suspects, some wearing sunglasses and surgical masks, arrived holding their coats over their faces to disguise their identities before entering the juvenile court. The trial is being held behind closed doors given the young ages — between 13 and 15 years old — of the defendants at the time of the events. Only people directly affected by the case can attend the hearing. The press does not have access to the courtroom, guarded by police officers, and it is banned to report what is said during the hearings, even by quoting lawyers.

The 47-year-old history and geography teacher was stabbed and then beheaded near his secondary school in the Paris suburb of Conflans-Sainte-Honorine on October 16, 2020. His attacker, 18-year-old Chechen refugee Abdoullakh Anzorov, was shot dead at the scene by police.

The young, radicalized Muslim murdered Paty after messages spread on social media that the teacher had shown his class cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) from the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo. Paty had used the magazine as part of an ethics class to discuss free speech laws in France, where blasphemy is legal and cartoons mocking religious figures have a long history.

His killing took place just weeks after Charlie Hebdo republished the cartoons. When the magazine first used the images in 2015, Islamist gunmen

stormed its office, killing 12 people. Last month another teacher, Dominique Bernard, was killed in Arras in northern France by a young, radicalized Muslim. Like Anzorov, Bernard's suspected killer Mohammed Moguchkov also hailed from Russia's mainly Muslim North Caucasus region.

### 'Role of the minors'

Five of the adolescents on trial, who were 14 or 15 at the time of Paty's murder, are being tried for criminal conspiracy with intent to cause violence. They are accused of having been on the lookout for Paty and identifying him to the killer in exchange for money.

A sixth teenager, a girl 13 at the time, is accused of false allegations for wrongly saying that Paty had asked Muslim students to identify themselves and leave the classroom before he showed the cartoons. She was not present in the class. She arrived in the courtroom with her head completely hidden in the hood of her black down jacket.

Louis Cailliez, a lawyer for the Paty family, said he expected the defense team to explain away the defendants' actions as "errors of youth". But, he said, the trial needed to elucidate "the true reasons why these pupils committed the unforgivable". "He is eaten up with remorse," said one of the defendants' lawyers, Antoine Ory, about his client. "He is terrified, very worried about coming face to face with Samuel Paty's family."

A trial of eight adults also implicated in the

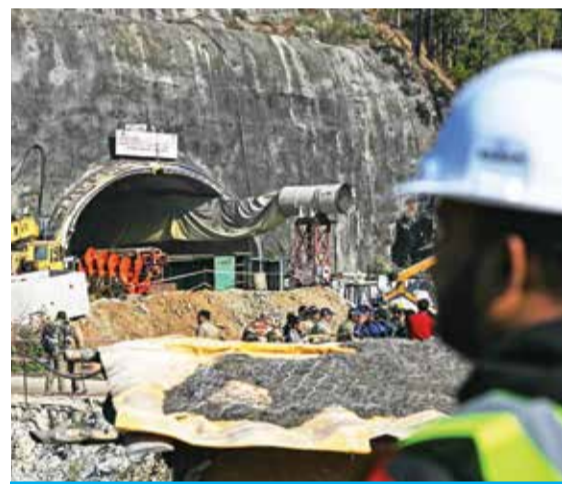


CONFLANS-SAINTE-HONORINE: A photo taken on Oct 16, 2023 shows a commemorative plaque for slain teacher Samuel Paty (portrait) near the Bois d'Aulne school in Conflans-Sainte-Honorine, outside Paris. — AFP

case is scheduled for late 2024. Paty's family see the trial of the teenagers as crucial, according to Virginie Le Roy, a lawyer representing his parents and one of his sisters. "The role of the minors was fundamental in the sequence of events that led to his assassination," she said.

During questioning, the teenagers swore that at most they thought Paty would be "flagged up

on social media", "humiliated" or maybe "roughed up" but they never imagined "it would go as far as murder". They now are high school pupils and risk two-and-a-half years in prison if convicted. "It is complicated," said Dylan Slama, the lawyer for one of the accused. "He will be associated with this for the rest of his life." The trial is scheduled to continue until Dec 8. — AFP



UTTARKASHI: A rescue personnel stands near an entrance of the Silkyara under construction road tunnel, during the final phase of a rescue operation, on Nov 23, 2023. — AFP

## Tearful families pray for Indian workers trapped in tunnel

PATNA: Indian officials have repeatedly promised 41 men trapped in a collapsed Himalayan tunnel for more than two weeks will be safe, but desperate relatives say they are pinning hopes on prayer. "Our only source of strength is God, as it is the last hope for us," said mother-of-three Musarrat Jahan, whose husband Mohd Sabah Ahmad is a migrant worker trapped behind the tons of rubble, concrete and earth in the bitterly cold mountain air. "We have more faith in God than anything", she said, speaking by phone from her home in the eastern state of Bihar, one of India's poorest. Most of the trapped men are migrant workers who left home to find employment, working on the Silkyara tunnel in northern Uttarakhand state, more than 870 kilometers (540 miles) away from Bihar state in the forested Himalayan foothills.

Jahan said she had spoken to her husband via a telephone exchange set up inside the tunnel with the help of her brother-in-law, who has been camping at the site since shortly after the accident on Nov 12. "My husband assured me that he is safe and hopeful to come out soon," she said. Rescue operations have been hit by repeated setbacks, including fears of further debris falling and the repeated breakdown of drilling machines snarled up by hitting metal girders trapped in the rubble. On Monday, military engineers began digging the final stretch by hand.

### 'Sleepless nights'

Guriya Devi has not stopped crying for her husband, 31-year-old Sushil Kumar. Devi said she has been glued to her phone, searching for new updates as the rescue stretched into its third week. "We are crying and going through sleepless nights ... But we are still hopeful that rescuers will succeed in their operation" she said. The workers were seen alive for the first time last week, peering into the lens of an endoscopic camera sent by rescuers down a thin pipe through which air, food and water are being delivered. Authorities say the men are healthy and safe. Abhishek Kumar, whose older brother Sonu Shah is among the trapped, said he cannot wait for the day he gets word he is free.

### 'Problems are increasing'

But the delay in getting good news has been traumatic, he told AFP by phone from his home in Bihar's Saran district. "Our wait is growing and our patience is stretching," he said. "We are now waiting for the end result," he said. "If the end is good, everything will be fine". The rescue operations have been an ordeal for the family members, with no imminent end in sight. Kumar said it was a matter of "serious concern" that the efforts have not been successful. "It appears difficulties and problems are increasing to safely rescue them," he said. He said his family had their hopes dashed already after officials said they were hopeful of being hours away from a breakthrough, only for that to turn to delays of days. Uttarakhand chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhama has vowed all the men would be rescued. "Do not worry, all the laborers will be taken out safely", he said. — AFP

## New search urged for missing Malaysia Airlines plane

BEIJING: Relatives of dozens of Chinese passengers who died when a Malaysia Airlines plane disappeared almost 10 years ago called Monday for a new investigation, as a Beijing court began hearing their fresh appeal for compensation. The MH370 jet vanished on March 8, 2014, carrying 239 people — mostly from China — en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing.

More than 40 families have filed lawsuits against Malaysia Airlines, the aircraft manufacturer Boeing, engine maker Rolls Royce and Allianz insurance group, state broadcaster CCTV said. The families' litigation requests focus on compensation and finding the truth behind the flight's disappearance, according to Zhang Qihuai, a lawyer quoted by CCTV.

Hardly any trace of the plane was found in a 120,000-square kilometer (46,000-square mile) Indian Ocean search zone, with only some pieces of debris picked up. The Australian-led operation, the largest in aviation history, was suspended in January 2017.

The families on Monday released an open letter addressed to Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, calling for a new search for the missing aircraft on a "No find, No fee" basis. "Our family members hope to search for flight MH370 on our own," the letter said, adding "family members are willing to invest their own money or cooperate with capable individuals and companies".

They asked for "effective communication" with the Malaysian government to kick off a new hunt. Outside the court, many relatives were on the verge of tears as they recounted stories of their loved ones, some holding pieces of paper saying "restart the search"

## New Zealand to scrap world-leading anti-smoking laws

WELLINGTON: New Zealand's plans for world-leading anti-smoking laws will be revoked, Christopher Luxon confirmed Monday after being sworn in as prime minister, in a move described as a "huge win for the tobacco industry". Former airline boss Luxon took over six weeks after his conservative National Party won national elections, ending a six-year Labour Party reign ushered in by Jacinda Ardern.



WELLINGTON: New Zealand's new Prime Minister Christopher Luxon speaks to the media during the swearing-in of the new government on Nov 27, 2023. — AFP

Luxon, 53, was sworn in as head of a new coalition government by New Zealand's governor-general in a ceremony in the capital Wellington. "It is an honor and an awesome responsibility," Luxon told reporters. The conservative said he would prioritize taming inflation and bringing down interest rates, and also confirmed he would scrap a so-called "generational smoking ban" adopted last year that stops sales of tobacco to anyone born after 2008.

Luxon said the tax revenue from ongoing cigarette sales would generate welcome income for the government, but also voiced concern that the ban would create a flourishing — and untaxed — black market. The move was criticized by anti-smoking groups as a step back for the country. "This is a major loss for public health, and a



BEIJING: Relatives of passengers of the missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 hold a sign reading "We Strongly demand a public trial of the Malaysia Airlines MH370 cases" close to a court building on Nov 27, 2023. — AFP

and "open, fair, impartial". Bao Lanfang lost her son, daughter-in-law and granddaughter in the disaster, and her husband died last year. "Personally, I do not care about the monetary compensation," the 71-year-old told the media. "What I want is that Malaysia Airlines gives me the truth. What happened to our loved ones? "What I want now is for them to resume the search and the investigation." Malaysia's transport ministry and Malaysia Airlines both declined to comment on the hearings. China's foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said on Monday that Beijing "attaches great importance to the follow-up work" into MH370's disappearance and "hopes that all parties will continue to maintain close communication".

### 'Unbearable'

It is unclear what jurisdiction the Chinese court has to enforce the claims for compensation against the de-

huge win for the tobacco industry, whose profits will be boosted at the expense of Kiwi lives," the Health Coalition Aotearoa — the Maori name for New Zealand — said in a statement.

The anti-smoking legislation, scheduled to start later this year, was designed to almost immediately reduce the number of people using tobacco products. While the number of adults smoking in New Zealand is relatively low at just eight percent, the previous government had envisioned a future where the country was completely smoke-free. As well as the steadily increasing age limit, the new law would have slashed the number of retailers able to sell tobacco products to a maximum of just 600 nationwide, a massive drop from the current figure of 6,000.

Originally unveiled by then-PM Ardern and praised by public health experts and anti-smoking advocates, a suite of near-identical measures were recently announced in the United Kingdom. Luxon focused on the need to revive the economy in his Monday remarks. "We have to reduce the cost of living and get inflation under control so we can lower interest rates and make food more affordable," he said.

Luxon said his new government would also focus in its first few months on restoring law and order and improving public services. The former Labour government struggled to control the rising cost of living, a global issue blamed in part on pandemic-related supply issues and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The previous prime minister, Labour Party leader Chris Hipkins, took over from Ardern in January. She had unexpectedly resigned, calling an end to her five-year period in office because she no longer had "enough in the tank".

Luxon said his cabinet would meet over the next two days to determine their plans for the first 100 days in office. National has also said it wants to crack down on crime, ban cellphones in schools and scrap planned fuel tax hikes. "A lot of our focus is on tackling the underlying cause of inflation," Luxon said. "That means a series of things to make sure we generate savings out of the public service and that government spending is prudent." Luxon became the country's 42nd prime minister following protracted coalition talks that came to an agreement on Friday. His National party has formed a three-party coalition with the conservative ACT and populist New Zealand First parties to govern in the 123-seat parliament. In a first for New Zealand, the deputy prime minister role will be shared in two 18-month stints. — AFP

endants. Each family filed for civil compensation of between 10 million yuan (\$1.4 million) and 80 million yuan (\$11.2 million), as well as moral damages of 30 million yuan (\$4.2 million) to 40 million yuan (\$5.6 million), CCTV reported.

The families of more than 110 other passengers have already reached a settlement with the defendants and received between 2.5 million and 3 million yuan, the broadcaster said. Gathering outside the court on Monday despite freezing temperatures, relatives were keen to talk to journalists.

Jiang Hui, whose mother was on flight MH370, said the opening of the hearing was "very comforting, and it is a turning point". "The survival of the relatives during these 10 years, the deterioration of their living conditions ... This really makes us very sad. So I hope that the legal relief can be realized as soon as possible. It is not difficult," he said. "Ten years have really been unbearable for us," added Jiang. The hearing was not listed on the court's public website, but Jiang wrote on social media this month the court hearings would continue until mid-December.

### Unsolved mystery

A US exploration firm launched a private hunt for MH370 in 2018, but it ended after several months of scouring the seabed without success. The disappearance of the plane has long been the subject of a host of theories — ranging from the credible to outlandish — including that veteran pilot Zaharie Ahmad Shah had gone rogue. In 2016, Malaysian officials revealed the pilot had plotted a path over the Indian Ocean on a home flight simulator but stressed this did not prove he deliberately crashed the plane. A final report into the tragedy released in 2018 pointed to failings by air traffic control and said the course of the plane was changed manually. But they failed to come up with any firm conclusions, leaving relatives angry and disappointed. — AFP

## Poor in west DRC unimpressed by anti-poverty drive

KIKWIT: DR Congo's president, who is seeking re-election, came to office pledging to help those in dire poverty, but in remote areas little has changed. Felix Tshisekedi, 60, is running for a second term in a Dec 20 election. After taking power in 2019, he waived primary school fees — his flagship social policy — and rolled out free maternity care in the capital Kinshasa.

More Congolese children are in classrooms than ever before. But most people in the Democratic Republic of Congo remain trapped in grinding poverty and see little change. In the small village of Camp Pay, in western DRC's Kwilu province, farmer Victor Mukala said he felt let down. "The head of state owes us a debt, he hasn't kept his promise," he said.

Despite its vast mineral wealth, the DRC is one of the world's poorest countries, plagued by corruption, mismanagement and conflict in its east. About two-thirds of the population of 100 million people live on under \$2.15 a day, according to the World Bank.

Tshisekedi's government is emphasizing its pro-poor social policies to voters ahead of next month's poll. Augustin Kabuya, the secretary general of the president's UDPS party, called free primary education a "great achievement". "Poor parents weren't sending their children to school," he said, explaining that the policy had put two million extra children in school nationwide.

### Packed classrooms

Free primary schooling has been widely praised but its implementation has been criticized. Valery Madianga, from the Kinshasa-based Research Centre for Public Finance and Local Development, told AFP that the quality of schooling had suffered.

Classes are now packed with 80-100 children, he said, piling huge workloads on teachers. The teachers are also impacted by soaring inflation, which in October had risen to 22 percent compared to the previous year, according to the International Monetary Fund. Life is tough for many, Madianga said, and many at the same time see a small elite enriching itself. — AFP

# Business

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2023

## Kuwait Times partners with Volvo Kuwait on unique journey

### Volvo car owners join cross-country drive from Kuwait City to Al Ula in Saudi Arabia

By Hawrah Al-Yakoob

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Times media team collaborated with leading luxury automotive brand Volvo Kuwait in an unprecedented journey. Volvo car owners were given an opportunity to take part in a cross-country drive from Kuwait City to Al Ula in Saudi Arabia. The 14-hour trip witnessed a variety of terrain and weather conditions amongst the natural Arabian backdrop.

Guided by Husaak Adventures, the tour across Al Ula elevated the experience with a diverse range of sightseeing, hiking and outdoor activities, with exclusive Volvo cars as the primary mode of travel throughout. The journey was planned to explore Al Ula through the eyes of a premium vehicle — a Volvo — with the features and capabilities to withstand and perform under any condition.

The convoys of Volvo cars were documented alongside positive testimonials of the complete desert experience. The successful weeklong journey confirmed that the Volvo driving experience is unmatched, with impressive off-roading, groundbreaking safety features, turbocharged power and an elegant design with leading practicality.



Volvo car owners and Kuwait Times team pose for a group photo at Al Ula, Saudi Arabia.



A Volvo car at Al Ula.



The Volvo cars arriving at Husaak camp at Al Ula.



## Harvard Business School publishes case study about Floward

**KUWAIT:** The entrepreneurial journey of Floward, the go-to online flowers and gifts delivery destination in MENA and UK, will now be taught in the Senior Executive Leadership Program—Middle East to future business leaders and entrepreneurs at Harvard Business School by seasoned professor Krishna G Palepu starting from spring semester 2023-2024.

Amid the booming entrepreneurial landscape in the MENA, highlighting Floward's innovative business model acts as an exemplary source of inspiration for aspiring entrepreneurs. Led by notable academic, Professor Krishna Palepu, the comprehensive case study delves into Floward's evolution since its inception, explores the company's operating model, and provides insights on its promising growth aspects in upcoming years. This study serves as a testament to Floward's innovation and rapid success

since its establishment which earned it this recognition by Harvard Business School through the publication of a dedicated case study.

Floward Chairman and CEO Abdulaziz B Al-Loughani commented: "We are honored and proud to receive this acknowledgement by Harvard Business School, which serves as a testament to the remarkable growth we've achieved in a relatively short span of time. This case study serves as evidence of our competitiveness in the market and the success we've achieved so far. We hope that it also serves as a source of inspiration and value for all aspiring entrepreneurs."

The study by Harvard Business School promises to be a valuable resource for entrepreneurs, business leaders, and anyone interested in the evolving business landscape of the MENA region.

Established in 2017, Floward is a full-fledged e-commerce solution that offers prime fresh-cut flowers sourced from the best growers and farmers around the world and arranged locally by a team of florists and designers. Floward also offers cakes, chocolate and perfumes curated by the region's most exciting designers bundled with its flower arrangements and manages last-mile same-day delivery to ensure the best customer experience.

## Sales of new US homes slow in October

**WASHINGTON:** New home sales in the United States decelerated in October, according to government data released Monday, although the market for new properties remains boosted by a lack of inventory for existing ones. Sales of new single-family houses logged a lower than expected annual rate of 679,000 last month, seasonally adjusted, said the Commerce Department.

This marked a cooling from September's pace of 719,000, which was revised lower. The median sales price of new houses edged down to \$409,300 as well—the lowest since August 2021.

With mortgage rates elevated after the Federal Reserve rapidly lifted the benchmark lending rate to fight inflation, homeowners have been reluctant

to put their real estate on sale—having locked in lower rates previously. The resulting lack of supply for existing homes has nudged more buyers into the market for new houses instead, even as they grapple with affordability.

Sales of existing homes form the majority in the US market. Compared with the same month a year ago, October's new home sales figure is 17.7 percent higher.

"The selling pace weakened to start the fourth quarter: the October 679,000 level of sales is down from 703,000 on average in the third quarter," said economist Rubeela Farooqi of High Frequency Economics. "Mortgage rates have eased in recent weeks but they remain elevated and are impacting affordability," she said.

Data from home loan finance company Freddie Mac shows that the popular 30-year fixed-rate mortgage averaged 7.3 percent as of November 22, slightly lower than before but still more than twice the level two years ago. For now, Freddie Mac has noted that potential homebuyers are still holding out for lower rates and more inventory. —AFP



WASHINGTON: New home sales in the United States decelerated in October, according to government data released Monday.



## Business

# COP28 host UAE ready for rising heat risk: Minister

## UAE targeting domestic carbon neutrality by 2050

**DUBAI:** The United Arab Emirates is ready for soaring temperatures that are feared to make parts of the Gulf uninhabitable by the end of the century, the oil power's climate change minister told AFP. Long experience of the harsh desert summers has taught the country to live with temperatures that regularly flirt with 50 degrees Celsius (122 degrees Fahrenheit), she said.

"We've actually been on the journey of adaptation for many years now," Mariam Almheiri, the UAE's minister of climate change and environment, said in an interview ahead of the COP28 United Nations climate talks in Dubai. "When you look at the temperatures now currently in the summer, there are people from around the world that say: 'How do you live in that temperature?'"

"But actually we can stay here during the summer and we live fine. We're able to do the activities we want to do. It's just we have already adapted since many, many years."

The UAE's scorching summers, when many flee for cooler climes and the streets empty, look set to worsen due to climate change, various studies show. The Gulf region's extreme heat and high humidity are a dangerous mix as in such conditions the human body struggles to cool itself by evaporating sweat on the skin. The combination is measured by

a thermometer wrapped in a wet cloth to calculate the "wet bulb temperature"—the lowest possible through evaporative cooling.

The Gulf is one of the few places to have repeatedly measured wet bulb temperatures above 35C (95F), the threshold of human survivability beyond which heat stress can be fatal within hours, regardless of age, health and fitness.

It is for this reason that experts warn accelerated climate change will make parts of the Gulf region uninhabitable by the end of this century. As global temperatures tick higher, with this year on course to be the hottest on record, the UAE is changing its building designs and urban planning to create cooler living environments, even outdoors, Almheiri said. More parks and vegetation, including a plan to plant 100 million mangroves—an effective carbon sink—by 2030, will also mitigate the heat, she added.

"People don't realize that actually, already more than 70 percent of our economy is non-oil-based. We have actually already set up a lot of the renewable energy infrastructure," she said. "We've also made sure that buildings are set or start to be built at a certain level to take care of any sea-level rise that the models are looking like it might come up soon." The high temperatures mean air-conditioning is used nearly year-round



Mariam Almheiri

in the UAE's homes, offices, malls, cars and even bus stops, a key factor in making its carbon footprint one of the world's biggest per capita.

Other contributors are the fleets of SUVs, muscle cars and sports vehicles that clog the multi-lane highways, scant mass transport, and energy-heavy attractions such as an indoor ski slope with artificial snow that is kept at a steady minus -2C (28.4F).

Despite these challenges, the UAE is targeting

domestic carbon neutrality by 2050 -- not including exported oil and gas—by ramping up nuclear, solar and wind energy, extending metro and rail services, and promoting electric vehicles. The UAE's Masdar—chaired by COP28 president and state oil giant CEO Sultan Al-Jaber—is one of the world's biggest renewable energy companies, signaling the country's ambitions to lead the energy transition. Changing blase attitudes to energy and resources, in a multicultural, multi-lingual, often transient environment that is 90 percent expatriate, is one of the key tasks for the UAE, Almheiri said. "We look at it sector by sector, bringing in the private sector, bringing in community members, academia, and really making sure that youth are also part of this conversation, to understand how we can decarbonise these sectors, but how also individuals can do their part as well," the minister said. "I myself always talk about stories that I do at home, whether it's trying to make sure you don't put any edible food in the bin, being a little bit more conscious about what you're buying, where it is sourced from," she added.

"The net zero strategy that we have just announced... it's a pathway that's pro-climate, pro-growth, but it also means that there needs to be mindset change in the way we do business and the way we live," Almheiri said. —AFP

## Russian CB to resume currency trades in 2024

**MOSCOW:** Russia's central bank said Monday it will resume buying and selling foreign currency through its sovereign wealth fund next year as the ruble continues to recover from a dramatic summer slide. The Russian currency has been extremely volatile since February 2022, when Russia launched its full-scale military offensive on Ukraine and the West hit Moscow with an unprecedented package of sanctions. The ruble has gained 14 percent since the start of October after Moscow reimposed currency controls, hiked interest rates and halted foreign currency interventions.

Russia's central bank said Monday it will resume operations under its so-called "budget rule" from January 2024. It suspended those transactions in August as the ruble slid below 100 against the US dollar. Under the mechanism, the central bank buys and sells foreign currency—Chinese yuan since the imposition of Western sanctions—to stabilise the ruble, which is highly sensitive to global oil prices and Moscow's earnings from its crucial energy exports.—AFP

## Lawmakers criticize Bank of England inflation forecast

**LONDON:** Members of the House of Lords, Britain's upper chamber of parliament, demanded Monday that the Bank of England improve its economic forecasting after failing to predict prolonged surges to inflation.

While insisting that the BoE remained independent of the government on monetary policy, the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee said in a report that "reforms are vital to improve its performance". The report comes as the BoE conducts its own review into forecasting, led by Ben Bernanke, a former head of the US Federal Reserve.

The House of Lords committee criticized the BoE—and other central banks—for believing in 2021 that a surge in global inflation would be temporary, when in fact it lasted far longer and led to multiple interest-rate rises, worsening a cost-of-living crisis. "Twenty-five years after the Bank of England was made operationally independent, it is time to take stock," noted the committee's chair, George Bridges. "While we are of the strong view that independence should be preserved, reforms are needed to improve the Bank's performance and to strengthen its accountability to parliament."

He said the bank should focus on its main task of keeping UK annual inflation around a government-set target of two percent. It currently stands at 4.6 percent, which is the highest inflation among G7 rich nations. The BoE, however, has played a key role in reducing the rate from a 41-year peak of 11.1 percent, reached in October 2022. It has achieved this by hiking its main interest rate to the highest level in more than 15 years.

Inflation began to soar around the world in 2021 as economies emerged from COVID lockdowns faced with supply shortages of goods and services amid rebounding demand. Food and energy prices then rocketed after major grains producer Ukraine was invaded by oil and gas giant Russia in early 2022. In a newspaper interview published Monday, BoE governor Andrew Bailey said it would take time for UK annual inflation to fall to two percent—as he once more ruled out interest-rate cuts any time soon. "By the end of the first quarter next year... we may be a bit under four percent," he told the Chronicle, a daily in Newcastle, northeast England. The House of Lords committee noted that "the persistence of above-target inflation... also reflects errors in the conduct of monetary policy, including an over-reliance on inadequate forecasting models" by the BoE. The central bank "must do more to foster a diversity of views and strengthen a culture that encourages challenge", it said. The report added that "parliament should conduct an overarching review of the Bank's remit and operations every five years". This would enhance "parliament's ability to hold the Bank to account and express its view" on BoE "performance and leadership". —AFP



Former Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen at EU headquarters in Brussels in this file photo. — AFP

## EU-NZ trade pact gets Brussels' final green light

**BRUSSELS:** Brussels on Monday gave the final green light for an EU-New Zealand trade deal that, while mutually lowering barriers for both markets, highlights the recent failure of EU-Australia negotiations. The European Council, representing the EU's 27 member countries, said it adopted the New Zealand pact, setting it up come into force "probably in early 2024" once Wellington ratifies it. The deal provides for a phased-in slashing of duties on New Zealand imports of lamb, beef, wine and fruit such as kiwifruit, while European exports, including machinery and vehicles as well as chocolate, wine and biscuits, would likewise benefit.

Two-way trade in goods and services is currently worth 9.1 billion euros (US\$10 billion) but is expected to grow by 30 percent over a decade with the new deal. New Zealand's government estimates that the deal could bring in an extra US\$365 million

annually from exports of its beef, sheep and dairy products. The EU, with its population of 450 million, is the third-biggest export market for New Zealand, population five million. The deal is not without critics in Europe. France's beef and dairy sectors, for instance, have voiced wariness about New Zealand products coming from land using pesticides or herbicides banned in the European Union.

The European Commission, though, has stressed that all food reaching the EU market has to comply with EU standards and vowed a "robust" system of checks. The passage of the New Zealand trade deal stood in contrast with the collapse last month of a much-bigger accord the EU had been negotiating for six years with Australia.

Those talks, aimed at expanding trade currently worth 56 billion euros, fell over agricultural issues. One issue was how far Europe was willing to open its market to Australia's lamb, beef and sugar imports. Another was to what extent Canberra was willing to adopt EU geographic indicators given that Australian producers currently made goods under names Brussels wants to make exclusive to European regions. Brussels is at work trying to seal another, even bigger trade deal with South America's Mercosur bloc, where two-way trade is currently 98 billion euros. —AFP

## UK unveils almost £30bn of private investment

**LONDON:** Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Monday announced £29.5 billion (\$37.2 billion) of private funding for new UK projects as more than 200 CEOs descended on London for the 2023 Global Investment Summit. The UK government said the new investment would create 12,000 jobs "in our most innovative sectors, including tech, life sciences, renewables, housing and infrastructure." "Today's investments... are a huge vote of confidence in the future of the UK economy," Sunak said in a statement before the opening of the event at Hampton Court Palace, just outside London. "Attracting global investment is at the heart of my plan for growing the economy," he added. Investments announced on Monday included £10 billion over the next four years from Australian fund IFM Investors "for large-scale infrastructure and energy transition projects".

Spanish energy company Iberdrola announced £7 billion of funding for offshore wind infrastructure while US tech giant Microsoft plans to invest £2.5 billion in artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure, including data centers. Germany's BioNTech Laboratories will invest around £1 billion over 10 years, expanding its research and development activities with a new laboratory in Cambridge, eastern England, as well as a centre of expertise for Artificial Intelligence in London.

The announcements came as Japanese car giant Nissan said on Friday that it would inject up to £2 billion to build two new electric car models in the UK, as well as an additional gigafactory to produce batteries. Finance minister Jeremy Hunt in last week's budget announcement earmarked £4.5 billion in aid for strategic industrial sectors, including automotive, aerospace, green energy and life sciences. It is the second edition of the summit, which was first held in 2021. Sunak and Business & Trade Secretary Kemi Badenoch opened the event, with CEOs in attendance including Stephen Schwarzman from Blackstone, Amanda Blanc from Aviva, David Soloman from Goldman Sachs and Jamie Dimon from JP Morgan Chase. —AFP

# DOUBLE CHECK: Pioneering Integrity Verification Technology in Kuwait

## A Revolutionary Leap in Information Verification

**DOUBLE CHECK** stands as Kuwait's premier and sole enterprise specialized in technology for verifying the integrity of information. Launched in 2022, it expertly certifies official documents—ranging from academic credentials and resumes to criminal records and financial and legal standings—for individuals, companies, and organizations. This is done to prevent falsification, fraud, and deception using cutting-edge technology, artificial intelligence, and electronic integration. Adhering to the highest global standards of trust, integrity, cybersecurity, and information privacy, **DOUBLE CHECK** ensures unparalleled technical service quality.

### Expanding Global Reach

With one of the world's most extensive verification networks, **DOUBLE CHECK** has built a global web with partners across over 200+ countries and territories. This network enables the company to authenticate information globally with utmost integrity and speed, earning various international accreditations in this domain.

### Cultivating a New Culture in Kuwait

**DOUBLE CHECK** has introduced a new culture of verification and certification of private information in Kuwait, addressing a significant global issue in workforce credibility and entrepreneurial authenticity. As a globally recognized Kuwaiti company in this field, it serves as a protective shield for Kuwait's business market against all forms of fraud and counterfeiting.



**DOUBLE CHECK**  
KUWAIT VERIFICATION COMPANY

This protection extends to state institutions, entrepreneurs, and the Kuwaiti community at large.

### Services Offered by **DOUBLE CHECK**:

- Educational Check:** Verification of academic qualifications.
- Employment Check:** Authentication of professional resumes.
- ID Check + 3D Facial Recognition:** Identity verification.
- Criminal Record Check:** Examining criminal histories.

inal histories.

- Profession License Check:** Validating professional licenses.
- Mass & Social Media Check:** Assessing media reputations.
- Corporate Due Diligence:** Ensuring company integrity through risk management services, compliance checks, and professional testing and examination services.
- Psychometric Assessment:** Evaluating psychological and personality traits.

### Strategic Goals and Community Impact

**DOUBLE CHECK**'s strategic goal is to establish workforce and labor force verification as a fundamental requirement in the hiring process. This is a significant step towards elevating standards and quality in employment, security, service and project quality in both the public and private sectors in Kuwait, aligning with the standards of developed countries and the region.

**DOUBLE CHECK** also emphasizes the importance of thorough verification before recruiting expatriates, ensuring candidates meet specific legal and skill requirements. This approach enhances job and service quality, fosters sustainable development plans, bolsters Kuwait's economic status, and provides a safe, law-abiding work environment, thus protecting the community at large.

## Business

# Winter isn't coming: Climate change hits Greek olive crop

## Drought compounds Spain's problem, hits olive production

**POLYGYROS, Greece:** Greek organic farmer Zaharoula Vassilaki looks with admiration at a huge olive tree on her property believed to be over two centuries old, still yielding despite a direct lightning hit years ago.

But climate change — in this case, the absence of deep winter — is proving too much for even this gnarled veteran to cope with. "The climate has changed and the trees cannot cope with these big changes. We no longer have winter at all," she told AFP.

In mid-November, the temperature in the Halkidiki region of Polygyros, northern Greece, was still over 15 degrees Celsius (59 degrees Fahrenheit). "I consider climate change the main challenge this season," noted Nikos Anoixas, a board member of Doepel, the Greek national interprofessional organization for table olives. "At this time, temperatures should be 10 degrees Celsius... the year is already lost, and we fear next year will be similar. I don't even want to think what will happen if another such year follows," Anoixas said.

Vangelis Evangelinos has been growing edible olives on his family land in Halkidiki, northern Greece since he was a child. At 62, he does not recall adverse weather conditions such as his area has endured this year — or such a poor crop — ever before.

"We've never had a year such as this," Evangelinos told AFP, two months after the Thessaly region, to the south, was devastated by massive floods. "The rainfall is intense and brief," the opposite of what is needed to enrich the soil," he said. The warm weather has affected some six million trees in the region, according to producers and experts. "This year the phenomenon of 'fruitlessness' was very intense, but it is an issue that we have noticed mainly in the last five years," said Vassilaki, 48.

The European Union's olive production giants Italy and Spain have faced similar problems, pushing up prices. Spain, the world's biggest producer of olive oil, suffered a very difficult year in 2022 and

drought this year has compounded the problem.

In Italy, this year's olive harvest is down by an estimated 80 percent, according to producers. The EU estimates global olive oil production will fall more than 26 percent in 2022-2023 compared to a year earlier, to just over 2.5 million tons. In the EU itself, production is expected to drop 39 percent.

"The old growers here say it is very important for the trees to rest in the winter. It takes about one to two months of good cold weather for the tree to rest... so that it can yield later," Vassilaki said. Athanasios Molassiotis, an agronomist and head of the arboriculture lab of Thessaloniki's Aristotelio University, said his team recorded an increase in temperature of two degrees during October, November and December 2022 compared to a year earlier. This affected the olive buds "because we know that the tree bears fruit after cold winters, especially the Halkidiki variety, which has high requirements at low temperatures in winter," he said. "We found that in many trees, there was no flowering and therefore no fruit afterwards," Molassiotis said. Halkidiki accounts for around half of edible table olives produced in Greece.

According to the regional chamber of commerce, more than 20,000 local producers cultivate 330,000 acres of olive trees in the area, generating an average of 120,000 to 150,000 tons of edible table olives annually. More than 150 companies are active in olive processing and marketing, and more than 90 percent of the products produced are exported the world over, as far as Brazil, China and Australia.

This year, however, the crop shortage has in some cases exceeded 90 percent, plunging sector entrepreneurs into despair.

"I'm afraid things will get worse in the future," said chamber president Yiannis Koufidis, noting the economic impact on growers has been "huge" with a loss of some 200 million euro (\$) just in Halkidiki prefecture alone. In many cases, growers did not deem it worth the trouble to harvest their estates.



**POLYGYROS, Greece:** A worker of the olive industry looks on next to pouring green olives near Polygyros in Halkidiki region. — AFP

At the local olive processing unit, which also handles intake from across the country, management says production is down at least 60 percent. A climate change study for the Halkidiki area in January showed the local average temperature is expected to increase by 1.5-2 degrees Celsius in coming years, according to the best-case scenario. At worst, it could be three degrees. The Aristotelio University study also predicts less rain. The overall "thermal stress" is ultimately expected to impact fruit quality, it warned.

And because Halkidiki is also one of Greece's main tourism destinations, there is an added draw on the area's water resources, said study author Christina Anagnostopoulou. "Climate changes will happen. We need to learn and prepare so that we can reduce the effects," the climatology professor told AFP. Koufidis said the Halkidiki chamber is working with the university to create a variant of the local olive variety that requires less wintry weather. "It's a very difficult project. But we can't stand idly by," he said. — AFP

## Stock markets drop as US inflation comes into view

**LONDON:** Major Asian and European stock markets mostly dropped Monday as investors awaited the release this week of key US inflation data that could provide a guide for the Federal Reserve's plans for interest rates going into the new year. Oil prices slid nearly two percent awaiting a delayed meeting of OPEC and its allies to decide over output levels. With Wall Street seeing little action at the back of last week owing to the Thanksgiving break, traders had few catalysts to drive action, though analysts were upbeat about the end of the year.

The retreat in equities comes after a recent run-up across world stock markets fuelled by bets the US central bank has finished lifting interest rates as inflation comes down and the jobs market comes off the boil.

Expectations that the Federal Reserve is done with hiking rates continued to weigh on the dollar Monday. The main focus this week is the release Thursday of the personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index, the Fed's preferred gauge of inflation. "These numbers will be closely scrutinized for insights into inflation trends and their potential implications for monetary policy decisions," said SPI Asset Management's Stephen Innes. "While the current backdrop does not signify 'mission accomplished' in terms of addressing inflation, policymakers must now focus on planning for the next phase of the economic battle."

Still, observers were upbeat about the outlook, with the latest weakness blamed on traders taking a breather after a strong month.

Tony Sycamore, at IG Group, said early December could see some selling as investors "rebuild energy and (look) to set up for the end-of-year fireworks". Others said a drop in Wall Street's VIX "fear gauge" - a measure of equity volatility - to its lowest since January 2020 suggested investors were getting their mojo back. — AFP

## China opens probe into indebted asset management firm

**BEIJING:** Chinese police have opened an investigation into Zhongzhi Enterprise Group after the debt-ridden financial giant declared itself insolvent.

Police in Beijing, where the group is headquartered, said late Saturday they had opened an investigation into unspecified "alleged offences", adding that they had taken measures against several suspects. Zhongzhi declared itself insolvent on Wednesday with its arrears estimated at nearly \$66 billion, according to a letter to investors cited by local media.

During China's real estate boom, many developers used Zhongzhi to finance their projects. The company managed assets worth more than one trillion yuan (\$141 billion), according to investment bank Nomura. But the group has been caught up in China's real estate crisis, leaving it now unable to repay investors.

Zhongzhi's bankruptcy raises fears of far-reaching consequences for China's financial system following the downward spiral of property developer Evergrande, whose troubles continue to take a toll on the country's real estate sector and the economy. — AFP

## Huawei's PaperMatte display: True paper experience

**KUWAIT:** E-ink tablets combine the versatility of traditional tablets and the comfortable glare-free display of e-book readers. But they are still a compromise. The lack of color and unavoidable stutter make them unsuitable for videos or even many productivity scenarios. But there seems to be a far better option now. Huawei recently launched the Huawei MatePad 11.5-inch PaperMatte Edition. These PaperMatte Edition tablets are designed to cater to the needs of students and young professionals. The PaperMatte Editions introduce the innovative PaperMatte Display, providing an unprecedented paper-like viewing and writing experience, including eye protection and rich notetaking capabilities.

The PaperMatte Display shows that Huawei has mastered delicately balancing vibrant visuals while eliminating glare. With no reflections on the screen to distract, your favourite eBooks, sketches, and videos come to life in a way that can be comfortably experienced in any setting. The Huawei MatePad 11.5-inch PaperMatte Edition feature a refreshing PaperMatte Display. The eye-soothing screen ensures an effortless viewing and writing experience. This makes learning, and working on a tablet more efficient, indoors or outdoors, in both bright and dim conditions.

Using nano-level anti-glare etching technology to form hundreds of millions of tiny structures on the PaperMatte Display's mirror glass surface eliminates 97 percent environmental light interference. Ideal for your entertainment, educational, and office needs, the multi-layer diffusion technology generates a soft and soothing view, while ensuring the screen stays consistently clear, bright, and even.

The PaperMatte Tablets have received TÜV Rheinland Reflection Free and industry-first SGS Low Visual Fatigue Premium Performance Certifications, which guarantee standout viewing performance in real-world conditions. The Low Visual Fatigue Premium Performance Certification is the highest certification developed by SGS to evaluate eye strain.

The PaperMatte Edition also reduces eye strain in users, being TÜV Rheinland Low Blue Light (Hardware

## COP28 could push India's energy transition ambition

**DUBAI:** The COP28 climate summit, which starts in Dubai on Thursday, is an opportunity for India to boost its efforts in transitioning to renewable energy, industry experts say. The country's limitations on moving away from dependence on coal will also come to the fore at the summit, given its rapidly growing energy demands.

"India's priorities for COP28 will revolve around building on the positive momentum gained at the recently held G20 Summit in New Delhi, including focusing on tripling renewable energy capacity by 2030, developments in green hydrogen and the need of low-cost finance for energy transition," says Gautam Mohanka, chief executive at Gautam Solar in New Delhi.

"Additionally, India will focus on accountability and more ambitious climate mitigation plans from the wealthy, developed nations." Industry leaders are confident about what India might be able to achieve at COP28. "As we enter COP28, India has the opportunity to showcase not only the progress made but also our unwavering dedication to a green and resilient future," says green energy company Avaada Group's chairman, Vineet Mittal, who is part of the delegation.

India has been rapidly increasing its green energy capacity — especially solar — as it recognizes this as not only a way to cut emissions, but also to boost its energy security and reduce its import bill from fossil fuels. The country is aiming for 500 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity by 2030. As of July, India had an installed capacity of 176.49 gigawatts, according to official data.

"Realizing the 2030 renewable energy target will be a milestone not to be missed if India is to stay on track for the 2070 net-zero goal," says Anup Garg, founder and director of World of Circular Economy, a company offering sustainability solutions. India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi at COP26 in 2021 pledged India would cut its emissions to net zero by 2070, and renewables would make up half of the country's energy mix by 2030. The US and EU have committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2050, while China is targeting 2060 for the goal.

India is the fourth-largest emitter of carbon emissions after China, the US and the EU. The COP conference this year is seen as particularly crucial as the planet appears to be falling short in its efforts to tackle climate change. The first full global stocktake of the world's climate targets will be delivered at COP28. Efforts by countries so far are insufficient to limit the world's temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, an initial report on the summit found.

Solution) and Flicker-Free-certified. Both tablets boast a hardware solution that suppresses blue light and flickering emitted by screens, while also reducing the yellow tint. For an even more comfortable reading experience, you can turn on Colour e-Book Mode. With this feature, thousands of colours are displayed with meticulous accuracy, to produce a vibrant, immersive view.

### Sketch and draw like never before

Imagine the sensation of a pencil gliding smoothly across a sheet of fine paper. The gentle rustle, the subtle resistance under the tip, and the crisp, dark lines left in its wake, creating a perfect harmony that helps you to put your ideas to paper. The PaperMatte Display captures this essence of writing with pen on paper. Writing with the M-Pencil on the PaperMatte Display gives you the feeling of journaling or sketching in a book. Tablet gives you an immersive and sensory-rich experience, complete with tap sounds, rustling effects, texture, and paper-like resistance. These elements combine to elevate the overall writing experience. Moreover, the Huawei Pencil (2nd generation), fitted with a nylon elastomer nib and 2ms low delay, makes it all the more easy to sketch and draw. You can achieve a smoother handwriting experience by swapping the hard transparent nib for the soft white pencil nib.

But unlike writing on paper, your scribbles and sketches are no longer confined to the parchment. They can be edited, shared, and transformed with a simple tap. Both Huawei MatePad 11.5-inch PaperMatte Edition offer Huawei Notes, a professional notetaking app that helps you record notes and illustrate ideas with the Huawei M-Pencil (2nd generation). With 15x canvas zoom, you can zoom in on the canvas up to 15 times to record your ideas in detail.

Huawei Notes on the PaperMatte Tablets also supports the split-screen mode notes feature, making it possible to view two notes side by side at the same time. This simplifies the process of sorting and organizing notes. When getting ready for a meeting, you can use the split-screen feature to draft meeting outlines on one side while jotting down essential references on the other.

### Super device

Both Huawei 11-inch PaperMatte Edition and Huawei MatePad 11.5-inch PaperMatte Edition offer a wide range of features to enhance office efficiency, including an Enhanced App Multiplier, and SuperHub



for seamless content transfers. The SuperHub makes Cross-device content editing and sharing a breeze without the need for a third-party app. This feature eliminates barriers between your devices, so that you can copy and paste a bunch of images, videos, and even text by a simple drag-and-drop.

These tablets can serve as a hub, effortlessly connecting to a PC with a simple drag. Once connected, they can transform into a secondary display for the PC and seamlessly work with the keyboard and mouse. This lets you edit files on one screen while browsing reference documents or attending an online meeting on the other. Furthermore, with drag-and-drop file sharing between the PC and tablet, you can be even more productive and multi-task like a champ.

### Your productivity companions

To ensure a seamless user experience, the PaperMatte Tablets can be paired with a range of accessories. This includes the new and improved Huawei M-Pencil (2nd generation), enhancing the handwriting experience and offering system-level stylus functionality. Furthermore, a smart detachable keyboard with the AI Voice key enhances productivity and convenience for users on the go.

The Huawei MatePad 11.5-inch PaperMatte Edition boasts a 2200 x 1440 resolution display with a 3:2 aspect ratio, optimizing the screen-to-body ratio for an immersive visual experience. The tablet comes in an elegant Space Grey color, exuding a calming and futuristic vibe. It can deliver a cinema-grade audiovisual experience, thanks to the Quad-speaker system and HiSTen audio algorithms for fine-tuning specific frequency ranges and volume levels.



**Youth delegates make a statement at the pre-COP28 event in Abu Dhabi.**

India, as the fifth-largest economy and with the world's largest population of more than 1.4 billion people, is considered vital when it comes to global climate negotiations. "India's energy demand continues to rise due to the growth in the country's population and economy in the years ahead," says Garg. However, because of these demands and despite pressure from developed nations, India has been resistant to setting a deadline to phase out fossil fuels such as coal. The country relies on the highly polluting fuel to produce about 70

percent of its electricity. Although "India remains one of the fastest growing markets for renewable energy, it still remains largely dependent on coal to meet its growing energy needs," said Mohanka.

"While India still faces a relatively big challenge with coal dependency within its energy sector, we are quite optimistic about the efforts being made to reduce it," says Sandeep Bhammer, founder and co-managing partner at Green Frontier Capital, a climate change-focused venture capital fund. — Agencies



Picture of black soldier (*Hermetia illucens*) fly larvae taken in the production plant to produce food sustainably while conserving the environment for animals and pets.



Picture of black soldier (*Hermetia illucens*) flies taken in the production plant.



A worker collects black soldier (*Hermetia illucens*) fly larvae at the production plant.



Picture of black soldier (*Hermetia illucens*) fly larvae taken in the production plant.



An employee holds black soldier (*Hermetia illucens*) fly larvae in the production plant.



**R**aised in vertical farms and stuffed with fruit waste, fly larvae have been turned into animal feed, as a new Costa Rican venture in sustainability is demonstrating. The Central American nation, one of the most biodiverse places on Earth, has put a lot of energy and creativity into the goal of becoming the greenest, most sustainable country in Latin America. In Guapiles, a farming town just 60 kilometers (37 miles) north of the capital San Jose, an innovative company has turned the tables on the flies that have always buzzed annoyingly around the crops — putting them to work.



Picture of black soldier (*Hermetia illucens*) flies taken in the production plant.

The black soldier fly (*Hermetia illucens*) is native to tropical climates such as Costa Rica's, with its larvae incessantly gobbling up organic waste. "It's a high-quality protein," Miguel Carmona, president of the company ProNuvo, told AFP. So fly larvae can provide "healthier" proteins for animals and with less environmental impact than feed based on animal (beef or fish) or



A worker collects black soldier (*Hermetia illucens*) fly larvae at the production plant to produce food sustainably while conserving the environment for animals and pets in Guapiles, Costa Rica. — AFP photos

vegetable (soy) protein, the 52-year-old businessman explained. The company's final products, in the form of dried larvae, protein powder or insect oil, are exported — for now only to the United States, although one Costa Rican fishery is already using them in its tilapia farm in the north of the country.

**'Sustainable business'**  
The flies are raised in cages in a greenhouse at about 40 degrees Cel-

sius (104 Fahrenheit) and in high humidity. They live for a week and lay about 500 eggs each before dying. Four days later, the eggs hatch and the larvae begin to feed on organic waste from banana, mango and papaya plantations. Over the next 14 days, they gain 10,000 times their original weight, Carmona explained.

"These larvae are then converted

into very rich proteins and oils and fats for animal feed," Gabriel Carmona, general manager of ProNuvo and Miguel's brother, told AFP. Not even the waste goes to waste: the excrement deposited by the larvae makes an ideal fertilizer for the same fruit plantations. "We are practicing a sustainable business," said Miguel Carmona.

**Fewer inputs**  
"We are using waste from other industries to make a high-quality protein without having the environmental impacts that overfishing, soy and livestock have today," said the company president. According to ProNuvo, the production of one ton of beef requires 30,000 square meters (7.5 acres) of land, and soybeans require 3,000 square meters. Vast areas are thus deforested, sharply reducing the numbers of carbon dioxide-absorbing trees. Yet, the fly larvae farm requires only 300 square meters.

The same applies to water use. Production of a ton of beef protein requires 15.4 million liters of water (4.1 million gallons), while soybean crops require 1.6 million liters. The larvae consume barely 10,000 liters. The production time for a ton of larvae protein is also substantially shorter: flies take 14 days, soybeans six months, and cows 36 months.

**'Regional pioneers'**  
The farm in Costa Rica is the first in Latin America to produce insect protein, according to Miguel Carmona. "Pioneers of the region," he said proudly. With food, grain and fertilizer prices increasing due to the war between Russia and Ukraine, other innovative projects are underway elsewhere. There is work in Kenya and Uganda, for example, on using the black soldier fly in the production of organic fertilizers. And in Europe, the larvae are being sold as a protein supplement for animals — available to order online. — AFP



Picture of black soldier (*Hermetia illucens*) flies taken in the production plant.



Workers collect black soldier (*Hermetia illucens*) fly larvae at the production plant to produce food sustainably while conserving the environment for animals and pets.



A worker arranges banana waste for use in the production of black soldier (*Hermetia illucens*) fly larvae to produce food sustainably.



A worker moves black soldier fly (*Hermetia illucens*) larvae collection cages at the production plant.



Farmland and houses are covered with water in an inundated area following flash floods in Garissa.

## From drought to deluge: Kenyan villagers reel from floods

Days after floodwaters swallowed her home in eastern Kenya, Fatuma Hassan Gumo waded through thigh-deep murky water to collect her only remaining possessions—floating utensils. Flash floods from the Tana river in Garissa, a county on the border with Somalia, forced the 42-year-old fruit vendor to flee at night from her submerged home built from mud and corrugated metal sheets to the nearest dry land with her family of 12, including seven children. They are among thousands of people left homeless and destitute by torrential rains that have lashed much of Kenya, killing more than 70 people.

The Horn of Africa—only slowly emerging from a devastating drought that left millions hungry—is experiencing heavy rainfall and floods linked to the El Nino weather phenomenon. The latest disaster has claimed dozens of lives and caused large-scale displacement in Kenya as well as Somalia and Ethiopia. “The waters have ruined everything,” a distressed Gumo told AFP as she folded her soaked hijab, oblivious to the health risks from the overflowing pit latrine next to her.

“My life is in a very bad state right now.” At a camp for the displaced in the heart of Garissa town, hurriedly set up near an aid agency’s warehouse, Mwana Juma Hassan sat outside her white domed tent, her eyes downcast. “Eating here has become a luxury. We don’t know when we will eat the next meal,” she said. It is the fourth time the 37-year-old widow has been displaced by floods in less than a decade, and the latest downpour has washed away her watermelon farm—her only source of income. Along with her

teenage daughter, Hassan said they plan to return home after the water recedes, fearing starvation at the camp.

### ‘Get out-of-hand’

About 500 people there had to brave four nights of unrelenting rains, sleeping on sodden clothes, before the Kenya

Fourteen such camps have been set up in Garissa in two weeks, housing more than 7,000 people. The floods have hit at a time when most of the largely pastoral county’s 800,000 people are suffering from food insecurity and rely on international aid. Mohamed Dubow, Garissa county di-

### ‘Hunger crisis’

The floods have wrecked the main road leading to Garissa’s northern neighbors Wajir and Mandera and cut off the highway to Nairobi, leaving hundreds of trucks stranded. “The damaged road has brought a lot of problems, food has become scarce and the cost of living has gone up,” community leader Dagane Haji told AFP. “The price of one kilogram of sugar has risen to 250 shillings (over \$1.6) when it cost 150 before the rains.” In the camp, 49-year-old farmer Abubakar Maliyu Jillo said he feared the crisis could drag on and that he will not be able to provide for his four wives and 12 children. “This is a hunger crisis,” he told AFP, adding that a 300,000 shilling investment in his farm had been wiped out. Humanitarian agencies and environmental campaigners have called for more financing to build the resilience of developing nations to the increasingly ferocious and expensive consequences of climate change—countries that contributing least to its cause.

“This vicious cycle makes it nearly impossible for these communities to maintain any economic progress they have achieved,” said Kunow Sheikh Abdi, country director for US development charity Mercy Corps. “The scale and urgency of climate crisis is unprecedented, and while it can be daunting, it cannot paralyze us,” he said. Dubow, meanwhile, warned that local residents need to brace themselves for harsher days ahead. “We have two hazards coming at us day and night. We are either in drought or are in floods.”—AFP



People discuss about the damage created by waters while crossing the section of a road covered by flash floods at the Mwingi-Garissa Road.

Red Cross provided tents, said 60-year-old mat weaver Amina Duke Gabuku. There are growing concerns that the camp’s poor sanitary conditions and lack of clean water could spread disease, but other concerns weigh on Gabuku’s mind. “How can one kilogram of rice be enough for seven kids when everyone wants a full belly?” Gakubu said, referring to the food handouts.

rector for special programs, said the situation could “get out of hand” if there are another two or three days of rain. He told AFP at least 200,000 people are forecast to be affected by the flooding, with the Tana river already at about three meters (10 feet) above normal levels. Almost the entire county was either “submerged, a no-go-zone or affected”.



People carry their belongings while crossing the section of a road collapsing due to flash floods at the Mwingi-Garissa Road near Garissa.



Herdsmen assists some of their goats to cross a flooded area next to a road destroyed by flash floods at the Garissa-Wajir Road in Maalimin.



People gather on top of the section of a road destroyed by flash floods as others try to cross the waters at the Garissa-Wajir Road.



Joseph Kamau crosses a flooded area on the way to his home in Garissa.



Halan Subeir Salat, 35, tries to collect some of her belongings at an inundated area where she lives following flash floods in Garissa.

## AI anxiety as computers get super smart

From Hollywood’s death-dealing Terminator to warnings from genius Stephen Hawking or Silicon Valley stars, fears have been fueled that artificial intelligence (AI) could one day destroy humanity. Tech titans are racing toward creating AI far smarter than people, pushing US President Joe Biden to impose emergency regulation and the European Union seeking major legislation to be agreed by the end of this year. A two-day summit starting Wednesday in London will explore regulatory safeguards against AI risks such as those below.

### Job stealer?

The success of ChatGPT from OpenAI has ignited debate about whether “generative AI” capable of quickly producing text, images and audio from simple commands in everyday language is a tremendous threat to jobs held by people. Automated machinery is already used to do labor in factories, warehouses, and fields. Generative AI, however, can take aim at white-collar jobs such as lawyers, doctors, teachers, journalists, and even computer programmers.

A report from the McKinsey consulting firm estimates that by the end of this decade, as much as 30 percent of the hours worked in the United States could be automated in a trend accelerated by generative AI. Boosters of such technology have invoked the notion of a universal basic income in which machines generate wealth that is shared with people freed of the burdens of work. But it is also possible companies would reap profits of improved efficiencies, leaving those out of work to fend for themselves.



### Copycat?

Artists were quick to protest software such as Dall-E, Midjourney and Stable Diffusion that are capable of creating images in nearly any style on demand. Computer coders and writers followed suit, critiquing AI creators for “training” software on their work, enabling it to replicate their styles or skills without permission or compensation. AI models have been taught using massive amounts of information and imagery found online. “That’s what it trains on, a fraction of the huge output of humanity,” OpenAI co-founder Sam Altman said at a conference in September. “I think this will be a tool that amplifies human beings, not replace them.”

### Disinformation tools?

Fake news and deepfakes have been around for years but being able to easily crank it out using generative AI raises fears of rampant online deception. Elections run the risk of being won by those most adept at spreading disinformation, contends cognitive scientist and AI expert Gary Marcus. “Democracy depends on access to the information needed to make the right decisions,” Marcus said. “If no one knows what’s true and what’s not, it’s all over.”

### Fraud?

Generative AI makes it easier for scammers to create convincing phishing emails, perhaps even learning enough about targets to personalize approaches. Technology lets them copy a face or a voice, and thus trick people into falling for deceptions such as claims a loved one is in danger, for example. US President Biden called the ability of AI to imitate people’s voices “mind blowing” while signing his recent executive order aimed at the technology. There are even language models trained specifically to produce such malicious content.

### Human role models

As with other technologies with the potential for good or evil, the main danger is posed by humans who wield it. Since AI is trained on data put on the web by humans, it can mirror society’s prejudices, biases, and injustices. AI also has the potential to make it easier to create bioweapons; hack banks or power grids; run oppressive government surveillance, and more.

Some industry players fear AI could become so smart that it could seize control from humans. “It is not difficult to imagine that at some point in the future, our intelligent computers will become as smart or smarter than people,” OpenAI co-founder and chief scientist Ilya Sutskever said at a recent TED AI conference.—AFP

# IRISH AUTHOR PAUL LYNCH WINS 2023 BOOKER PRIZE

Irish author Paul Lynch won the 2023 Booker Prize for fiction on Sunday for his novel "Prophet Song," a dystopian work about an Ireland that descends into tyranny. The 46-year-old pipped five other shortlisted novelists to the prestigious award at a ceremony in London. He becomes the fifth Irish writer to win the high-profile literary prize, which has propelled to fame countless household names, including past winners Salman Rushdie, Margaret Atwood and Hilary Mantel.



Booker Prize 2023 shortlist book "Prophet Song" by Irish writer Paul Lynch is pictured prior to the Booker Prize Award announcement ceremony.

"This was not an easy book to write," Lynch said after collecting his award, which comes with £50,000 (around \$63,000) and a huge boost to his profile. "The rational part of me believed I was dooming my career by writing this novel. Though I had to write the book anyway. We do not have a choice in such matters," he added. Lynch's book is set in Dublin in a near future version of Ireland. It fol-

lows the struggles of a mother of four as she tries to save her family from totalitarianism.

There are no paragraph breaks in the novel, which is Lynch's fifth. Canadian novelist Esi Edugyan, who chaired the five-person judging panel, called the story "a triumph of emotional storytelling, bracing and brave". "With great vividness, Prophet Song captures the social and political anxieties of our current moment," she said. "Readers will find it soul-shattering and true, and will not soon forget its warnings." The Booker is open to works of fiction by writers of any nationality, written in English and published in the UK or Ireland between October 1, 2022, and September 30, 2023.

## Murdoch, Doyle

None of this year's six finalists—which included two Americans, a Canadian, a Kenyan and another Irish author—had been shortlisted before and only one had previously been longlisted. The shortlisted novels, announced in September, were chosen from a 13-strong longlist that had been whittled down from an initial 158 works. Among them was Irish author Paul Murray's "The Bee Sting", a tragicomic saga which looks at the role of fate in the travails of one family.

Murray was previously longlisted in 2010. Kenyan writer Chetna Maroo's moving debut novel "Western Lane" about grief and sisterhood follows the story of a teenage girl for whom squash is life. The judges also selected "If I Survive You" by US writer Jonathan Escoffery, which follows a Jamaican family and their chaotic new



Irish writer Paul Lynch and Booker Prize 2023 shortlisted author poses with his specially bound book copy "Prophet Song" on the red carpet upon arrival for the Booker Prize Award announcement ceremony.



Jamaican American writer Jonathan Escoffery and Booker Prize 2023 shortlisted author poses with his specially bound book copy "If I survive you".



British Indian writer Chetna Maroo and Booker Prize 2023 shortlisted author poses with her specially bound book copy "Western Lane".



Canadian writer Sarah Bernstein and Booker Prize 2023 shortlisted author poses with her specially bound book copy "Study for obedience".



Irish writer Paul Murray and Booker Prize 2023 shortlisted author poses with his specially bound book copy "The Bee Sting".



US writer Paul Harding and Booker Prize 2023 shortlisted author poses with his specially bound book copy "This Other Eden". — AFP photos

life in Miami.

He was joined by fellow American author, Paul Harding, whose "This Other Eden"—inspired by historical events—tells the story of Apple Island, an enclave off the US coast where society's misfits flock and build a new

home. Canada was represented on the shortlist in the shape of "Study for Obedience" by Sarah Bernstein. The unsettling novel explores the themes of prejudice and guilt through a suspicious narrator. The Booker was first awarded in 1969. Last year's winner

was Sri Lankan writer Shehan Karunatilaka for "The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida". The previous Irish winners are Iris Murdoch, John Banville, Roddy Doyle and Anne Enright. — AFP



A picture shows artefacts on display during the exhibition 'Crimea: Gold and Secrets of the Black Sea' at the Allard Pierson Museum in Amsterdam.



An undated handout picture shows a 2nd-century AD golden earring with glass inlay and figurine, found in a woman's grave at the necropolis of Ust'Alma and which is part of the "Crimea: Gold and Secrets of the Black Sea" at the Allard Pierson Museum in Amsterdam.

## Crimean treasures return to Kyiv after years of legal battles

Ancient Crimean gold treasures returned to Kyiv Monday after being stuck in a Dutch museum for nine years, where they were on show when Russia seized the Black Sea peninsula in 2014. The Scythian artefacts—some around 2,000 years old—were on loan to Amsterdam's Allard Pierson museum when they were suddenly at the centre of a geopolitical crisis following Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea. Years of legal battles ensued, with both Kyiv and Moscow-controlled Crimean museums filing suits that the jewels should be in their hands, before the Dutch Supreme Court ruled this summer they should go to Ukraine.

"After almost 10 years of trials, artefacts from four museums of Crimea... returned to Ukraine," the National Museum of the History of Ukraine (NMHU) said on its website. "They will be kept in the NMHU until the de-occupation of Crimea," it added. Their return comes 21 months into Moscow's invasion, and is a symbolic victory for Kyiv, which has repeatedly vowed to retake Crimea.

Moscow has insisted that the hundreds of artefacts—which include a golden helmet—should be kept in Crimea, territory which it claims as its own. "It belongs to Crimea, it should be there," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Monday in response to the jewels arriving in Ukraine. The treasures were kept at the Allard Pierson museum throughout the legal battles, awaiting a ruling.

In June, the Netherlands' top court ruled they should be handed to Ukraine, and not to the four Crimean museums. "This was a special case, in which cultural heritage became a victim of geopolitical developments," Allard Pierson director Els van der Plas said on the museum's website. She said that, during the legal battles, the museum "focused on safely storing the artefacts until the time came to return them to their rightful owner." "We are pleased that clarity has emerged and that they have now been returned," she added. — AFP



An undated handout picture shows a 1st-century AD golden pendant in the shape of a deer, found in a grave at the necropolis of Ust'Alma and which is part of the "Crimea: Gold and Secrets of the Black Sea" at the Allard Pierson Museum in Amsterdam. — AFP photos

## Young Thug, rap's offbeat maestro facing racketeering charges

Rap vanguard essential to the Atlanta scene at the genre's nerve center, Young Thug is one of contemporary hip-hop's most famous and most idiosyncratic figures. The artist's arrest in May 2022 on racketeering charges rattled the community the 32-year-old came up in, as he and 27 other alleged street gang members were swept up in a sprawling indictment that charged some of them with violent crimes.

With opening statements in the trial due to begin Monday in Atlanta, state prosecutors allege the chart-topping artist, born Jeffery Williams, is the founder and head of YSL, or Young Slime Life, an affiliate of the Bloods street gang. But defense attorneys assert that YSL is nothing but a record label and a family of artists known as Young Stoner Life—the name of the label Young Thug founded in 2016 as an imprint of 300 Entertainment, a subsidiary of Warner Music Group. The rapper maintains his innocence.



The case has sparked widespread attention not least because prosecutors plan to cite rap lyrics as evidence of criminal activity, a practice that for years has prompted accusations of racism and an unconstitutional curbing of artistic expression.

The month after his arrest, Young Thug urged fans in a video to sign a petition calling for legislation to restrict courts from using rap lyrics against defendants. "You know, this isn't just about me or YSL. I always use my music as a form of artistic expression, and now I see that Black artists and rappers don't have that, you know, freedom. Everybody please sign the 'Protect Black Art' petition and keep praying for us. I love you all," he said in the message, which was shown at a concert. The petition has since garnered tens of thousands of signatures.

Born August 16, 1991, Williams grew up in the Jonesboro South projects of Atlanta, where other renowned rappers including Waka Flocka Flame, 2 Chainz and Ludacris also came from. As a teen he declared himself to be the "next Lil Wayne," another Southern rapper he idolized in his youth—before becoming friends with him, getting bigger than him, and eventually beefing with him. — AFP

## Opening statements to begin in racketeering trial of rapper Young Thug

Opening statements in the long-awaited US gang conspiracy trial targeting rapper Young Thug are slated for Monday, with the prosecution expected to controversially present lyrics as evidence. The opening statements come nearly 11 months after the painstaking jury selection process began in the trial, which could last well into next year. They also begin weeks after a motions hearing in which Atlanta Judge Ural Ghanville gave prosecutors the green light to present 17 sets of lyrics as evidence, provided they could link their content to real-world crimes. Defense attorneys had sought to exclude lyrics from evidence, saying the use of verses could unfairly influence the jury.

Many free speech advocates and others in the music industry are on their side: critics say the practice of examining verses—which has sparked controversy numerous times over past decades—is a violation of constitutionally protected expression that could chill creativity by taking slice-of-life lyrics out of context and criminalizing artists of color. Young Thug, the 32-year-old rapper born Jeffery Williams, was one of 28 alleged street gang members originally swept up in a May 2022 racketeering indictment. Many of those defendants have since taken plea deals or will be tried separately.

The accusations included myriad underlying offenses that prosecutors say support an overarching conspiracy charge, including murder, assault, carjacking, drug dealing and theft. Prosecutors say Young Thug's record label is a front for a crime ring, arguing that the defendants belong to a branch of the Bloods street gang identified as Young Slime Life, or YSL. But defense lawyers insist YSL instead stands for Young Stoner Life Records, a hip-hop and trap label that Young Thug founded in 2016 and which, they say, amounts to a vague association of artists, not a gang.

### 'Fictional art form'

During the motions hearing, prosecutor Mike Carlson told the judge: "The



Rapper Young Thug

question is not rap lyrics. The question is gang lyrics." "These are party admissions," he added. A party admission is a statement by a party to a criminal case or lawsuit that is offered as evidence against that person. But the defense countered that "rap is the only fictional art form treated this way."

"As soon as you put these lyrics in front of a jury, the blinders drop," said Doug Weinstein, who represents the artist Yak Gotti, one of the 28 indicted. Several studies support Weinstein's argument, and Erik Nielson, a University of Richmond professor and specialist on the subject, told AFP earlier this year that prosecuting rap lyrics "resides in a much longer tradition of punishing Black expression."

Nielson could not comment directly on the YSL case as he will testify in it as an expert witness, but said that "we know that this issue of rap on trial is just one manifestation of a system that is hell-bent on locking up young men of color." The scholar said he thinks prosecutors see lyrics as "insurance" that they will secure a conviction. "If you have other evidence, don't use the rap lyrics," Nielson said. "And if you don't have other evidence, don't bring the charges in the first place." The prosecution filed a list of hundreds of potential witnesses. The defense's list includes expert and character witnesses including family members as well as fellow rappers T.I. and Killer Mike. — AFP

## Flashed and furious: Swiss speed cams produce thousands of erroneous fines

Swiss police admitted Monday that faulty speed cameras in the capital Bern resulted in nearly 10,000 erroneous fines being issued in little over a month. Thanks to a software error, four new speed cameras were racking up so many infractions that the police themselves suspected something was amiss. "In total, 9,604 erroneous measurements were recorded between

September 12, 2023 and October 19, 2023. All those concerned will receive a letter in the coming days and around 6,000 paid fines will be refunded," Bern police said on their website.

Traffic cops noticed an above-average number of speed violations in the four locations, where cameras were using a particular 2.2-metre configuration, while "more and more of those people affected came forward" with concerns. The police asked the Federal Institute of Metrology to carry out checks, and it duly found that measured speeds were too high. "These four devices are the only ones used in Switzerland with this... configuration and, therefore, the only ones affected by this error," police said. — AFP

## Sports

# Superb Mikaela Shiffrin wins Killington World Cup slalom

## Vhova settled for a fifth runner-up slalom finish

**KILLINGTON:** Mikaela Shiffrin picked up her second victory of the World Cup season with a dominant performance in the women's slalom in Killington on Sunday. The 28-year-old American, five-time winner of the overall World Cup rankings, beat off the challenge of her Slovakian rival Petra Vhova and Switzerland's Wendy Holdener to claim her record-extending 90th win.

Last season, Shiffrin broke Ingemar Stenmark's record for wins on the world circuit (86), and appears to be heading inexorably for the century mark. In front of her home crowd, and one day after finishing third in the giant, Shiffrin led after the first run.

She was quickest again on the second, holding off Vhova by 0.33sec. It follows her victory in a slalom in Levi, Finland a fortnight ago. "This track is incredible. The crowd helps me here, they're so noisy, I can even hear them shouting at every split time," Shiffrin, who has now won six of the seven World Cup slaloms at Killington since 2016, told NBC.

"Every time I pass one, I hear them get louder, and I'm like, 'Oh man, I don't know if I'm ahead or behind, but either way, I've got to push.' It's amazing to ski with that kind of energy." Shiffrin's season got off to a rocky start when she bruised a bone in her left knee in a training crash in October, missing significant training time.

Fourth in the opening slalom won by Vhova in

Levi, Shiffrin bounced back the next day to claim victory, taking full advantage when Olympic champion Vhova, the first-run leader, straddled a gate on the second run.

Sunday offered another Shiffrin-Vhova duel. The American, leading after the first run, was put to the test by her Slovak rival's storming second run, but responded magnificently to seize the win. The two were in a class by themselves, Holdener claiming third more than a second behind Vhova.

"Today I earned it in a way," said Shiffrin. "After the victory in Finland I didn't dare to hope that this would happen here because Petra was skiing so fast and she's so consistent." Vhova settled for a fifth runner-up slalom finish in Killington.

"At the end, second place again here," she said. "The second run, I needed to push if I wanted to be on the top. 'When I crossed the finish line, I thought maybe it can be enough but Mikaela was stronger.' Since March 2017, the two skiers have between them occupied the top two places in slalom 22 times. Shiffrin has 55 slalom wins among her 90 World Cup victories and Vhova has 20. Shiffrin, who won her fifth overall World Cup title last season, leads this season's standings with 350 points, 84 ahead of Vhova as the women head into two giant slalom races at Tremblant, Canada, next week. — AFP



**KILLINGTON:** Mikaela Shiffrin of Team USA reacts on the podium after finishing first place in the Women's Slalom at the Stifel Killington FIS World Cup race in Killington, Vermont. — AFP

## Eagles rally to beat Bills in overtime, Chiefs top Raiders

**LOS ANGELES:** Quarterback Jalen Hurts ran in an overtime touchdown to give the Philadelphia Eagles a 37-34 NFL win over the Buffalo Bills Sunday and move them to 10-1 on the season. The Eagles, who lost the Super Bowl to Kansas City last season, trailed at half-time but rallied to win for the fifth straight game.

The defeat was a bitter blow for the Bills who led 17-7 at the break and were ahead with seconds remaining. Buffalo fell to 6-6 and now face a battle to make the playoffs. The Eagles fightback began when 21-14 behind early in the fourth with DeVonta Smith scoring on a 15-yard pass from Hurts followed by Olamide Zaccheaus clutching a 29-yard touchdown pass from Hurts, despite double coverage.

The Bills responded with quarterback Josh Allen zipping a seven-yard pass to Gabe Davis to lead 31-28 with less than two minutes remaining. The Eagles suffered two five-yard penalties on their final drive leaving kicker Jake Elliott to make a 59-yard attempt in heavy rain to force overtime.

Tyler Bass converted a 40-yard field goal for the Bills before Hurts capped a nine-play, 75-yard drive by spotting a gap for the walk-off touchdown. Kansas City Chiefs came back from an early 14-point deficit for a 31-17 win against the Raiders in Las Vegas.

Isiah Pacheco ran for a one-yard touchdown and then Patrick Mahomes connected with Justin Watson on a three-yard pass as Kansas City went in level at half-time. Another Pacheco touchdown put the Chiefs in front and although the Raiders managed a field goal in response, Kansas City's 10 points in the fourth quarter ensured the victory to take them to 8-3.

The Denver Broncos won their fifth straight game, defeating the Cleveland Browns 29-12 as quarterback Russell Wilson threw for one touchdown and ran in another. Jacksonville quarterback Trevor



**EAST RUTHERFORD:** (FILES) Jaelan Phillips, #15 of the Miami Dolphins, is carted off the field after being injured in a play against the New York Jets during the fourth quarter of the game at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey. — AFP

Lawrence threw for 364 yards and a touchdown as the Jaguars stretched their AFC South lead with a nail-biting 24-21 victory over division rivals Houston.

The Jags improved to 8-3, avenging a 37-17 home loss to the Texans, who fell to 6-5. Houston quarterback C.J. Stroud threw for 306 yards and two touchdowns enabling him to overtake Los Angeles Chargers quarterback Justin Herbert for most passing yards by a rookie in his first 11 games.

Stroud's 3,266 yards eclipsed Herbert's mark of 3,224 set in 2020. The final Texans drive ended with Matt Ammendola's game-tying 58-yard field goal attempt coming up agonizingly short with 34 seconds remaining.

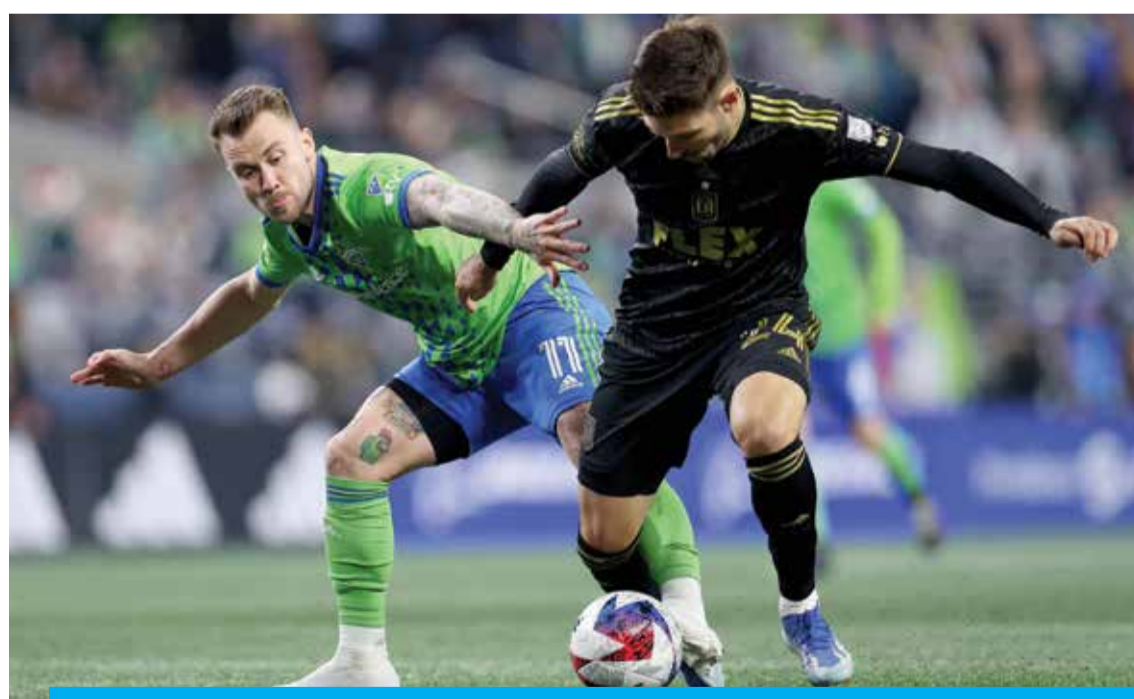
### Ravens grind out win

The Baltimore Ravens relied on their running game and strong defense to earn a 20-10 win at the Chargers. The victory gives the Ravens an AFC best 9-3 record after they forced four turnovers and sacked Chargers quarterback Herbert three times.

Los Angeles drew within three points when Herbert connected with Gerald Everett on a three-yard pass but Baltimore made sure of the win with a 37-yard rush from Zay Flowers. Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Kenny Pickett threw for a season-high 278 yards in a 16-10 victory over the injury-hit Cincinnati Bengals.

The rejuvenated Steelers, who sacked offensive coordinator Matt Canada this week, gained 400-plus yards on offense for the first time since 2020 as they came out on top against their AFC North rivals. Chris Boswell kicked two of his three field goals in the fourth quarter and Najee Harris ran for a touchdown in the third for the Steelers.

Bengals quarterback Jake Browning, making his first start after Joe Burrow was ruled out for the season with a right wrist injury, connected on 19 of 26 passes with one touchdown and one interception in the red zone. The Atlanta Falcons beat New Orleans 24-15 to grab a share of first place alongside the Saints in the NFC South. — AFP



**SEATTLE:** Seattle Sounders midfielder Albert Rusnak #11 and Los Angeles FC midfielder Ryan Hollingshead #24 battle for the ball during the second half at Lumen Field in Seattle, Washington. — AFP

gave the Houston Dynamo a 1-0 win over Sporting Kansas City. Escobar rose to firmly head in a corner from Hector Herrera in the 39th minute as Houston kept alive their hope of winning a US Open Cup and MLS Cup double.

Houston have not featured in the playoffs since 2017 and endured some miserable seasons since that run to the conference final six years ago. But under former US international Ben Olsen the Dynamo have been transformed into a team that plays attractive, attacking football.

Winger Nelson Quinones went close twice in the early stages, cutting in from the left with his first effort flashing just wide of the far post and his second forcing Kansas City keeper Tim Melia into a full-stretch save.

Then Escobar, who has won the MLS Cup with Atlanta and LAFC, found the breakthrough and forced Sporting to chase the game. Within minutes they went close to levelling when Alan Pulido's shot was saved and the ball fell to Hungarian forward Daniel Salloi, whose goalbound shot was blocked on the line. Houston managed their lead well, but Kansas City had a great chance to level when Johnny Russell found Salloi but his close-range shot was well saved by Houston keeper Steve Clark. On Saturday, Columbus Crew beat Orlando City 2-0 and FC Cincinnati defeated the Philadelphia Union 1-0 to set up an all-Ohio Eastern Conference final. Both conference finals will be played on Saturday with the final on December 9 at the home of the Eastern winner. — AFP

## Pandya returns to Mumbai, Green to Bangalore in IPL

**NEW DELHI:** Hardik Pandya has been traded to his former franchise Mumbai Indians from Gujarat Titans with Cameron Green moving from Mumbai to Royal Challengers Bangalore, the IPL said on Monday.

Five-time winners Mumbai got all-rounder Pandya back on his existing player fee of \$1.8 million as teams prepare their wish lists and organize their purses for the IPL auction on December 19 in Dubai. Pandya first joined Mumbai, which is owned by Nita Ambani — wife of India's richest man, the Reliance Industries billionaire Mukesh Ambani — as an uncapped player in 2015 for \$11,000.

"We are thrilled to welcome Hardik back home! It's a heartwarming reunion with our Mumbai Indians family!," Nita Ambani said in a statement. "From being a young scouted talent of Mumbai Indians to now being a Team India star, Hardik has come a long way and we're excited for what the future holds for him and Mumbai Indians."

An attacking batsman and fast bowler, Pandya led Gujarat to the IPL title in their debut season in 2022 and remained captain in their runners-up finish this year. He led from the front with 833 runs in 30 innings and a strike rate of 133.49. Pandya took 11 wickets.

India opener Shubman Gill has been named captain of Gujarat ahead of the 2024 season. "Shubman Gill has shown growth in stature and standing over the last two years at the highest level of the game," said Vikram Solanki, Gujarat's director of cricket.

"We've seen him mature not only as a batter but also as a leader in cricket." Mumbai let go of Australian all-rounder Green, who was the second most expensive buy in the auction for the 2023 season at \$2.11 million. — AFP

## Sri Lanka sports minister sacked over cricket crisis

**COLOMBO:** Sri Lanka's sports minister was sacked Monday hours after he accused President Ranil Wickremesinghe of trying to assassinate him over his moves to clean up corruption at the cricket board.

Officials said Roshan Ranasinghe was dismissed ahead of Monday's weekly cabinet meeting after he told parliament that Wickremesinghe should be held responsible if he was killed. "I fear I could be killed over my work to clean up the cricket board," Ranasinghe told parliament, escalating a confrontation with Wickremesinghe who had been at loggerheads with the minister over the running of Sri Lanka Cricket.

"If I am assassinated on the road, the president and his chief of staff will be responsible," Ranasinghe said. There was no immediate reaction from Wickremesinghe except confirmation from his office that the minister was dismissed.

Ranasinghe sacked the elected cricket board earlier this month after accusing office-bearers of gross corruption, a charge they have denied and are challenging in court. The cricket board is the richest sporting organization in the otherwise bankrupt island country. The International Cricket Council suspended Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) earlier this month, saying it had failed to ensure there was no government interference in its affairs, violating the world body's rules. Ranasinghe has refused the president's calls to revoke the sacking of the board. — AFP



**Roshan Ranasinghe**

## LAFC win at Seattle to set up Western final with Houston

**MIAMI:** Denis Bouanga grabbed the winner as defending MLS champions Los Angeles FC defeated the Seattle Sounders 1-0 on Sunday to set up a Western Conference final clash with the Houston Dynamo. Seattle had won their last 19 home games in the playoffs, a run going back 10 years, but despite late pressure they were unable to find a way past LAFC keeper Maxime Crepeau.

The Canadian, who broke his leg during last season's MLS Cup final win over Philadelphia and missed most of this season, produced a series of saves to deny the two-times champions. The keeper was brought into action in just the third minute, getting down low to keep out a drive from Josh Atencio.

Sounders striker Jordan Morris then used his pace to power away from LA's veteran Italian defender Giorgio Chiellini but his lofted shot was clawed away by the advancing Crepeau. The Sounders were on top but the 35,000 home supporters were silenced on the half hour. Mexican international Carlos Vela spread the ball out wide to Bouanga on the left and the French-born Gabon international, the top scorer in the league with 20 goals in the regular season, cut inside before unleashing a fierce drive into the far corner.

Seattle came out after the break determined to find a way into the game but LAFC's solid back line kept them at bay. Yeimar Gomez had a scuffed shot cleared off the line by Timothy Tillman and then Brazilian Joao Paulo's well-struck curling effort was superbly tipped over by Crepeau.

In stoppage time, Albert Rusnak went closest to beating the Canada international with a deflected strike from distance which rattled the bar.

### Escobar header

A header from Argentine defender Franco Escobar

Sports

# Garnacho stunning overhead kick helps Man Utd quell Everton fury

## Erik ten Hag's men have now won five of their last six league games

**LIVERPOOL:** Manchester United rubbed salt into Everton's wounds as Alejandro Garnacho's stunning overhead kick helped the Red Devils to a 3-0 win that left the Toffees rooted in the Premier League relegation zone.

Everton's first match since receiving a 10-point deduction for breaches of financial rules was met with a furious response at Goodison Park as the home support held up thousands of placards labelling the Premier League "corrupt".

But the match was only three minutes old when Garnacho produced a sublime piece of skill that will go down as one of the great Premier League goals. The 19-year-old Argentine sprang to meet Diogo Dalot's hanging cross flush on the volley and fire into Jordan Pickford's top left-hand corner.

"I cannot believe it. To be honest I just turned around and thought 'oh my God'," said Garnacho. That moment of magic was out of keeping with another patchy United performance, but Marcus Rashford's penalty and Anthony Martial's strike ensured Erik ten Hag's men have now won five of their last six league games.

"It was a fantastic goal. (The) season is still many games to play but probably already the goal of the season," said Ten Hag. "We knew beforehand it was going to be difficult but we enjoy those challenges." United climb up to sixth in the table and within six points of leaders Arsenal despite a troubled season.

The visitors had to cope with a febrile atmosphere as the Everton support took out their frustrations on the authorities for being handed the most severe sporting sanction in Premier League

history. After two seasons battling relegation, Sean Dyche's men looked to have pulled clear of trouble thanks to a fine recent run of form.

But they are now off the bottom of the table only on goal difference and five points adrift of safety. Everton were left to rue a series of missed chances after Garnacho stunned the raucous home support early on. Dominic Calvert-Lewin twice failed to make the most of excellent headed chances.

### Mainoo shines

Teenager Kobbie Mainoo shone on his first Premier League start for United and only a goal-line clearance from the midfielder denied Dwight McNeil an equalizer after Andre Onana parried Calvert-Lewin's initial effort.

Abdoulaye Doucoure then slotted another glorious opportunity wide as Everton failed to press home their dominance before the break. And the feeling among the home support that the world is against them was not helped when VAR intervened early in the second period to award United a controversial penalty.

Referee John Brooks had initially booked Martial for diving as he went down in the box under a challenge from Ashley Young. The contact appeared minimal for VAR to get involved, but Brooks overturned his decision after viewing a replay.

"The VAR thing this year, it's been all over the place. It's the simplest thing but it seems to be mayhem all the time," said Dyche. "You're 2-0 down all of a sudden from a nothing moment, one you think has gone for you."

Bruno Fernandes handed responsibility from the spot to Rashford and the England international



**LIVERPOOL:** Everton's Ukrainian defender #19 Vitaliy Mykolenko (L) fights for the ball with Manchester United's English striker #10 Marcus Rashford during the English Premier League football match between Everton and Manchester United at Goodison Park in Liverpool. — AFP

took the chance to smash home his first club goal since September 3. "Marcus needed a bit of confidence, he needed his goal," said Fernandes.

"He is an excellent penalty taker. I was sure he could score that penalty and Marcus did it per-

fectly." Martial was making a rare start in the absence of the injured Rasmus Hojlund and rounded off United's biggest league win of the season with a cool finish from Fernandes' through ball 15 minutes from time. — AFP

## Dortmund's Terzic seeking positive spark in crucial Milan clash

**BERLIN:** Edin Terzic's Borussia Dortmund can seal a spot in the Champions League last 16 by winning at AC Milan on Tuesday, sparking some positivity amid a stuttering domestic campaign. Already ten points behind league leaders Bayer Leverkusen with just 12 games played, Terzic's men have however impressed on the European stage this season.

Dortmund sit first in a Champions League group which includes Milan, Paris Saint-Germain and Newcastle, having conceded just two goals in four matches. In the league however they are shipping more than 1.5 goals per game on average and look out of the title race with only a third of the season gone.

Now at the helm for almost a year and a half, Terzic has faced heavy criticism in Germany, with some calling for the 41-year-old's head. Terzic and those in charge at Signal Iduna Park can help to silence the chatter by securing progress to the knockout phase against last season's semi-finalists.

### 'Not that good'

Speaking at Dortmund's AGM on Sunday, club CEO Hans-Joachim Watzke contrasted his side's performances in the league with their showings in Europe. "We were hoping for two or three more points (in the league) at this stage," Watzke said,

"but the sky isn't falling." "We are in first place in the (Champions League) group which cannot be over-estimated. The group is fragile and anything can happen. "On Tuesday, we have a chance to qualify early with a win. I wouldn't have dared to dream of that at the time of the draw. That's the truth."

Watzke said the club had "been exposed to a media barrage for months that I have not experienced in ages. "I have to double check every week that we're not fighting relegation!" The CEO, who took over in 2005 and helped save Dortmund from financial ruin, said "we beat Newcastle, but even then they say 'well they're not that good either.'"

Despite the criticism, Watzke has been Terzic's main advocate, often calling for patience for the Dortmund-born-and-raised coach. The CEO has drawn parallels between Terzic and former mentor Jurgen Klopp, who did not finish in the top four until his third season in charge, when he won the league.

### 'We don't need to hide'

Dortmund drew the reverse fixture 0-0 with Milan in October and another draw, or a loss, would most likely mean the German side need to beat Paris at home in December to progress. Besides the morale boost that would come from making it through this season's strongest Champions League group, qualifying has huge financial importance for the member-run club.

Dortmund, who were European champions 26 years ago, ended a run of three matches without a win in the league on Saturday but made tough work of it, coming from two goals down to beat Borussia Moenchengladbach 4-2 at home.

hind Monaco, who were thumped 5-2 by leaders Paris Saint-Germain in the capital on Friday. Nice kept an eighth consecutive clean sheet in a 1-0 win over Toulouse on Sunday that keeps the Riviera outfit breathing down the necks of PSG.

Nice goalkeeper Marcin Bulka has not conceded a goal in Ligue 1 for 723 minutes, more than eight games ago and Nice have yet to fall behind in their 13 Ligue 1 matches this term, breaking the record of 12 held since the 1984-85 season by Bordeaux.

However, while they have only conceded a miserly four goals all season, they have only scored 14, which pales by comparison with Kylian Mbappe-fuelled PSG on 34. "Our main strength is our defence," said Nice coach Francesco Farioli. "We aren't interested in statistics, but it's nice racking up the points," he said. Striker Terem Moffi scored the only goal of Sunday's game at Nice's Allianz Riviera, his fourth goal of the Ligue 1 season coming in the 54th minute with a simple tap-in after being set up by Morgan Sanson. A week after releasing their coach Bruno Genesio, Brittany outfit Rennes got their campaign back on track with a 3-1 win over Reims. — AFP



**DORTMUND:** Dortmund's German forward #14 Niclas Füllkrug (L) celebrates scoring the 2-2 goal with Dortmund's English forward #43 Jamie Bynoe-Gittens during the German first division Bundesliga football match between BVB Borussia Dortmund and Borussia Moenchengladbach in Dortmund, western Germany. — AFP

"It was extremely important that we started the next block of games with a win," Terzic said on Saturday. Terzic joked with reporters after the Gladbach game that "it definitely won't be boring with this season" before crediting this side's "spirit, energy and faith" in the comeback.

Dortmund have now rescued 11 points from losing situations this season, the second-highest in the Bundesliga. They face a season-defining set of fixtures in the lead-up to Christmas, taking on Milan, league leaders Leverkusen, third-placed Stuttgart in the German Cup, RB Leipzig and PSG. — AFP

## Struggling Lyon slip to seventh Ligue 1 loss of the season

**NICE:** Lille inflicted the seventh defeat of the season on Lyon on Sunday, leaving the one-time kings of French football rooted to the bottom of Ligue 1. An opening goal from Canadian international Jonathan David and a stunning strike from Tiago Santos earned Lille a 2-0 victory at Lyon's Groupama Stadium.

Lyon mounted a limited fightback in the second half but former Arsenal forward Alexandre Lacazette's lack of cutting edge in front of goal summed up their season so far. They have just seven points from 12 games and relegation is starting to seem a genuine prospect for the club that won seven consecutive titles between 2001 and 2008.

Lille's three points secured fourth place, a point be-



**LYON:** Lyon's French midfielder #18 Rayan Cherki (C) fights for the ball with Lille's Kosovar midfielder #23 Edon Zhegrova (L) during the French L1 football match between Olympique Lyonnais (Lyon) and LOSC (Lille) at the Groupama stadium in Lyon, central eastern France. — AFP

## Saudi-backed Newcastle face Champions League reality check

**MANCHESTER:** Newcastle must overcome the might of Paris Saint-Germain and a mounting injury list if the Magpies' first foray into the Champions League for 20 years is not to come to a premature end on Tuesday.

Damaging back-to-back defeats to Borussia Dortmund have left Eddie Howe's men sitting bottom of a devilishly difficult Group F, also featuring last season's semi-finalists AC Milan. Newcastle must avoid defeat in the French capital to have any chance of reaching the last 16.

Qualification looked well within the grasp of Howe's side when they humbled PSG 4-1 on Tyne-side in October. But things have since unravelled for Newcastle as an injury crisis has taken its toll despite the club being backed by the riches of the Saudi sovereign wealth fund.

Contrary to expectations, Newcastle did not splash their newfound wealth extravagantly in the transfer window by the standards of top Premier League sides. The club's one marquee summer signing, Sandro Tonali, has been slapped with a 10-month ban for breaching betting rules during his time with Milan.

Harvey Barnes has spent most of the campaign out injured since his switch from Leicester, while young full-backs Lewis Hall and Tino Livramento have only been pressed into action in recent weeks due to injuries to others.

The decision to be more conservative in the transfer market is now coming back to bite, even if Newcastle showed remarkable resolve to thrash Chelsea 4-1 on Saturday without 13 first-team players. Sven Botman, Dan Burn, Callum Wilson, Joe Willock and Sean Longstaff are among the other key players likely to miss out again at the Parc des Princes.

"You look at the players who were missing and that was a giant performance from the players we have fit," said Howe after Chelsea were swept aside at St. James' Park. However, the fear for Howe is that his depleted squad have already emptied the tank ahead of facing a PSG side led by Kylian Mbappe with revenge and a place in the last 16 in their sights.

Howe needed to name three goalkeepers and a number of teenagers just to fill his bench at the weekend. The demolition of the French champions in their first home Champions League match for two decades appeared a statement of intent from a coming power of European football. — AFP

# Classifieds

### Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoum Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

### Change of Name

<p><b>I, Sakina</b>, holder of passport number: L9644390, do hereby change my name to Sakina (as given name) Khedawala (as surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known as Sakina Khedawala and also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">#4567- 28-11-2023</p>	<p><b>I, Hakimuddin</b> Rokadia s/o Shabbir Ali Rokadiya holder of Indian Passport No. U0188194, having permanent address, Hussami Mohalla, Partapur, Banswara, Pin-327024, Rajasthan, India, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) Hakimuddin and (surname) Rokadiya.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">#4566- 27-11-2023</p>
<p><b>U, Huzefa</b>, holder of passport number: M2312749, do hereby change my name to Huzefa (as given name) Khedawala (as surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known as Huzefa Khedawala and also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">#4567- 28-11-2023</p>	<p><b>I, Tubi</b> Kadaparambil holder of Indian Passport No-V7782765 having permanent address - S/o Baby Kadaparambil, Kadaparambil house Kodange Mundaje post, Belthangady TQ, Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka, Indian Pin - 574228, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) Tubi Joseph and (surname) Baby Kadaparambil.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">#4565-27-11-2023</p>

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## Sensational Sinner steers Italy to Davis Cup glory over Australia

Italian demoralized the scampering De Minaur with a relentless performance



MALAGA: The members of team Italy raise their trophy as they celebrate winning the Davis Cup tennis tournament at the Martin Carpena sports hall, in Malaga. — AFP

**MALAGA:** Italy won the Davis Cup for the first time since 1976 as Jannik Sinner crushed Alex de Minaur 6-3, 6-0 to seal a 2-0 win over Australia on Sunday in Malaga. The world number four clinched victory in the second singles rubber after Matteo Arnaldi dug deep to beat Alexei Popyrin 7-5, 2-6, 6-4 in the opening clash.

Sinner, who remarkably beat top-ranked superstar Novak Djokovic twice in one day on Saturday as Italy eliminated Serbia, secured his country's second title against Lleyton Hewitt's 28-time winners in style. "I felt quite good today ... this is a really important win for me, the whole team and Italy together," said Sinner. "This is something different, really special, because you don't play for yourself, you play for the whole team."

The Italian demoralized the scampering De Minaur with a relentless performance, overpowering him with vicious ground-strokes to the delight of the majority of the packed Martin Carpena arena. Sinner had won each of the five prior meetings be-

tween the pair and the world number 12 came no closer this time, brutally dismantled in 81 minutes.

Australia's wait for a Davis Cup trophy goes on, with their last coming in 2003, but Italy, who last reached a final in 1998, celebrated wildly when De Minaur went wide to end the tie. On Saturday Italy were on the verge of elimination, but Sinner saved three match points against Djokovic to force a deciding doubles clash.

"Yesterday we were one point away from being out and now we can celebrate winning, I think we can all be very, very happy," said Sinner, after ending Italy's 47-year wait, the third-longest gap between titles in Davis Cup history. Sinner, who lost the ATP Finals showdown with Djokovic a week ago in Turin, deserves special credit for his stunning displays in Malaga — he won all five rubbers he played in.

Laser-focused from the start, he broke early in the first set for a 2-1 lead when De Minaur sent a lob long and then consolidated with a powerful forehand. The 22-year-old brought up three set points and clinched

the first set with the second of them when De Minaur volleyed beyond the baseline.

In the second set Sinner produced 19 winners to just five unforced errors to sweep to victory. "I will find ways to get better, to be able to hurt these types of players," said De Minaur, who also suffered disappointment with Australia in last year's final. "Today I just didn't have enough."

### Clinging on

Arnaldi had to cling on to beat Popyrin in the first match. "I think I won one of the most important matches in my life, I don't know what to say right now," said an emotional Arnaldi. "I'm sorry for Alexei, because he deserved to win, for sure — he was playing better, but sometimes Davis is like this." Arnaldi, ranked 44th, exchanged breaks with Popyrin and converted his fourth set point to take a scrappy first stanza. The Australian hit back strongly in the second, racing into a double break and holding for 4-0.

Arnaldi finally got on the board in the fifth game

but Popyrin — who produced six aces in the second set to the Italian's zero — served it out to force a decisive third. The erratic Arnaldi saved break points in his first, second and fourth service games without putting pressure on Popyrin's serve until earning a break point which the 24-year-old saved, holding for 4-4.

Popyrin was on top but could not make it count to get the breakthrough, with Arnaldi saving yet another break point on his way to a 5-4 lead. Despite being outplayed for the best part of the third set Arnaldi converted his first set point to put Italy ahead in the tie with a powerful forehand, with Sinner completing the job without a fuss.

"(Sinner) backed up what he did yesterday against Novak and played extremely good tennis," said Hewitt, who played for Australia last time they won the cup 20 years ago. "I think the conditions and surface suit him perfectly, as well, which makes life pretty tough." Victory completed a superb year for Italian tennis, after their women's team finished as runners-up in the Billie Jean King Cup. — AFP

## Electric Rodrygo sends Madrid top at Cadiz

**CADIZ:** Rodrygo sent Real Madrid provisionally top of La Liga with two goals in a comfortable 3-0 win at Cadiz on Sunday. The Brazilian winger also set up a goal for La Liga's top scorer Jude Bellingham, who now has 11 to his name this season in the Spanish top flight. Madrid climbed a point clear of high-flying Girona, who host Athletic Bilbao on Monday looking to reclaim top spot. Carlo Ancelotti's side also rose four points clear of fourth-placed rivals Barcelona, following their 1-1 draw at Rayo Vallecano on Saturday, and third-placed Atletico Madrid.

Madrid were dealt severe blows over the past fortnight with Vinicius Junior and Eduardo Camavinga suffering long-term injuries, joining Thibaut Courtois, Eder Militao and Aurelien Tchouameni on the sidelines. Despite that, Madrid secured a straightforward victory which is not something they take for granted after the international break, and less so with an injury-ravaged squad. "Sometimes difficulty is just more motivation and the players understood that very well," Ancelotti told reporters.

"All the absences that we have are important players, but we managed it well and the team was very good out there." The Italian coach started Toni Kroos in defensive midfield and brought veteran



CADIZ: Real Madrid's German defender Antonio Rudiger (2R) vies for a header with Cadiz's Spanish forward Chris Ramos (R) during the Spanish league football match between Cadiz CF and Real Madrid CF at the Nuevo Mirandilla stadium in Cadiz. — AFP

playmaker Luka Modric into the team for only his fifth start in La Liga this season.

Bellingham also returned after missing two league games and England's Euro qualifiers with a shoulder injury. Madrid dominated the opening stages and took the lead after 14 minutes when Rodrygo dribbled across the penalty area and curled a sumptuous strike into the top right corner. The Brazilian struggled for goals at the start of the season but Ancelotti kept faith in him and with Vincius sidelined, he will be crucial for Madrid in the coming weeks. — AFP

## Bucks roar back to beat Blazers, Suns and Magic roll on

**LOS ANGELES:** The Milwaukee Bucks erased a 26-point deficit to beat Portland 108-102 on Sunday as Phoenix and Orlando stretched their NBA winning streaks to seven games. Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 33 points and grabbed 16 rebounds for the Bucks. Teammate Damian Lillard added 31 in his first game against his former team and Milwaukee authored the biggest comeback victory of the season so far.

Lillard, who played 11 seasons in Portland until he was traded to Milwaukee in September, admitted it was "a weird feeling" to take the court against former teammates. "But once we started playing I kind of got over it quick," added Lillard, who added five rebounds and four assists. "I'm just happy we were able to get the win."

Portland, fueled by 22 points from Jerami Grant and 18 from Malcolm Brogdon, led 68-52 at halftime and pushed their advantage to 26 points early in the third period. Lillard's three-pointer tied it at 97-97 with less than three minutes remaining. It was tied at 102-102 when Antetokounmpo tipped in the go-ahead basket with 18.5 seconds left to play.

A big block from Antetokounmpo on Brogdon and four free-throws from Lillard sealed it. "We've been in that situation a few times this season, where

our character was tested, our togetherness was tested," Lillard said. "We showed true again." Phoenix guard Devin Booker starred in New York, drilling a go-ahead three-pointer with 1.7 seconds remaining as the Suns kept their streak going with a 116-113 victory over the Knicks.

Booker scored 28 points and handed out 11 assists for the Suns, who were without superstar Kevin Durant for a second straight game because of a sore right foot. Jalen Brunson scored 35 points with six rebounds and eight assists for the Knicks, but his three-point attempt as time expired rimmed out.

In Orlando, Franz Wagner and Cole Anthony scored 30 points apiece to fuel the Magic's 130-117 victory over the Charlotte Hornets. Paolo Banchero added 23 points and eight assists for the Magic, who out-scored the Hornets 74-60 in the paint and parlayed 18 Charlotte turnovers into 28 points.

Up 61-57 at halftime, the Magic didn't trail in the second half. Anthony scored 17 points in the fourth quarter to help Orlando extend their lead to as many as 16. Miles Bridges led Charlotte with 23 points and 10 rebounds, but the Hornets ultimately had no answer for a Magic team on its longest winning streak since a nine-win run in the 2010-11 season.

In Boston, Jayson Tatum scored 34 points, Jaylen Brown added 21 to propel the Celtics to a 113-103 victory over the Atlanta Hawks. The Celtics were without injured Kristaps Porzingis and Jrue Holiday, but after a lackluster loss to the Magic on Friday the short-handed hosts hustled for the victory. Boston pulled down a season-high 58 rebounds, including 18 on the offensive glass. — AFP