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As death toll mounts, US claims Zionists 'making effort' to minimize casualties

Amir remains stable; Gulf leaders check on health

KUWAIT: The health condition of HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah remains stable, said the Amiri Diwan affairs minister Sunday. Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah expressed wishes of good health and rapid recovery for HH the Amir.

HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a call Sunday from Omani Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, checking on the health of HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf. HH the Crown Prince thanked Sultan Haitham for his kind feelings, wishing him good health and the sultanate further progress.

HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal also received a phone call from Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa, during which he was reassured about the health of HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf. During the phone



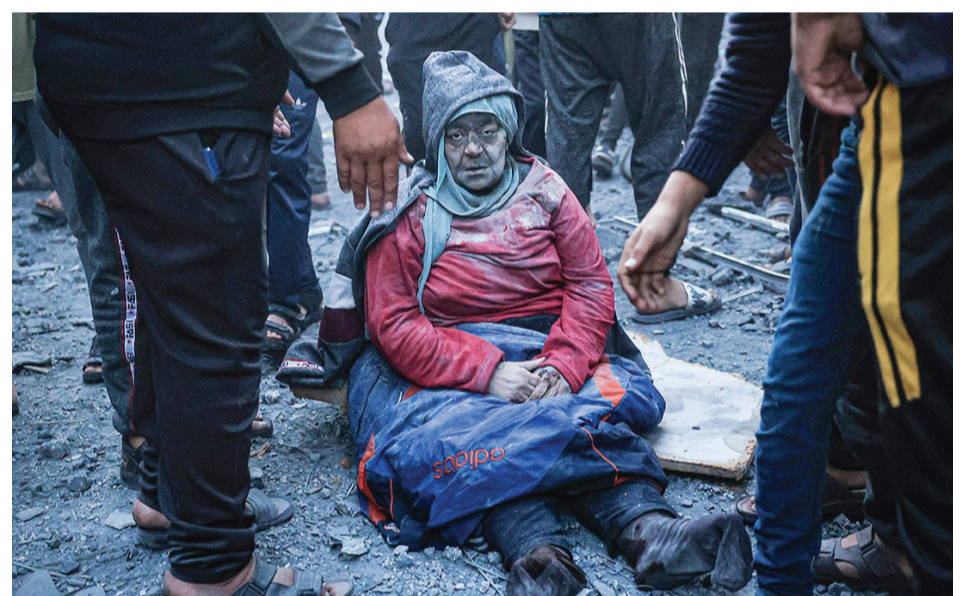
HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

call, King Hamad wished HH the Amir good health and rapid recovery. HH the Crown Prince thanked King Hamad for his kind words and sentiments, wishing him optimal health and for Bahrain further progress and prosperity. — KUNA

GAZA: The Zionist entity struck Gaza targets Sunday in its war on Hamas sparked by the Oct 7 attacks, as international concern deepened over the mounting civilian death toll on the third day of fighting after a truce ended. More than 15,500 people have been killed in the besieged Palestinian territory, according to the Gaza health ministry, in more than eight weeks of combat and heavy bombardment.

But the White House believes the Zionist entity is "making an effort" to minimize civilian deaths in Gaza, a senior official said Sunday. Speaking on the US Sunday talk shows, National Security Council spokesman John Kirby also insisted that US intelligence was unaware of any secret, advance Hamas blueprint for its Oct 7 attack on the Zionist entity. The New York Times reported last week that Zionist authorities had obtained such a document a year before the attack occurred.

Kirby told ABC's "This Week" that the Zionist entity had responded to US appeals to protect civilians. "We believe they have been receptive to our messages here of trying to minimize civilian casualties," he said, including by publishing online a map of places where Gazans could go to find safety. "There's not a whole lot of



GAZA: A woman injured in a Zionist strike sits amid the rubble in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on Dec 3, 2023. — AFP

modern militaries that would do that... to telegraph their punches in that way. So they are making an effort."

Zionist air and artillery strikes hit Gaza's northern frontier with the Zionist entity, throwing thick clouds of smoke

and dust into the sky. The Zionist army reported 17 rocket salvos from Gaza into the Zionist entity on Sunday, adding that most were intercepted and there was only slight material damage.

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Kuwait in final stages of tabling low-carbon plan

DUBAI: Kuwait is now in the final stages of presenting its 2050 low-carbon strategy and plans to ensure it reaches carbon neutrality by 2060, said Undersecretary of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Oil Sheikh Dr Nimer Al-Fahad Al-Sabah.



Sheikh Dr Nimer Al-Sabah

In a statement to KUNA, Sheikh Nimer Al-Sabah congratulated the UAE for hosting the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28), considering it an opportunity to shed light on how the GCC and Arab countries are suffering from the negative effects of climate change.

Sheikh Nimer stressed that Kuwait attaches utmost importance to managing the climate change file at the national level through the formation of a supreme national climate committee headed by Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs Dr Saad Al-Barrak. It aims to develop programs and plans to reduce emissions and enhance flexibility in facing the effects of climate change. He stated Kuwait is working to develop low-carbon development strategies in the sectors of oil, gas, energy, transportation, industry, land use and the promotion of agriculture.

These strategies include a roadmap to achieve sustainable economic growth through the principles of circular carbon economy, Sheikh Nimer said Kuwait submitted 14 projects within the Clean Development Mechanism

Continued on Page 6

Tears, curbs during COP28 Gaza protest

DUBAI: Teary-eyed, keffiyeh-wearing activists protested the Zionist entity's bombardment of Gaza at the UN climate talks in the UAE Sunday. Hindered by UN restrictions preventing them from raising Palestinian flags or chanting certain slogans, more than 100 activists in a COP28 "Blue Zone" venue, managed by the world body and not local authorities, demanded a Gaza ceasefire.

"We say to the Palestinian people that the international community

may have forgotten you, but you are not alone," said Asad Rehman, lead spokesman for the Climate Justice Coalition. "Free Palestine", he told a sobbing crowd that echoed his chant before they were shushed because of UN guidelines prohibiting the naming of states, leaders or companies in activist actions within the COP venue.

Sunday's solidarity gathering, the largest yet, still pales in comparison to mobilizations that have swept other parts of the world since the Zionist-Hamas war began on Oct 7. With activist actions kicking off on Sunday, the fourth day of the climate talks, it was not local authorities that tightened the protest space, but strict UN guidelines that governed previous COPs.

Continued on Page 6



DUBAI: Participants shout slogans during a demonstration demanding a ceasefire in the Zionist-Hamas war at the COP28 summit on Dec 3, 2023.—AFP

Zionists destroy Qatari-funded Gaza complex

GAZA: At almost exactly the same time Zionist negotiators pulled out of deadlocked truce talks in Qatar on Saturday, Zionist jets sent a prestige Doha-funded housing development in the Gaza Strip up in smoke. Hamad City is named for the former Amir of the Gulf state, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, who laid the foundation stone on a visit 11 years ago.

Inaugurated in 2016, it was still among the newest projects in the Gaza Strip, the housing complex in the city of Khan Yunis

boasting an impressive mosque, shops and gardens. The first flats — more than 1,000 of them — were provided to Palestinians whose homes were destroyed in the war between the Zionist entity and Hamas two years earlier.

On Saturday it happened again, a day after a Qatar-brokered pause in the current war between the Zionist entity and Hamas expired. First their phones pinged around noon with an "immediate" evacuation order SMS sent by the Zionist army. Around an hour later, five Zionist air strikes rained down on the neighborhood in the space of just two minutes.

Bombs slammed into the pale apartment blocks one by one, reducing them largely to rubble and sending a huge

Continued on Page 6



GAZA: Residents of the Qatari-funded Hamad Town residential complex in Khan Yunis sit with their belongings as they flee their homes after a Zionist strike on Dec 2, 2023.—AFP

4 killed in bomb attack on Catholic mass in Philippines

MARAWI, Philippines: At least four people were killed and dozens wounded in a bomb attack on a Catholic mass in the insurgency-plagued southern Philippines on Sunday, with President Ferdinand

Marcos blaming "foreign terrorists". The blast happened during a morning service at Mindanao State University's gymnasium in Marawi, the country's largest Muslim city, which was besieged by Islamist militant groups in 2017.

Police Lieutenant General Emmanuel Peralta said four people were killed and around 50 wounded in the blast from an improvised explosive device. Other security officials said the bombing may have been a retaliatory attack for a series of military operations against Islamist militant groups in recent days. Photos posted on the

Lanao del Sur provincial government's Facebook page showed several overturned plastic chairs, shattered glass and debris around a black patch on the floor of the gymnasium.

University student Chris Jurado, 21, told AFP from his hospital bed that the explosion happened during the first Bible reading of the morning mass at 7:00 am (2300 GMT Saturday). "It was really sudden and everyone ran," Jurado said. "When I looked behind me people were lying on the floor. We didn't know what happened because everything happened so fast." — AFP



Local

KIPIC completes the third and last units of Al-Zour refinery

A milestone in the company's journey



KUWAIT: Photos show the Al-Zour refinery. The Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) announced on Sunday the successful and safe completion of the operation of the third and final units of the Al-Zour refinery. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) announced on Sunday the successful and safe completion of the operation of the third and final units of the Al-Zour refinery in the Al-Zour petroleum complex, thus achieving a historic achievement added to its track record of success. KIPIC said in a press release that it has achieved one of the most important goals of the strategy of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and its companies in reaching the maximum refining capacity, which amounts to 615,000 barrels per day.

It pointed out that the operation of the Al-Zour refinery is a completion of the implementation of one of the most

important axes of the development program of the government of Kuwait, as the project will contribute to enhancing the production capacities of the oil and gas sector in the country, provide more opportunities for Kuwaiti citizens, and support the national economy.

It explained that the refinery represents a milestone in the company's journey, which has undergone unprecedented experience in implementing this huge project at the local and global levels. The Al-Zour refinery is the largest refining facility in the world to be built in one phase and ranked seventh globally in the list of the 10 largest oil refineries in the world by the global refining survey report.

The statement quoted Walid Al-Bader, CEO of the company, as saying, "We dedicate this great national achievement to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the noble Kuwaiti people. He stated that the completion of the third refinery comes as the culmination of years of hard work by all employees of the company and is a strategic achievement for Kuwait and the oil sector in particular due to the great and pivotal role assigned to it in shaping the future of Kuwait's oil industry.

The operation of the third refinery

was carried out successfully and safely with national assistance and in accordance with the plan. Successes have been achieved in supplying low-sulfur fuel oil to the power plants of the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy in the south and north of the country. KIPIC is focused on preserving the environment of Kuwait, reducing the percentage of sulfur emissions, and raising air quality.

Al-Bader stressed that the Al-Zour refinery project is one of the mega projects implemented globally and was implemented through five packages by alliances of global contractors. For his part, Ali Al-Ajmi, executive vice president of

operations of Al-Zour refinery, said that Al-Zour refinery has achieved a large and successive set of successes.

It started commercial operation of the first refinery in November 2022 and a number of commercial shipments of kerosene, petrochemical naphtha, high-quality jet fuel, as well as low-sulfur fuel oil. Very low-sulfur diesel has been exported to world markets. Al-Ajmi praised all the great efforts made by all the work teams at the Al-Zour refinery to achieve this historic achievement, stressing that it is the fruit of the efforts of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and its associates, as well as the solidarity of all employees in KIPIC. — KUNA

First phase of Kuwait Airport's T2 terminal nears completion

KUWAIT: The first phase of the new passenger terminal building project (T2) at Kuwait International Airport reached 72.64 percent complete, said the Directorate General of Civil Aviation on Sunday. The second phase of the new T2 had also reached 68.1 percent, said Acting Director General for Civil Aviation Saad Al-Otaibi in a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA). He assured the continuation of development projects in the airport as well as the modernization of the infrastructure in the air transport sector in the country, thanks to the relevant government entities.

The new passenger terminal is of top priority for the government, as it is considered one of the major development projects. Additionally, it receives direct follow-up from His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. A meeting was chaired by the Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy and Acting Public Works Minister Dr. Jassem Al-Ostad in the presence of relevant government officials to discuss the requirements to accelerate the pace of the project.

He added that the Ministry of Interior (Public Works), (Electricity and Water), Kuwait Fire Force, Kuwait Municipality, Public Authority of Manpower (Civil Aviation), and the Government Performance Follow-up Agency were present at the meeting. He praised the public works team working on the project as well as the collaboration and cooperation of government bodies to overcome the obstacles and challenges. The airport development projects contain three phases, the first containing the passenger terminal, the central station, and the connection to service tunnels.

The second phase involves car parks, service buildings, and roads leading to the new passenger terminal (T2). The third phase contains aircraft parking and taxiways. The T2 project's carrying capacity is about 25 million passengers annually and contains 30 fixed bridges to accommodate 51 planes at once, as well as 5,000 parking spaces, in addition to a modern hotel in the transit area. It will provide 15 thousand job opportunities for Kuwaiti youth. — KUNA



Saad Al-Otaibi

Parents urged to support students

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: A student might be excellent in academic subjects but might not excel in their practical life or artistic skills. On the other hand, another student may not have high academic abilities but possess outstanding talents in other areas. With the upcoming exam period, Kuwait Times sheds light on the issue of parents scolding their children who may not be able to achieve the highest grades. Many students are subjected to severe punishment for obtaining grades that are average or just good, even though this may be the student's academic capability over which they have no control.

"Support their needs and allow their potential to flourish. Avoid suffocating them with your own fears and aspirations. Instead, let them blossom into unique individuals." With these words, high school teacher Mohammed Al-Ansari emphasized that parents' focus should not solely be on grades and academic performance alone.

Ansari said many parents have a predetermined path for their children, disregarding their preferenc-

es. Ansari has observed this frequently in his 11th grade science class, where most students struggle or lack interest in scientific subjects, yet excel in Arabic, English, geography and other areas. "It seems as though they are being pushed towards a future that is not their own, but a manifestation of their parents' unfulfilled aspirations. It is quite heartbreaking to be honest," he stressed.

Many people and students may believe that teachers prefer students with high grades, which can cause those who are unable to achieve high grades to feel frustrated and desperate, besides extra pressure from the parents. This was pointed out by Reem Fares, a mother who explained that with a rise in their grades, students receive more attention from teachers. "We make sure our children are among those who receive the most attention, and we emphasize to our children to catch their teacher's at-



Mohammed Al-Ansari



ention through their grades," she said.

However, Ansari emphasized on good manners over good grades. "Personally, I value a well-behaved student more than one with poor manners. I am inclined to give higher grades to students who show respect," he said. "I would like to urge parents to spend quality time with their own flesh and blood. Show them that you care and take the time to understand their interests and dislikes. Support their needs and allow their potential to flourish. Avoid suffocating them with your own fears and aspirations. Instead, let them blossom into unique individuals," he advised.

45th edition of Tamkeen conference kicks off

KUWAIT: The International Women's Empowerment and Capacity Building Organization (IWEBCO), better known as Tamkeen, said it will on Monday launch its 45th conference under the patronage of Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Feras Saud Al-Sabah. IWEBCO's Head, Ibtisam Al-Qaoud, said in a statement to KUNA that the two-day conference will be organized in cooperation with several women's organizations and societies.

The event will highlight women's issues, primarily financial, social, and political empow-

erment, and the media's role in this regard, she remarked. It also aims to communicate with all organizations that support women's empowerment in all domains through the adoption of new laws that empower women, she added.

For her part, Dr. Salwa Al-Jassar, the organization's board member, said in a statement to KUNA that her agency is keen to follow up on governmental and non-governmental efforts to empower women in many fields in order to achieve sustainable development, especially regarding regional and international developments in the world. Al-Jassar, who also doubles as the head of the conference's scientific committee, confirmed that the gathering will attract many specialists and parliamentarians in many fields to share their own experience in this regard. — KUNA



IWEBCO's Head Ibtisam Al-Qaoud is pictured with Dr Salwa Al-Jassar.

Handicapped law amended

KUWAIT: The chairwoman of the Kuwait Society for the Handicapped, Rihab Buresli, on behalf of the board of directors, lauded the amendments the National Assembly

made to the handicapped law in regards to the education rights of autistic people and those with Down syndrome and to move the affiliation of schools that care for the handicapped affairs from the Public Authority for the Handicapped Affairs to the Ministry of Education.

The amendments also commit the government to making available training workshops for the

handicapped and those who care for them. The amendments coincided with the world's celebration of World Disabled Day (on December 3rd each year).

Buresli appreciated the cooperation of the government and the National Assembly. She thanked the members of the National Assembly's Disability Affairs Committee for their efforts.



Rihab Buresli

'Picky eating' can be a serious issue

By Passant Hisham

KUWAIT: There must be a logical explanation behind why a specific type of food can bring a smile on someone's face but can make someone else's face wrinkle in disgust. The cause of this is simply the blending of our genetic makeup, personal preferences and childhood experience that usually shape our taste perception. According to Ghazal Al-Ghaben, a nutrition specialist, this either connects us with or repels us from certain food types.

Developing a relationship with food usually starts from an early stage in life, as the emotions that children associate with food have a greater potential to last forever, and that's the time when they are more likely to become picky eat-

ers, Ghaben noted. She highlighted negative childhood experiences as one of the most common causes behind this phenomenon.

Instances like consuming specific foods during illness, experiencing discomfort, vomiting after a particular meal, or facing parental punishment for not finishing a dish, even if occurring just once, can influence a person's food preferences for a lifetime. Extreme picky eaters tend to limit their dietary intake, often developing aversions to nutritious foods and leaning towards starchy, fried, and ready-to-eat options. This can lead to nutritional imbalances, weight gain



Ghazal Al-Ghaben, nutrition specialist

and health issues such as anemia and metabolism disorders.

In this case, as Ghaben stated, it's important to put personal preferences aside and start taking the problem more seriously. "The good news is our likes and dislikes in food change, and we are more likely to start accepting foods that we didn't like in our childhood. So, we need to start small, start introducing those foods back into our diet and hide them within other ingredients. Try to pair these foods with flavors that we like within small portions," she said, noting that such a transition needs time, and it's important to stay patient with the process to generate effective results.

Ghaben emphasized that while supplements cannot fully replace the deficiency in picky eaters' diets, they can complement a balanced diet consisting of whole foods to ensure sufficient intake of essential nutrients. Before taking supplements, she advised picky eaters to undergo blood tests

and consult with a doctor or dietician to ensure the right dosage.

For those looking to enhance their diet through supplements, multivitamins are recommended, especially for nutrients lacking in their diet due to the avoidance of healthy food choices like vegetables, fruits or proteins. Ghaben identified iron, vitamin D, calcium, B12, zinc, magnesium, potassium and omega-3 as essential nutrients that should be incorporated.

Recognizing the critical role of childhood in shaping food preferences, Ghaben advises mothers to be proactive in preventing picky eating behaviors in their children. She suggests starting slowly with soft foods when introducing new items, avoiding heavy spices and making the food experience enjoyable for children, treating it as a game, such as cutting it into shapes. Mothers should stay attuned to their children's signals of acceptance or rejection of food and avoid imposing specific types of food on them.

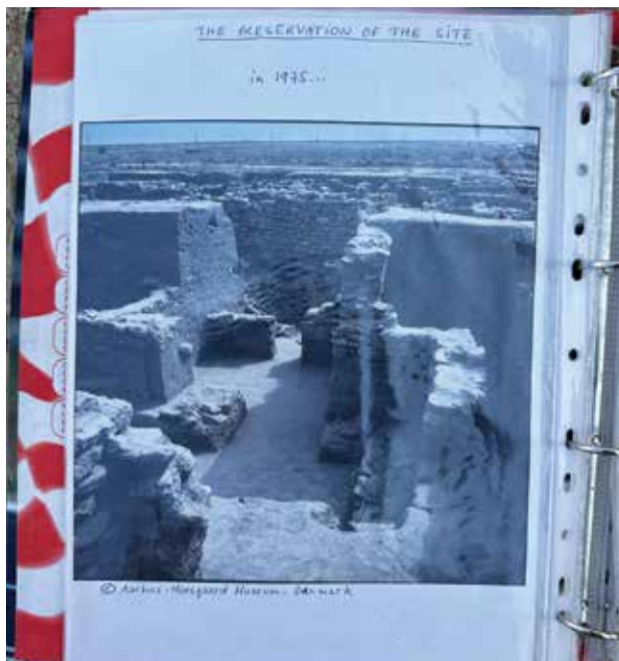
Local

2,300-year-old ruins at Failaka are falling apart

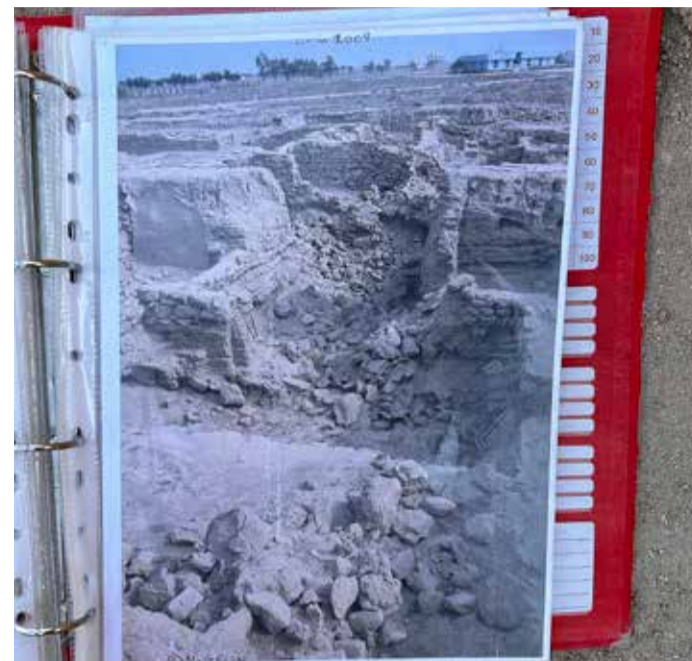
‘One of the most important Bronze Age monuments in all of the Arabian Gulf’



The 2,300-year-old Hellenistic fortress.



The fortress in 1975.



The fortress in 2009.

By Zainab Dashti

KUWAIT: I stand on a 2,300-year-old fortress on Failaka Island, watching a team of men piece the walls of the ancient fort together, trying to stop it from slowly collapsing. “I’m not sure the walls will last until next year,” says archaeologist Dr Mathilde Gelin. Gelin shows me photographs of the same excavation of the site, one in 1978 and the other in 2009. The walls in 1978 are clean and stable, with clear corridors running in between. In 2009 it is almost unrecognizable: several portions of the walls have collapsed, and the floors are invisible underneath all the wreckage.

The fortress was built by Alexander the Great around 300 BC, says Gelin. I look around and see a large maze of mudbrick walls and corridors — it is as wide as a football field, roughly 60 meters long and 60 meters wide. In the middle of the site is a temple dedicated to the Greek goddess Artemis. There I spot the famous Greek column, the same one found on the Kuwaiti one-dinar banknote. Taking a picture of the dinar with the real-life column in the background is a common habit for visiting tourists and locals.

The problem, says Gelin, is the rain. It collects at the bottom of the wall and erodes it, and over time the walls collapse. In order to maintain the walls, the team uses wooden buttresses to hold them up, as well as the same materials that were used to build the fortress 2,300 years ago. They are using the same earth and

rocks found on Failaka for repairs. Gelin says the team is doing the best they can to save the walls of the fort.

Two hundred meters away, I walk over to an even older site — a 4,000-year-old temple belonging to the civilization called Dilmun. I can see from what is left of it that it is shaped like the letter H and made of limestone. There I meet archaeologist Dr Ole Herslund, who describes it as “one of the most important Bronze Age monuments in all of the Arabian Gulf”.

The Dilmun were an ancient civilization who arrived before the Greeks and established a trading colony in Failaka, making it a very important trade route between Mesopotamia and India. Herslund explains the uniqueness of the site by showing that just below the surface of the island, you can step directly into the Bronze Age, almost 4,000 years ago. With a few exceptions from Bahrain and Egypt, this makes Failaka “virtually unique in the world”.

Next to the temple we walk over to another valuable excavated building belonging to the Dilmun — the Governor’s Palace. I can see it is rectangular shaped, and the stone walls of the palace rise higher than what was left of the ones at the temple. Herslund explains this to be the administration of the temple, which had an important function: Animal sacrifices. The Dilmun priests would present the Dilmun gods with offerings of food, drink, jewelry and expensive materials to please them.

Herslund points a four-minute walk away, “that’s



Archaeologist Dr Mathilde Gelin



Archaeologist Dr Ole Herslund



4,000-year-old Bronze Age village.

where we have the settlement, where the people would live”. There is Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber’s rest house, a traditional mudbrick Kuwaiti house, built in 1927. As I walk closer to the house, the ground next to it seems to open, and an excavated 4,000-year-old village is revealed below. I can see the mudbrick walls still standing after thousands of years, and the small rooms where people would sleep. Herslund explains it is extremely rare to find a Bronze Age village in such good condition as that found on Failaka. “I really hope the people of Kuwait appreciate that they have this,” he said.

Only a 30-minute boat ride away from the mainland, Failaka Island, only 16 square miles, has a total

of 44 archeological sites. The small island has seen different civilizations, from Bronze Age Sumeria to Dilmun to the Greek Hellenistic period and to Christian and early Islamic settlers. According to Herslund, we can learn a lot from the ruins found on Failaka. What does it tell us about life back then? What does this tell us about life today? Herslund says that till this day, Kuwait remains a diverse nation with many different cultures, and through the archaeology found at Failaka, we know that “actually it has been like this for 4,000 years”.



Dr Ahmed Onsy Dr Darren Ansell Rob Stroud

British Council’s event focuses on academic quality assurance

By Khaled Al-Abdulhadi

KUWAIT: The British Council hosted an event featuring collaboration with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan). The event focused on essential methods of academic quality assurance and strategies to enhance educational experiences in Kuwait. Dr Ahmed Onsy, Professor of Mechatronics and Intelligent Systems Engineering and Associate Dean of the School of Engineering and Computing for Business Development and Partnership, delivered a lecture explaining UCLan’s role in the process. He highlighted UCLan as the 6th largest university in the UK, emphasizing their commitment to being among the top institutions globally, with numerous partners across Africa, Asia and the southwest UK.

Dr Onsy mentioned the collaborative approach with 19 connected institutions providing constructive feedback to achieve total satisfaction, a challenging yet paramount goal given the evolving educational landscape. Regarding education and development, he stressed the importance of hands-on skills, revealing that 25 percent of education involves teaching, while 75 percent comprises practical experiences facilitated through student-led clubs funded by the institution.

Dr Onsy expressed pride in UCLan’s 120 students in Kuwait, commending their achievements and ambition. He disclosed the university’s ambitious target of reaching 5,000 students in the coming years, with substantial investments dedicated to industry development and partnerships. “So far, £15 million has been dedicated to the development of the industry, with £200 million in investments. Our goal is taking industry from businesses and the community to students,” he said.

Dr Onsy expressed excitement about the opportunity in Kuwait, stating UCLan’s commitment to supporting local institutions and witnessing the passion and ambition of locals to improve higher education quality. Notably, Dr Onsy won the “Leading Entrepreneur in the Field of Higher Education for the Year 2023” award at the level of European countries.

Dr Helen Collinson, Director of Academic Quality and Enhancement, emphasized the key goal of helping students enhance their education. She outlined the interconnected mechanisms involving various bodies to ensure quality assurance and the significance of constructive feedback to address setbacks.

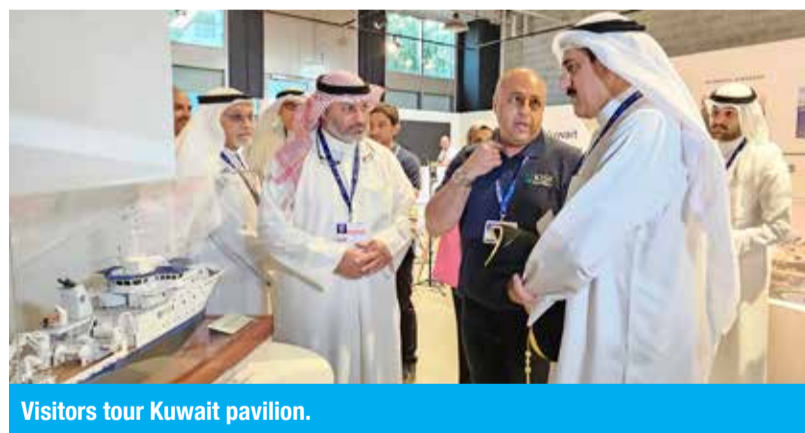
Dr Darren Ansell, Professor of Aerospace Engineering, highlighted the valuable opportunity to share practices and collaborate with overseas institutions. He acknowledged the British Council’s role in fostering collaborations and expressed eagerness to meet potential partners.

Rob Stroud, Director of Assessment Services at QAA, emphasized the importance of external reference points, study involvement and quality assurance in education. He highlighted the focus on setting and maintaining standards and ensuring positive outcomes for students. Baljinder Birdi, Business Development Manager at QAA, discussed their work with Kuwaiti institutions, accrediting two universities and qualifying them for international membership. She mentioned ongoing collaborations with other institutions at different stages of the review process.

FM partakes in GCC ministerial meeting

DOHA: Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the accompanying delegation took part Sunday in the 158th ministerial meeting of the GCC held in Doha, Qatar. This preparatory meeting is held ahead of the 44th GCC summit in the Qatari capital next Tuesday.

The summit, featuring the participation of Gulf leaders, will focus on joint GCC cooperation in addition to important regional developments, namely the alarming situation in the Gaza Strip and the violations against Palestinian lands and sacred places. — KUNA



Visitors tour Kuwait pavilion.



Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Jassem Al-Ostad poses for a photo with members of Kuwait mission to COP28.

Kuwait gov promotes environment-friendly development projects

DUBAI: Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, Dr. Jassem Al-Ostad, reaffirmed Kuwait’s commitment to the agreements related to supporting efforts aimed at adopting sustainability

KFAED, UK seek to bolster climate action in Mideast

DUBAI: The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) and the British Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO) signed on Sunday a joint statement bolstering climate action in the Middle East in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG). In a statement addressed to KUNA, KFAED’s Acting Director Waleed Al-Bahar and Alicia Forsyth, Head of the Climate Strategy and Co-ordination Department at FCDO,

signed the document on the sidelines of the COP 28 held in Dubai. The fund indicated that the technical cooperation between the two sides on combating sand and dust storms (SDS) in Kuwait, Iraq, and nearby countries was also touched upon to counter the ill effects of such phenomena on the environment. The cooperation between the fund and the FCDO would be under the umbrella of the UN Habitat program in coordination with Kuwait and Iraq.

The leadership’s demands are precise regarding working to establish stations in Kuwait that operate with clean energy and projects that support environmental sustainability, indicating that one of the most

prominent development projects concerned with supporting environmental and climate initiatives in the country is the Al-Shaqaya Renewable Energy Complex project to use renewable energy by 15 percent, Al-Ostad said.

The Kuwait delegation to the conference is headed by the representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and includes representatives of institutions concerned with environment, development, climate, and sustainability issues. — KUNA

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The statement went on to say that activities included an early alarm system for sandstorms in areas heavily affected, in addition to methods to counter them. The current cooperation between Kuwait and the UK came in line with the recommendations coming from the 19th session of the long-standing UK-Kuwait Joint Steering Group, which was held in February 2023. It also came in



DUBAI: Officials sign a joint statement to bolster climate action in the Middle East in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG). — KUNA

the framework of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in February 2020. — KUNA

Book Fair attracts 360,000 visitors

KUWAIT: The 46th edition of the Kuwait International Book Fair attracted as many as 524 publishers from 29 countries, with more than 171,000 entries on display. Fifty-two publishing houses made their debuts at the annual event between November 22 and December 2. The event received more than 360,000 visitors, including 18,400 students from 598 schools, the general supervisor of the fair, Saad Al-Enzi, told KUNA after the closing ceremony on Saturday.



Saad Al-Enzi

Of the 171,000 entries on display, 11,000 were new ones, including 2,000 child-centered books, Al-Enzi pointed out. During the just-ended edition of the fair, 140 functions, including workshops, seminars, symposia, panels, and lectures, were organized by the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Literature (NC-CAL) in collaboration with competent state agencies and public interest societies from Kuwait and friendly countries, he added. First launched on November 1, 1975, the fair draws publishers and cultural institutions from countries inside and outside the Arab region. — KUNA

Cancer Control Center organizes workshop

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Cancer Control Center, represented by the physiotherapy department, organized a training workshop for physiotherapists at the center on how to treat lymphedema cases on Sunday. The lecture was presented by the director of the European Academy of Lymphedema Specialists, Dr Tim DeKock. The head of the department, Dr Hana Al-Khamis, said in a press statement that 18 specialists participating in the workshop passed the exam and obtained an international permit to treat these cases, noting that this specialty is considered one of the exact specialties in the specialty of lymphotherapy.

The physiotherapy department at the center is the only one that receives and follows up on therapeutic developments for lymphedema patients by setting a day (in a week) for follow-up. She pointed out that obtaining the international permit for the participating specialists would benefit the lymphoma patients. The department is constantly keen to record the annual statistics of lymphoma patients since 2016, which are increasing annually, reaching 437 cases by the end of this year. — KUNA

Kuwait dispatches 32nd planeload of urgent aid supplies for Gazans

Kuwait's Specialized Hospital records more than 600 cases per day



The 32nd plane with Kuwait relief packages heads for Gaza. — KUNA photos



Member of Gaza Relief Committee at the International Mercy Society (Al-Rahma) Walid Al-Suwailem.

KUWAIT: The 32nd plane within the Kuwait Relief Air Bridge took off Sunday, heading to the Egyptian city of Al-Arish, carrying some tents to support Kuwait's Hospital in Gaza and to help shelter families who lost their homes. A member of the Gaza Relief Committee at the International Mercy Society (Al-Rahma), Walid Al-Suwailem, told KUNA that after receiving special reports related to the need to urgently expand the society's "Kuwait Hospital" in the Gaza Strip due to the increasing number of wounded, 500 tents were allocated, of which they were carried on today's flight.

He also noted that Al-Rahma International has allocated, to date, more than one million Kuwaiti dinars in medical supplies, medicines, various relief and shelter materials, and several ambulances to provide relief to the Palestinian brothers in the Gaza Strip. For his part, the charitable activist at Al-Rahma International, Khaled Al-Qassar, confirmed that under the humanitarian conditions in the Gaza Strip, Kuwait's Specialized Hospital is witnessing the reception of more than 600 cases per day.

Meanwhile, scores of Palestinians perished on Sunday in the intensive Zionist occupation's bombardment, which turned an unaccounted number of residential units and buildings into heaps of rubble in the war-battered Gaza Strip. The official Palestinian news agency, WAFA, said the attacks with artillery, tanks, warplanes, and gunboats targeted Al-Daraj district in Gaza City, Dair Al-Balah town, and Jibalya camp in the north of the enclave.

It also reported air raids and artillery attacks on Khan Yunis town in the south, where scores of people died or suffered injuries. Meanwhile, the houses of two families in eastern Gaza were attacked, and a number of the two families' members had fallen as martyrs. Moreover, an unknown number of people remained trapped under the wreckage.

The civil defense in Gaza declared that a number of martyrs and injured Gazans were retrieved from under heaps of the remains of devastated buildings in western Gaza. Zionist enmity has resumed its fierce aggression on Gaza following a pause of a few



days during which a number of prisoners from the two sides were set free and some aid supplies were allowed into the strip. More than 15,000 Palestinians have joined martyrs' ranks since October 7.

The casualty toll includes 6,150 martyred children, more than 4,000 despised women, and 37,000 injured

Gazans of various ages. Thousands of Palestinians had been trapped under the wreckage of the devastated buildings, the majority of whom were believed to have lost their lives. Palestinian rescue authorities in the strip lack sufficient equipment to remove rubble and rescue stranded civilians quickly. — KUNA

KUNA launches training program

KUWAIT: The KUNA Center for the Development of Media Capabilities launched the training program (electronic editing) on Sunday. The program will continue until December 7 and will deal with the definition of electronic journalism, its fea-

tures, and its requirements. The program, presented by Jordanian journalism researcher Hussein Al-Sarayra, tackles the basics of journalistic arts and their types, electronic editing styles, international models in journalistic editing, and electronic journalistic forms, in addition to the development of communication and the content industry between theory and practice.

The program will also feature audience identification, editorial language, open sources, research

techniques, selecting titles, building paragraphs, and the ethics of electronic journalism, in addition to working on the implementation of editorial projects. The KUNA Center for the Development of Media Capabilities, which was established in December 1995, is one of the most important media training centers. It has provided hundreds of training programs in various media fields and aims to develop personal media capabilities and upgrade professional media work. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Participants are pictured during the training program. — KUNA

Kuwait among the best in diagnosing and treating AIDS

KUWAIT: The Director of the Public Health Department at the Ministry of Health, Dr Fahad Al-Ghamlas, said that Kuwait is one of the most distinguished countries in the world in terms of the diagnosis and treatment of AIDS. In a statement to reporters on the sidelines of the Ministry's celebration on the occasion of World AIDS Day on Saturday, Al-Ghamlas said that the aim of the celebration is to communicate

with the community and to pass a message about the disease in terms of prevention and treatment.

"The event is based on three main topics: shedding light on ways of prevention and treatment, dealing with societal stigma, and finally early diagnosis," he explained, stressing the keenness to deal with patients with great confidentiality and respect. He pointed out the importance of including Aids patients in society and taking into account not to exaggerate their fear of them. Al-Ghamlas underlined the importance of early diagnosis and full treatment of patients. He added that the Health Ministry has doctors and specialists in the diagnosis and treatment of the disease at the highest levels and is keen on vocational training and continuing medical education. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Health Ministry's officials mark the World AIDS Day on Saturday. — KUNA



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Over 135 Chinese boats 'swarming' reef off Philippines coast

Chief prosecutor of ICC vows to 'intensify' Gaza probe

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BUTUAN: People gather along a street after evacuating from inside buildings after a 6.6 earthquake struck Butuan City, in southern island of Mindanao late December 2, 2023. Local authorities warned of a "destructive tsunami" and urged people in coastal areas to flee. — AFP

Magnitude 6.6 aftershock causes panic in southern Philippines

Quakes are a daily occurrence in the Philippines

MANILA: A magnitude 6.6 earthquake hit the southern Philippines on Sunday, the US Geological Survey said, a day after an even more powerful quake in the same region killed two people and triggered a tsunami alert.

The latest earthquake — one of several strong aftershocks felt in the region since late Saturday — hit at around 6:36 pm (1036 GMT) at a depth of 56 kilometres (35 miles) northeast of Hinatuan municipality on Mindanao island. It was the same area where residents had fled to higher ground the night before following a magnitude 7.6 quake. At least two people were killed and several were injured after that quake, authorities said. It was followed by five major aftershocks of magnitudes exceeding 6.0 through Sunday, according to the USGS.

Hinatuan police Staff Sergeant Joseph Lambo said Sunday evening's quake sent people rushing out of their homes again. "They were panicking due to the memory of the previous night's quake," Lambo told AFP. He said police were checking for any further damage or casualties. Saturday's quake triggered tsunami warnings across the Pacific region and sent residents along the east coast of Mindanao fleeing buildings, evacuating a hospital and seeking higher ground.

Collapsed wall

There have been no reports of major damage to buildings or infrastructure so far, disaster officials told AFP earlier on Sunday. A 30-year-old man died in Bislig City, in Surigao del Sur province, when a wall inside his house collapsed on top of

him, said local disaster official Pacifica Pedraverde.

Some roads in the city were cracked during the earthquake and aftershocks but vehicles could still drive on them, she said. A pregnant woman was killed in Tagum city in Davao del Norte province, the national disaster agency said, without providing details. Two people suffered minor injuries from falling debris in Tandag City, about 100 kilometres north of Bislig, an official said. The national disaster agency recorded a total of four people injured, but it was not clear if that tally included the two in Tandag.

The Philippine seismology institute initially warned of a "destructive tsunami" after the first quake that was expected to cause "life-threatening" waves. It issued a bulletin at 3:23 am local time that the highest waves generated were 64

centimetres (25 inches) tall on Mawes Island but also said the tsunami warning had ended.

Small swells were reported as far away as Japan's eastern Pacific coast, where a tsunami warning was also briefly in effect. Palau, a western Pacific archipelago located about 900 kilometres (560 miles) off Mindanao, reported no impact.

The earthquake came nearly two weeks after a 6.7 magnitude quake hit Mindanao, killing at least nine people, shaking buildings and causing part of a shopping mall ceiling to collapse. Quakes are a daily occurrence in the Philippines, which sits along the Pacific "Ring of Fire", an arc of intense seismic and volcanic activity that stretches from Japan through Southeast Asia and across the Pacific basin. Most are too weak to be felt by humans. — AFP

'Terrorist plot' probe after deadly Paris stabbing

PARIS: French prosecutors have opened an investigation into a "terrorist plot" after a man known to the authorities as a radical Islamist with mental health troubles stabbed a tourist to death and wounded two other people in central Paris at the weekend before being arrested.

The attack close to the Eiffel Tower occurred at around 9:00 pm (2000 GMT) on Saturday during a busy weekend, at a time when France is on its highest alert against the background of the war between the Zionist entity and Hamas. Prosecutors specializing in terrorist incidents told AFP on Sunday they had launched a probe into the attacker, identified as Armand Rajabpour-Miyandoab, a French national born in 1997 to Iranian parents who was arrested soon after the knife and hammer attack.

He is suspected of murder and attempted murder "in connection with a terrorist plot". A 23-year-old man, identified by a judicial source as a German-Filipino citizen, died in the attack. A 66-year-old British citizen and a 60-year-old French national were wounded. Rajabpour-Miyandoab, who is known to authorities for extremism, shouted "Allahu Akbar" — Arabic for "God is greatest" — at the moment of the attack, Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said at the scene by Bir Hakeim bridge over the River Seine.

The suspect, who lived with his parents in the Essonne region south of Paris, told police he could not stand Muslims being killed in "Afghanistan and Palestine" and accused France of being "an accomplice to what the Zionist entity is doing" in the Gaza Strip, Darmanin added. "We will not give in to terrorism," Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne wrote on X, formerly Twitter, after the attack. President Emmanuel Macron said he was sending his condolences to the family of the man killed in the "terrorist attack".

'Unstable and easily influenced'

Police and security sources confirmed the at-



PARIS: Police officers stand guard at the scene of a stabbing in Paris. A person known to the French authorities as a radical Islamist with mental health troubles stabbed a German tourist to death and wounded two people in central Paris on December 2 before being arrested, officials said. — AFP

tacker had posted a video on social media at the moment of the attack, claiming responsibility and speaking about "current events, the government (and) the murder of innocent Muslims".

Investigators would scrutinize his medical history, a security source told AFP, saying the attacker was "very unstable and easily influenced". The attacker was "being monitored in way that did not mean he was being hospitalized, he was supposed to follow a course of treatment" for his mental health issues, Health Minister Aurelien Rousseau told broadcaster France 3.

"As often in these cases, there's a mixture of an ideology, an easily influenced person and, unfortunately, psychiatry," Rousseau added. Darmanin said the man had previously been sentenced in 2016 to four years in prison for planning another attack in the Paris business district of La Defense, which he failed to carry out.

A taxi driver who witnessed the scene intervened, Darmanin added, saving the wife of the slain tourist. Patrick Pelloux, an emergency doctor who

was on duty at the time of the attack, said the couple were both nurses, adding that the woman was severely shocked but unhurt.

The attacker then crossed the bridge, lashing out at others and injuring one with a hammer. Pursuing police used a taser to neutralize the man, who was then arrested. Rousseau told France 3 on Sunday that the wounded victims were "in good health", suffering only "superficial traumas, but of course psychological traumas that will be enormous".

Joseph S., a 37-year-old supermarket manager who asked not to give his last name, witnessed the scene as he sat in a bar. He heard screams and people shouting "help, help" as they ran. A man wielding a hammer attacked a man who had fallen down, and within five to 10 minutes the police arrived, he told AFP. The country has suffered several attacks by Islamist extremists, including the November 2015 suicide and gun attacks in Paris claimed by the Islamic State group in which 130 people were killed. There had been a relative lull in recent years, even as officials have warned that the threat remains. — AFP

Modi's party routs oppn in key India state polls

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling party routed the main opposition in key heartland states as votes were counted Sunday, months before national elections in the world's most populous country. The victories in three of the five states that voted in November further boost right-wing BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) and Modi, who is already the favourite to win his third consecutive term in office next year.

The premier's party wrested control of Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan states from the opposition and retained Madhya Pradesh in a landslide despite a spirited challenge. The results are seen as yet another setback for the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty scion Rahul Gandhi, 53, who led the opposition centre-left Indian National Congress party's aggressive and personal campaign directly targeting Modi.

Gandhi's father, grandmother, and great-grandfather were prime ministers and political stalwarts who dominated the Indian political landscape for decades. India's once dominant political force, the Congress party, lost the last two successive national elections in 2014 and 2019 in historic defeats to Modi and the BJP.

The Congress defeated the regional BHRS (Bharat Rashtra Samithi) party in the southern state of Telangana while votes in the small northeast Indian state of Mizoram will be counted on Monday. Modi, who remains widely popular in his tenth year in office, flew across all poll-bound states in October and November to address tens of thousands of people in packed campaign rallies.

With the final votes still being counted, India's election commission Sunday evening said that the BJP had won or was leading in 163 of Madhya Pradesh's 230 state assembly seats. In Rajasthan, the BJP had 115 wins and leads in the 199 member legislature and the party was set to secure 54 of 90 seats in Chhattisgarh. — AFP

International

Chief prosecutor of ICC vows to 'intensify' Gaza probe

My office will further intensify its efforts to advance its investigations

THE HAGUE: The chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court vowed Sunday to step up efforts to investigate alleged war crimes, as he wrapped up a visit to Zionist entity and the Palestinian Territories.

Karim Khan stressed his visit was "not investigative in nature" but said he was able to speak to victims on both sides of the conflict. More than 15,200 people have been killed in the besieged Palestinian territory of Gaza, according to Islamist group Hamas, in more than eight weeks of combat and heavy bombardment.

"My office will further intensify its efforts to advance its investigations in relation to this situation," Khan said. "Credible allegations of crimes during the current conflict should be the subject of timely, independent examination and investigation."

Opening its doors in 2002, the ICC is the world's only independent court set up to probe the gravest offences including genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. It opened an investigation in 2021 into Zionist entity as well as Hamas and other armed Palestinian groups for possible war crimes in the Palestinian territories.

Khan has previously said this investigation now "extends to the escalation of hostilities and violence since the attacks that took place on October 7, 2023". But ICC teams have not been able to enter Gaza or investigate in Zionist entity, which is

not an ICC member.

The war broke out when Hamas militants burst through Gaza's militarised border into Zionist entity on October 7 and killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, while also taking around 240 hostages, according to Zionist authorities.

Khan said he witnessed "calculated cruelty" at the sites attacked by Hamas. Those attacks "represent some of the most serious international crimes that shock the conscience of humanity, crimes which the ICC was established to address".

He also emphasised that "the manner in which Zionist entity responds to these attacks is subject to clear legal parameters that govern armed conflict". Acknowledging that conflict in densely populated areas such as Gaza was "inherently complex", international humanitarian law must still apply, Khan said. Legal experts have told AFP that both Hamas and Zionist entity could face war crimes charges over the conflict.

Five countries called in mid-November for an ICC investigation into the Zionist-Hamas war, with Khan saying his team had collected a "significant volume" of evidence on "relevant incidents". Khan also called for humanitarian aid to be allowed into Gaza and not be seized by Hamas. "All actors must comply with international humanitarian law. If you do not do so, do not complain when my office is required to act," he warned. — AFP

Le Monde suspended

Military leaders headed by Captain Ibrahim Traore seized power in Burkina Faso in September 2022, vowing to improve security after years of jihadist attacks by groups affiliated to Al-Qaeda and Islamic State. Relations with France quickly broke down, with Traore's government ordering French forces that had been helping the under-equipped Burkinabe army to quit the country in February. More than 17,000 people have died in attacks since 2015 in Burkina Faso, according to a count by an NGO monitor called the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), and two million people have been uprooted by the violence.

On Saturday, Burkina Faso suspended "all distribution methods" of *Le Monde* daily after the French newspaper published an article on a deadly jihadist attack in the north. The Burkinabe authorities in recent months have suspended the French TV outlets LCI and France24 as well as Radio France Internationale and the magazine *Jeune Afrique*. France has also begun withdrawing its 1,500 troops from Niger following demands by the military rulers who ousted President Mohamed Bazoum in July. Niger's foreign minister Bakary Yauou Sangare on Saturday said the new US ambassador, Kathleen FitzGibbon, who arrived in August, would soon present her letter of assignment to authorities to take up her post.

Washington, which withdrew non-essential staff from its embassy in August, indicated at the time that FitzGibbon would not present her credentials to Niger's new authorities, as the United States did not recognise them. The West African nation is battling two jihadist insurgencies—a spillover in its south-east from a long-running conflict in neighbouring Nigeria, and an offensive in the west by militants crossing from Mali and Burkina Faso. — AFP

Burkina, Niger to quit G5 anti-jihadist force

OUAGADOUGOU: The military leaders of Burkina Faso and Niger said Saturday they would quit the G5 anti-jihadist force in Africa's Sahel region, the latest blow to the fight against insurgents in one of the world's most troubled zones.

The G5, created in 2014, has secured only meagre results, with Mali also quitting the original five-nation force last year in the wake of a military coup. Leaders of the five countries agreed to deploy a joint anti-terror task force backed by France in 2017, but the military rulers of Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali have all accused Paris of having an outside role after years of French deployments on their territories.

Burkina and Niger "have decided in full sovereignty to quit all instances of the G5 Sahel, including the joint force" as of November 29, the two countries said in a statement. "The organisation is failing to achieve its objectives. Worse, the legitimate ambitions of our countries, of making the G5 Sahel a zone of security and development, are hindered by institutional red tape from a previous era, which convinces us that our process of independence and dignity is not compatible with G5 participation in its current form," they said.

In a veiled reference to France, they added that "the G5 Sahel cannot serve foreign interests to the detriment of our people, and even less the dictates of any power in the name of a partnership that treats them like children, denying the sovereignty of our peoples."

Gazans killed with impunity...

Continued from Page 1

The UN humanitarian agency OCHA said at least 160 Palestinian deaths were reported in two incidents in northern Gaza Saturday: The bombing of a six-storey building in Jabalia refugee camp, and of an entire block in Gaza City. Repeated bursts of heavy automatic weapons fire were heard over an AFP TV livecam.

A seven-day truce, brokered by Qatar with support from Egypt and the United States, led to the release of 80 Zionist captives in exchange for 240 Palestinian prisoners before it expired early Friday. More than two dozen other captives were freed from Gaza under separate arrangements. The Zionist entity has unleashed an air and ground campaign with the stated aim of destroying Hamas, which authorities say has killed mostly women and children.

The Zionist military said it had carried out around 10,000 air strikes since the war started. United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk voiced alarm that hundreds of thousands of Gazans "are being confined into ever smaller areas" in the southern of the territory. "There is no safe place in Gaza," he said. Hamas and another militant group, Islamic Jihad, announced "rocket barrages" against multiple Zionist cities and towns including Tel Aviv, and the Zionist entity said two of its soldiers had died in combat, the first since the truce ended.

Fighting also flared on the Zionist entity's northern border with Lebanon. The Zionist army said it had launched artillery strikes in response to cross-border fire, and its fighter jets hit a number of targets linked to Lebanese militant group Hezbollah. Iran-backed Hezbollah said it had launched several attacks on Zionist positions, including a missile strike on a military vehicle.

The Zionist entity's ally the United States, which provides it with billions of dollars in military aid annually,

has intensified calls for the protection of Gaza's civilians. "Too many innocent Palestinians have been killed," Vice President Kamala Harris told reporters at UN climate talks in Dubai. In a new estimate, OCHA said around 1.8 million people in Gaza, roughly 75 percent of the population, had been displaced, many to overcrowded and unsanitary shelters.

Jumana Murad said her son Mohammad, 19, was killed as he tried to help women and children out of a tent inside a school. "A piece of shrapnel hit him in the head," she told AFP before bursting into tears. Nasser hospital in the southern Gaza city of Khan Yunis overflowed with both the wounded and the dead. World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that some patients there were being treated on the floor, in conditions "unimaginable for the provision of healthcare".

Gazans are short of food, water and other essentials, and the aid reaching them is "a drop in the ocean of needs," said Adnan Abu Hasna, a spokesman for the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA. Pope Francis deplored "so much suffering in Gaza", and urged those involved to reach a new ceasefire deal.

On Saturday Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said Zionist negotiators were being withdrawn from Qatar "following the impasse in the negotiations" aimed at renewing the truce. As fighting continues, Hamas has ruled out more captive releases until a permanent ceasefire is agreed.

"The price to pay for the release of Zionist prisoners will be the release of all our prisoners — after a ceasefire," Saleh Al-Aroui, deputy head of Hamas's politburo, said on Saturday, referring to thousands of Palestinians held in Zionist jails. There are still 137 captives held in Gaza, the Zionist entity's army said.

Britain's defence ministry said that it would conduct surveillance flights over the Zionist entity and Gaza "in support of the ongoing hostage rescue activity". Netanyahu said the war would continue "until we achieve all its aims" — among them freeing the captives — and that soldiers had prepared during the truce "for total victory against Hamas". — AFP

the Paris Climate Agreement, which aims to reduce emissions and support the principles of sustainable development.

On Friday, Kuwait participated the summit with a delegation headed by the representative of HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah. The Kuwaiti pavilion includes many representatives of agencies and institutions concerned with issues of the environment, development, climate and sustainability. — KUNA



KHAN YUNIS: United Nations employees and Palestinian civilians flee Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip after the Zionist army called on people to leave certain areas in the city, as battles between Zionist entity and Hamas militants continue on December 3, 2023. — AFP

Pope urges leaders to put climate fight over national interests

DUBAI: Pope Francis on Sunday urged world leaders at the United Nations climate negotiations in Dubai (COP28) to move beyond their national interests and urgently commit to the political changes needed to tackle climate change.

In remarks in Italian that were broadcast from his official residence onto giant screens on Saint Peter's Square in Rome, the pope appealed for "concrete political changes" to prevent the planet's climate

spinning dangerously out of control.

"We need to go beyond the constraints of specific interests and nationalities, the models of the past, and embrace a common vision," Francis said in a written statement that was read out by an aide. The 86-year-old is recovering from a lung infection that has caused him difficulty breathing, and on Tuesday cancelled his trip to the UN climate summit being hosted by the oil-rich United Arab Emirates.

He said he was nonetheless following the COP28 debates closely. On Saturday, Francis urged the nations negotiating in Dubai to commit to achieving a "breakthrough" to save the planet from the snowballing climate emergency. The pontiff said the world should stop burning the coal, oil and gas that are generating global-heating greenhouse gas pollution. — AFP

UK-owned ship hit by rocket fire in Red Sea: Reports

LONDON: A UK-owned ship passing through the Red Sea has reportedly been hit by rocket fire, two maritime security organisations said Sunday, with one reporting the involvement of a drone. The unnamed Bahamas-flagged vessel was "struck by a rocket" while sailing south around 35 nautical miles off Yemen's western coast, maritime security firm Ambrey said, citing reports.

"The affected vessel was issuing distress calls relating to piracy/missile attack," the UK-based company added. It noted reports that "an international naval asset in the vicinity of the incident" was likely

proceeding to the ship's location.

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) agency, run by Britain's Royal Navy, said it had received "a report of Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS) activity including a potential explosion... originating from the direction of Yemen".

It advised vessels in the area to "exercise caution". The reported incident comes amid heightened tensions in the Red Sea and surrounding waters after Iran-backed Huthi rebels seized an Israeli-linked cargo vessel, the *Galaxy Leader*, last month.

Within days two ballistic missiles were also launched from an area controlled by Huthi rebels in Yemen, landing around 10 nautical miles from a US destroyer, the *USS Mason*, according to the Pentagon. The Huthis have fired a series of drone and missile strikes targeting Israel since Hamas militants poured over the border into Israel on October 7, killing 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and kidnapping about 240. — AFP

Tears, curbs during COP28...

Continued from Page 1

Organizers had to request permits, identify action zones and appeal for approval for banners, slogans and chants — some of which were banned. "We were not allowed to name states or raise (Palestinian) flags," said Abderraouf Ben Mohamed of the Debt for Climate group, prompting activists to rely on the watermelon — a symbol of the pro-Palestinian movement — as a way to bypass restrictions.

Damian Godzisz, a staff member in the UAE's COP28 team, said he was told to remove a Palestinian flag and keffiyeh scarf attached to his bag at the security check to the Blue Zone. "I find it insensitive that while other nations can display their national attire, the Palestinian flag and keffiyeh are restricted," he said.

The war has cast a long shadow over the climate talks in Dubai, and has deeply impacted the Palestinian Authority's (PA) COP28 delegation, which had

been upbeat about its first-ever COP pavilion. Only 10 representatives managed to fly out for the event, with most cancelling their participation, Hadeel Ikhmais, a climate expert with the PA, told AFP. "It was really tough for us to come here, and up to the last-minute we were reconsidering our participation," said Ikhmais, who had to embark on a nearly 11-hour journey stymied by checkpoints from her home in Bethlehem to Jordan's airport to catch a flight to Dubai.

"What does climate justice mean, what does international law mean, what is justice? Palestinians are killed in cold blood and the world is just watching?" Ikhmais asked. "I want to go back. Honestly, we are counting the days just to go back home." At the Zionist pavilion, just a few metres away, a book of posters of those held captive by Hamas was put on display beside a large banner that read: "Bring them home now."

Maya Kadosh, the Zionist entity's national coordinator for COP28, sported a dog tag carrying the same message and said she sensed bias among activists attending the climate conference. The Zionist entity had been planning a 1,000-strong representation at COP28, but the war reduced that figure to around 100, including some 30 officials with the government delegation, she said. — AFP

Kuwait in final stages of tabling...

Continued from Page 1

program under the Kyoto Protocol to reduce carbon emissions, and is now awaiting the approval of the guidelines for participation in a number of projects in market mechanisms within Article VI of

taking place everywhere," he said.

Humanitarian bodies say the most vulnerable in Gaza are the estimated 1.7 million displaced people. Many of them do not have access to phones and have to rely on warning leaflets dropped by planes, not visible from inside an apartment. According to the Gaza Strip's Civil Defense emergency and rescue organization, in recent weeks "hundreds of displaced families" had been taking refuge in 3,000 apartments at Hamad City.

Mohammed Fourat, 21, already displaced once from Gaza City, told AFP that half an hour before the strike he had been warned by other residents to flee. They shouted "get out, get out", he said, as families piled their belongings into cars or carried them away in enormous bundles.

Nader Abu Warda fled Jabalia, near Gaza City, at the start of the war and no longer knows which way to go or what to do. He, his wife and three children had been staying in a friend's apartment in the complex. "They told us 'Gaza City is a war zone', now it's Khan Yunis," he said. "Yesterday, they were saying 'evacuate the east of Khan Yunis'. Today, they say 'evacuate the west'," he added, visibly exasperated. "Where are we going now, into the sea? Where are we going to put our children to bed?" — AFP

International

Venezuela holds referendum over Essequibo land dispute with Guyana

'Today we are voting as Venezuela in just one color, one feeling'

CARACAS: Venezuelans began voting Sunday in a referendum that the government hopes will strengthen its century-old claim to the oil-rich Essequibo territory controlled by neighboring Guyana.

"Essequibo is ours!" say posters plastered on walls lining the streets in Caracas, part of an intensive campaign by the government of President Nicolas Maduro, who is seeking re-election next year. "Today we are voting as Venezuela in just one color, one feeling. Our vote is for Venezuela to be respected," Maduro told reporters after he voted at a military base. Voting started at 6 am (1000 GMT) and was to end at 6 pm (2200 GMT), with results expected in the early hours of Monday morning. The Maduro government has said it is not seeking justification to invade or annex the territory, as some in Guyana, a former British colony, fear.

And regardless of the outcome of the vote by around 20 million eligible Venezuelans, little will change in the short term: The people of Essequibo are not voting, and the referendum is nonbinding.

But tensions have been rising since Guyana took bids in September for several offshore oil exploration blocks, and after a major new find was announced in October. Its petroleum reserves are similar to those of Kuwait, with the highest reserves per capita in the world. Meanwhile, Maduro's government has sharpened its rhetoric and conducted military exercises in the area. And Brazil has strengthened its own troop presence near the border with Venezuela, saying it is concerned by the "climate of tension."

Venezuela has claimed the huge territory for



CARACAS: Handout picture released by the Venezuelan Presidency showing Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro (C) speaks during a consultative referendum on Venezuelan sovereignty over the Essequibo region controlled by neighbouring Guyana, in Caracas on December 3, 2023. — AFP

decades—even as its 160,000 square kilometers (62,000 square miles) represent more than two-thirds of Guyana, and its population of 125,000 is one-fifth Guyana's total. Caracas contends that the Essequibo River to the east of the region is the natural border between the two countries, as declared in 1777 under Spanish rule, and that Britain wrongly appropriated Venezuelan lands in the 19th century.

Guyana, however, asserts that the border was set in the British colonial era and was confirmed in 1899 by a court of arbitration. It says the International

Court of Justice (ICJ), the UN's top judicial body, has validated this finding.

Guyana has asked the ICJ to block the referendum, saying it amounts to a violation of international rights, but in vain. On Friday, the ICJ called on Caracas to take no action that would modify the disputed lands—but it did not mention the referendum. And Caracas had vowed to go ahead regardless.

"We believe that justice, not force, should be the arbiter of international disputes," Guyanese President Irfan Ali said Friday from the United Arab

Emirates, where he was attending the COP28 international climate summit.

Ali met there with British Foreign Minister David Cameron to discuss the controversy. Maduro, for his part, lashed out at Ali on Friday, calling him "reckless (and) insolent" and suggesting he was working for US energy giant ExxonMobil.

Five questions

The referendum Sunday covers five questions, including proposals for the creation of a Venezuelan province to be called "Guyana Essequibo," giving the inhabitants Venezuelan citizenship, as well as a call to reject the ICJ's jurisdiction.

The Maduro government expects an overwhelmingly positive result, strengthening its claim. Opposition politicians, most of whom also support the claim, have generally been reticent about the referendum.

But Maria Corina Machado, who hopes to oppose Maduro in next year's presidential elections, has called the referendum a "distraction," saying that it should be suspended and that sovereignty is not something a government should ask about—"you just exercise it."

Maduro has mobilized his party and senior members of his government in a vigorous campaign for a resounding "yes" vote. In the streets of Caracas, many Venezuelans said they are motivated to vote.

"We have a commitment to the country," said Marlis Palmes, a homemaker. "I congratulate those who agree. And let history be the judge of the others." — AFP

Over 135 Chinese boats 'swarming' reef off Philippines coast

MANILA: The Philippines said Sunday more than 135 Chinese vessels were "swarming" a reef off its coast, describing the boats' growing presence as "alarming". The Chinese boats were "dispersed and scattered" within the boomerang-shaped Whitsun Reef, which the Philippines calls Julian Felipe Reef, around 320 kilometres (200 miles) west of Palawan Island, the coast guard said.

Whitsun Reef is more than 1,000 kilometres from the nearest major Chinese landmass of Hainan island. The Philippines said it counted 111 "Chinese maritime militia vessels" (CMM) on November 13. When the coast guard deployed two patrol boats to the area on Saturday the number had increased to "more than 135", the force said. "No response was made to the radio challenges issued by the PCG (Philippine Coast Guard) to the CMM vessels which is now estimated to have grown to more than 135 vessels dispersed and scattered within Julian Felipe Reef," Manila's coast guard said, describing the boats' presence as "alarming" and "illegal".

The Chinese embassy in Manila did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Beijing claims most of the South China Sea, including waters and islands close to the shores of its neighbours, and has ignored an international tribunal decision that its assertion has no legal basis. It deploys vessels to patrol the waters, and has built artificial islands and military installations to reinforce its stance.

The Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam have also staked claims to various islands and reefs in the sea, which is believed to have rich petroleum reserves deep beneath its waters.

The coast guard released images Sunday which it said showed Chinese vessels lined up in formation while others were scattered around the waters. In 2021, a similar incident involving more than 200 Chinese vessels at the reef sparked a diplomatic row between Manila and Beijing.

At the time, Manila insisted their incursion into the Philippines' exclusive economic zone was unlawful.

But China insisted they were fishing boats sheltering from bad weather and were allowed to be there. The Philippines announced Friday that it was establishing a coast guard station on the largest island it holds in the South China Sea to improve the monitoring of Chinese vessels. The coast guard station would be equipped with "advanced systems", including radar, satellite communication, coastal cameras and vessel traffic management. National Security Adviser Eduardo Ano said during a visit to Thitu Island. The station has been built and is expected to be operational early next year. — AFP



SOUTH CHINA SEA: This handout photo taken on December 2, 2023 and released on December 3 by the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) shows an aerial view of Chinese vessels gathered by Whitsun Reef, around 320 kilometres (200 miles) west of Palawan Island, in disputed waters of the South China Sea. — AFP



DONETSK: Ukrainian military medic Vasylyna (R), 28-years-old, of the 80th separate Air Assault brigade treats a wounded serviceman in a medical evacuation car in an undisclosed area in the Donetsk region, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine. — AFP

Ukraine accuses Russia of killing surrendering soldiers

KYIV: Ukraine launched an enquiry on Sunday into what it said was an "execution" by Russian forces of two unarmed Ukrainian soldiers who had signalled their intention to surrender. Ukrainian officials condemned the reported incident as a "war crime".

There was no official reaction from Moscow. On Saturday a short video, whose authenticity could be confirmed by AFP, was posted on Telegram showing two men coming out of a shelter, one with his hands above his head, before lying on the ground in front of another group of soldiers.

This is followed by what appears to be gunfire, and rising smoke, before the video cuts off abruptly.

The public prosecutor's office in the eastern Ukrainian region of Donetsk said that according to "preliminary data", the images were filmed near the village of Stepove, close to Avdiivka, an eastern town where fighting is raging.

"The video shows how a group of people in Russian uniforms shoot at close range two unarmed servicemen in the uniform of the Armed Forces of Ukraine who surrendered as prisoners," the prosecutor's office wrote. "Investigators and prosecutors have started an investigation." "The killing of prisoners of war is a gross violation of the Geneva Conventions and is classified as a serious international crime." The Ukrainian army's strategic communications centre said on Saturday it possessed "confirmed information" that the video showed the "execution" by Russian forces of "unarmed soldiers". Ukraine's human rights ombudsman, Dmytro Lubinets, condemned the incident as a "war crime".

Violating the rules of war

The Ukrainian soldiers "were disarmed and their hands were raised", Lubinets wrote on Telegram on Saturday. "They did not pose any threat! The Russian side had to capture them and give them the status of prisoners of war." The speaker of the Ukrainian parliament, Ruslan Stefanchuk, accused Russian forces of violating the rules of war. The Ukrainian army urged the international community to hold Russia's military leadership "accountable".

In March, another video went viral, appearing to show a Ukrainian soldier being shot dead after shouting "glory to Ukraine". At that time the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Turk, said his office had documented numerous violations of international humanitarian law against prisoners of war. These included "numerous summary executions and targeted attacks on civilians" by Russian forces and affiliated armed groups like the Wagner mercenary force, as well as "621 cases of enforced disappearances and arbitrary detention". — AFP

Hikers evacuated as Indonesia volcano spews ash

PADANG: A volcano in western Indonesia erupted Sunday, belching a column of ash around three kilometres into the sky and forcing the evacuation of dozens of hikers, officials said. Mount Marapi on the island of Sumatra, with a peak of 2,891 metres, is on the third-highest alert level of Indonesia's four-step system and authorities imposed an exclusion zone around its crater.

There were no immediate reports of damage or casualties after the eruption at 2:54 pm local time (0754 GMT), but 42 hikers were unaccounted for. A

total of 70 hikers had checked in at two entry points to Marapi since Saturday via an online booking system, according to the West Sumatra natural resources conservation agency. "The... agency team are conducting evacuations. Twenty-eight people have been evacuated and efforts are still being made (to evacuate) the rest. Hopefully there are no fatalities and everyone is safe," Dian Indriati, the interim head of the agency, said in a video statement. Some hikers may not notify authorities about their presence when entering or leaving such areas, so the true number of unaccounted hikers remains unclear. Hendra Gunawan, head of Indonesia's Centre of Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation, in a statement said ash was observed 3,000 metres (9,842 feet) above Marapi's peak. "The column of ash was observed in grey colour with thick intensity leaning toward the east," Gunawan said. "The eruption is still ongoing." — AFP

Towards a Smoke-free Future: Lessons from Japan

The decrease in cigarette sales in Japan observed in recent years holds valuable lessons for public health

Cigarette smoking is known to cause a variety of serious illnesses, such as heart disease and cancer. It has been estimated that around eight million deaths happen each year globally. Efforts to prevent people from smoking and support those who are trying to stop are key to reducing the harm caused by tobacco use. The best option for a smoker is to quit but, unfortunately, many people still choose to smoke.

For those who still continue to smoke, the opportunity to switch to scientifically substantiated, better alternatives may be the key to accelerating the decline in the number of people who smoke. According to the WHO, there are more than one billion smokers in the world today, and this number is expected to stay steady until 2025.

Many people believe that nicotine is the main issue when it comes to the harms of smoking, but the evidence tells us this is not correct.

Although nicotine is addictive and not without risk, it is not the main cause of smoking-related diseases. In fact, the toxic chemicals in the smoke that is generated when tobacco is burned are the main problem. In some countries (for example the UK and New Zealand), the use of regulated novel tobacco and nicotine products is seen as an appropriate alternative for smokers who do not quit, and their use is encouraged by public health bodies.

A country that merits attention is Japan, where, despite the lack of formal harm reduction policies to encourage switching, many smokers have switched to novel nicotine products such as e-cig-

arettes and heated tobacco. In just nine years since the introduction of IQOS and heated tobacco products in 2014, IQOS has grown year on year, reaching over 20% share of the market.

A study conducted by researchers from the American Cancer Society¹ revealed that the decline in cigarette sales in Japan followed the introduction of heated tobacco products in the country. The researchers applied multiple alternative causation models to the sales figures, including pricing and legislation, but found it difficult to explain the decline in cigarette sales without factoring in the introduction of heated tobacco products in the country. The study concluded that heated tobacco products "likely reduced cigarette sales in Japan".

A second, independent study by the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health reported that between 2015 and 2019, total cigarette sales dropped by 34 percent in Japan, while the sales of heated tobacco products increased from 5.1 billion sticks to 37.1 billion². The study concluded that "the accelerated decline in cigarette-only sales since 2016 corresponds to the introduction and growth in the sales of heated tobacco products".

The decline in cigarette sales in Japan can serve as inspiration for other countries to pursue similar goals. With the right regulatory encouragement, societal support, and innovative, science-based reduced harm alternatives, a future without cigarettes is entirely possible.

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¹<https://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/29/4/381>
²https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341530502_What_Is_Accounting_for_the_Rapid_Decline_in_Cigarette_Sales_in_Japan



Business

MONDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2023

Brazil will join OPEC+ but push cutting fossil fuels, says Lula

Phasing 'out' fossil fuels remains the buzzword at COP28

DUBAI: Brazil will tell oil producers to get ready to "reduce fossil fuels" when it joins OPEC+ next year, President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said at the COP28 climate talks on Saturday. Brazil, one of the world's top 10 producers, which hit a record 3.7 million barrels per day in September, was this week invited to join the 23-member grouping from January.

"I think it's important for us to participate in OPEC+, because we need to convince the countries that produce oil that they need to prepare to reduce fossil fuels," Lula said in Dubai.

"And preparing means taking advantage of the money they make from oil and making investments, so that a large continent like Latin America can produce the renewable fuels they need." The 13-member OPEC+ headed by Saudi Arabia and its 10 OPEC+ partners led by Russia announced fresh production cuts on Thursday to boost prices.

Lula has a strong environmental record after largely delivering on his promise to curb the destruction of the crucial Amazon rainforest. "Everyone freaked out at the possibility of Brazil joining in OPEC," he said in a meeting with civil society members at the UN climate talks. "Brazil will not join OPEC, Brazil will join OPEC+. That name is so fancy," said Lula, according to a transcript of the meeting sent by the COP presidency. The energy transition, and language over phasing "out" or phasing "down" fossil fuels, are key battlegrounds at COP28 in the oil-rich UAE where negotiators will try to agree



DUBAI: Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva speaks during the High-Level Segment for Heads of State and Government session at the United Nations climate summit in Dubai. — AFP

ways to tackle the climate crisis. OPEC+ slashes oil output further to boost flagging prices.

Saudi Arabia, Russia and other major oil-producing

nations on Thursday announced they would further slash production next year in an effort to prop up volatile prices. But prices dropped right after the

meeting, with analysts saying the market had expected more from the 13-member Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its 10 partners. Following the virtual meeting of OPEC+ ministers, Riyadh announced it would extend its voluntary oil production cut of one million barrels per day until March 2024. Moscow said it would slash oil exports by 500,000 barrels a day — up from 300,000 barrels a day so far — until March, following the tough talks.

Following the meeting, prices failed to rally — with benchmark WTI falling 3.0 percent briefly. Amid stuttering global economic growth, analysts had largely expected OPEC+ producers to extend or deepen production cuts into next year to halt the recent slump in prices.

"It's a bit of a sweet and sour victory for the Saudis," said Jorge Leon, an analyst with Rystad Energy, adding Riyadh "only managed to convince seven countries to join the voluntary cuts".

"The market was expecting cuts at least until the end of the first half of the year," he added. With the OPEC+ meeting postponed from Sunday to Thursday, Saudi Arabia, which has borne the brunt of the supply cuts, had sought to convince African countries to chip in by accepting lower production quotas. But Angola and Nigeria were among those countries reluctant to sign up, seeking to step up production to secure vital foreign currency after they agreed in June to reduce their quotas. — AFP



DUBAI: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak attends the Transforming Climate Finance session at the United Nations climate summit in Dubai. — AFP

UK unveils £11 billion windfarm investment by UAE, German firms

DUBAI: UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced Friday plans by UAE state-owned renewables firm Masdar and German energy giant RWE to invest up to £11 billion (\$14 billion) in a giant offshore windfarm. The joint investment plans will help erect turbines at the UK's massive Dogger Bank site in the North Sea, he said at the COP28 climate talks in Dubai.

The long-planned offshore windfarm off the coast of Yorkshire in northern England, will be the largest in the world, the UK government claims. Several other multinational companies are involved in ventures.

"I'm pleased to announce a new deal between Masdar and RWE, which includes a commitment to jointly invest up to £11 billion into the UK's new windfarm at Dogger Bank," said Sunak. "This is a huge boost for UK renewables, creating more jobs, helping to power three million homes and increasing our energy security," he told a press conference on the fringes of COP28.

Masdar will purchase a 49-percent stake in RWE's 3.0 gigawatt (GW) projects at Dogger Bank South, both companies said. The southern section is capable of powering three million typical UK homes, creating 2,000 jobs during construction and over 1,000 direct and indirect roles during its operational phase, it added. The financial deal is expected to complete in the first quarter of next year, the state-owned UAE enterprise noted. Sunak has come under pressure over his commitment to climate change mitigation this year, after softening several policies aimed at reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. But he used his appearance at the United Nations climate conference to defend those decisions and insist the UK was on course to meet its commitments.

"What I can reassure you is we're going to continue to do more than others going forward to," Sunak told reporters. "We can meet targets that are already more ambitious than anyone else but we can do so in a more pragmatic way," he added, noting the cost-of-living crisis impacting many Britons.

The British leader, struggling in the polls ahead of an expected general election next year, claimed no other world leaders at COP28 had raised his slew of recent rollbacks to UK climate policies. "Because most of their targets are less ambitious than the UK's," he said. — AFP

Vietnam lays out \$15.5bn energy transition plan

HANOI: Vietnam has laid out a \$15.5 billion blueprint to transition away from coal power, but environmentalists warned Sunday the plan fell far short of what was needed. The communist nation has committed to reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, supported by the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) program, under which wealthier nations would help developing countries switch to clean energy faster.

On Friday Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh announced the multi-billion dollar Resource Mobilization Plan (RMP) on the sidelines of the COP28 climate talks in Dubai. "We commit to an open mechanism, good infrastructure, and smart management," he told delegates.

However, environmentalists told AFP that Vietnam's intention to use coal-fired plants until the end of their life operations, as well as shrinking civil society space, prompted concerns. Vietnam's plan contained some "worrying" elements, chiefly the intention to use coal-fired plants "flexibly" rather than closing them early, said Leo Roberts, of environmental strategists EGG.

"What that means in practice is unclear, and is a slippery slope to using them extensively."

He added it sent a clear message the country was not transitioning as fast or at the scale it should, "and that discourages investment in renewables". Speaking on the phone from the sidelines of COP28, Roberts told AFP that successful energy transitions required input from all sections of society.

Montreal research hub spearheads AI ethics debate

MONTREAL, Canada: Rapid developments in artificial intelligence — and recent turmoil at industry powerhouse OpenAI — have brought fresh attention to a key hub of ethics research related to the technology in Montreal, led by Canadian "godfather of AI" Yoshua Bengio.

Bengio — who in 2018 shared with Geoffrey Hinton and Yann LeCun the Turing Award for their work on deep learning — says he is worried about the technology leapfrogging human intelligence and capabilities in the not-too-distant future. Speaking to AFP at his home in Montreal, the professor warned that AI developments are moving at breakneck speed and risked "creating a new species capable of making decisions that harm or even endanger humans."

OpenAI's recent dismissal and then rehiring a few days later of chief executive Sam Altman — who has been accused of downplaying risks in his push to advance its ChatGPT bot — illustrates some of the turmoil in the startup sector and fierce competition in the race to commercialize generative AI.

For some time, Bengio has been warning about companies moving too fast without guardrails, "potentially at the public's expense." It is essen-



DUBAI: President of the UAE Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan (right) and the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres (left) pose for a picture with the Prime Minister of Vietnam Pham Minh Chinh at COP28 UAE Summit at Dubai's Expo City. — AFP

cessful energy transitions required input from all sections of society.

"The lack of a clear, inclusive consultation process has limited the scale of ambition of the RMP," said Roberts. Five environmentalists have been jailed for tax evasion in Vietnam since last year, with an independent UN expert accusing Hanoi last month of targeting rights defenders. "The crackdown on civil society doesn't just undermine the content of the RMP, but also how easy it will be to actually deliver it," said Roberts.

tial, he said, to have "rules that'll be followed by all companies." At a world-first AI summit in Britain in early November, Bengio was tasked with leading a team producing an inaugural report on AI safety.

The aim is to set priorities to inform future work on the security of the cutting-edge technology.

The renowned AI academic has brought together a "critical mass of AI researchers" (1,000+) through his Mila research institute, located in a former working-class neighborhood of Montreal. His neighbors include AI research facilities of American tech giants Microsoft, Meta, IBM and Google. "This concentration of experts in artificial intelligence, which is greater than anywhere else in the world," is what attracted Google, says Hugo Larochelle, the hoodie-wearing scientific director of the Silicon Valley giant's AI subsidiary DeepMind.

Early on, these researchers began thinking about the future of AI, and consultations with the public and researchers from all disciplines led in 2018 to a global AI charter called the Montreal Declaration for a Responsible Development of Artificial Intelligence. "We knew early on that the scientific community needed to think about the integration of AI into society," explained Guillaume Macaux, vice-president of OBVIA, an international observatory studying the social impacts of AI.

Its 220 researchers advise government policies and raise public awareness of the possible positive effects and negative impacts of this cutting-edge technology. Artists too are playing a part in "demystifying AI," says Sandra Rodriguez, who splits her time making art in Montreal and teaching digital media at the prestigious Massachusetts Insti-

tute of Technology (MIT) in the United States. She showed off to AFP her latest art installation. Entering a breathtaking futuristic world via a virtual reality (VR) headset, the public is able to converse with a bot inspired by American linguist Noam Chomsky. Voice and text answers to queries appear simultaneously. With the touch of a finger, lists of alternative responses considered by the AI with their associated percentage gradient pop up. "You quickly realize that it's actually just an algorithm," said Rodriguez. "Montreal is a fantastic playground" for exploring the potential and limits of artificial intelligence, as well as "debating (related) ethical and societal issues," she told AFP. According to Rodriguez, art becomes "necessary more than ever" to invite "a wider public to ask questions about the issues of artificial intelligence which will affect them tomorrow." — AFP



MONTREAL: Yoshua Bengio, the scientific director at the Mila Quebec AI Institute, poses for a portrait in Montreal. — AFP

Business

NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

US economy remains resilient as consumer confidence rises

OPEC+ agrees on additional oil output cuts

KUWAIT: In November 2023, the US economy witnessed a rebound in consumer confidence, reversing a trend of three consecutive monthly declines. This rise in sentiment was primarily driven by an improvement in expectations, despite persistent concerns over inflation and interest rates. The Consumer Confidence Index, as reported by the Conference Board, climbed to 102.0 from a downwardly revised 99.1 in October, and above expectations of 101.0. The surge in confidence was predominantly observed among older households, while younger consumers remained more cautious about their financial prospects.

The US Gross domestic product showed expansion in the third quarter, coming in at 5.2 percent compared to the initial reading of 4.9 percent and exceeding expectations of 5 percent. The news release, which followed a higher-than-expected Conference Board consumer confidence data, indicates that the US economy continues to show signs of resilience and sustained growth despite the tightening policies. The growth marks a significant increase from the second quarter's rate of 2.1 percent. The news was also followed by an easing in unemployment rate which dropped from 233k to 209k in November, further supporting the argument that the US economy is withstanding higher rates. The data seems to support the narrative that a possible soft landing is achievable for the Fed.

The latest core personal consumption expenditure price index, which excludes the volatile food and energy components advanced 3.5 percent YoY the Fed's preferred gauge of underlying inflation. Meanwhile, overall PCE price index is running at 3.00 percent, the smallest gain since March 2021 yet still above the Fed's 2 percent target. One of the FOMC's hawks signaling no more hikes and even potentially opening the door to policy easing. Fed governor Chris Waller said that "If you see this [lower] inflation continuing for several more months, I don't know how long that might be — 3 months? 4 months? 5 months? — you could then start lowering the policy rate because inflation's lower."

US unemployment claims

US unemployment claims rose to 218,000 last week, up 7,000 claims from 211,000 the week prior on a seasonally adjusted basis. About 1.9 million workers continue to claim unemployment benefits, the highest level in two years. That number had been

generally on the rise over the past two months, suggesting unemployed workers are increasingly having a harder time finding new jobs. Overall, the labor market remains resilient, but Thursday's figure is the latest indication its strength is fading.

The US dollar index closed the week at 103.193.

In her recent speech, European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde emphasized the ECB's vigilant and focused approach to monetary policy amid current economic challenges. This stance comes after a significant hike cycle in interest rates by 450 basis points over the last year to counter inflation. Despite these measures and the current economic data, the ECB remains cautious, closely monitoring inflation trends, wage dynamics, and labor market conditions. In a meeting with EU lawmakers,

Rates - 3rd December, 2023

| Currencies | Previous Week Levels | | | | This Week's Expected Range | | 3-Month Forward |
|------------|----------------------|--------|--------|--------|----------------------------|---------|-----------------|
| | Open | Low | High | Close | Minimum | Maximum | |
| EUR | 1.0935 | 1.0827 | 1.1017 | 1.0881 | 1.0770 | 1.1080 | 1.0925 |
| GBP | 1.2592 | 1.2588 | 1.2733 | 1.2700 | 1.2610 | 1.2905 | 1.2709 |
| JPY | 149.43 | 146.65 | 149.67 | 146.81 | 144.80 | 147.9 | 144.70 |
| CHF | 0.8820 | 0.8677 | 0.8828 | 0.8677 | 0.8490 | 0.8795 | 0.8609 |

European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde warned that now "is not the time to start declaring victory." Additionally, she warned that the central bank will "need to remain attentive to the different forces affecting inflation and firmly focused on our mandate of price stability." Lagarde also reiterated the ECB's guidance that current rates would need to be held for a "sufficiently long" period of time. Furthermore, she acknowledged that the current environment of elevated rates, slow growth, and softening labor market will be key to bring inflation down to their 2 percent target.

Australia's inflation eased in November more than expected. With the consumer price index coming at 4.9 percent, significantly lower than the previous rate of 5.6 percent, and lower than the expected 5.2 percent. The drop is mainly contributed by a fall in the

prices of goods, while core inflation also edged down. The fall in inflation affirms that the central bank's approach is yielding results, hinting that higher interest should be kept at the current rates. The Australian dollar dipped to 0.6637 before currently stabilizing at around 0.6645 against the US dollar.

The AUD/USD currency pair ended the week at 0.6672.

OPEC+ meeting

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies, also known as OPEC+, assembled for a meeting to decide their next production policy steps on Thursday. They have agreed to make an additional voluntary cut to oil production in 2024 in an attempt to support the current market conditions. Saudi

Arabia pledged to extend an existing voluntary cut of 1 million barrels per day until the end of the first quarter while Russia also announced that they will deepen its existing voluntary cuts in exports to 500,000 barrels per day from the previous of 300,000 mainly due to rise in supply from rival producers. In addition, other members including the UAE's state news agency saying it would voluntarily cut by 163,000 bpd in the first quarter, while Iraq and Kuwait said they would cut by 211,000 bpd and 135,000 bpd respectively. Oman, Algeria, and Kazakhstan also pledged additional reductions. With that said Brent Crude fell by 0.2 percent to \$80.72 a barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate crude fell by 0.2 percent to \$75.84.

Kuwaiti dinar

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30770.

US proposes EV tax credit rules to curb Chinese inputs

WASHINGTON: The US government proposed new rules regarding its electric vehicle subsidies, setting limits on material that producers can source from China or other rival countries. The guidelines spell out how electric vehicles (EVs) could qualify for a tax credit of up to \$7,500 under President Joe Biden's landmark climate action plan, the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

They come as Washington works to reduce its burgeoning electric car industry's reliance on China.

Under the latest proposal released by the Treasury Department on Friday, an eligible clean vehicle cannot contain battery components made or assembled by a "foreign entity of concern" starting next year. From 2025, a qualifying vehicle also cannot contain critical minerals extracted, processed or recycled by such entities.

This targets companies owned by, or subject to the jurisdiction of countries like China, Russia, North Korea and Iran. They would be barred from providing such materials to vehicles aiming to qualify for tax breaks. A firm could be considered a foreign entity of concern if it were incorporated in one of these countries, or if it hit a 25 percent ownership threshold.

The rules have the effect of limiting Chinese companies' roles in the supply chain for US electric vehicles, as Washington aims to move more production into the United States.

Currently, the key electric vehicle industry is dominated by China. The latest rules will likely reduce the number of vehicles eligible for tax credits while piling pressure on automakers as they grapple with the transition to producing electric cars. But Senator Joe Manchin, a member of Biden's Democratic Party who played a key role in passing the IRA, criticized the guidelines for not going far enough to shift supply chains from China. — AFP



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 30 NOVEMBER 2023

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| Market | M. Cap (KD ml) | Last Close | WTD % | MTD % | YTD % | Quantity Traded | Value Traded | No. of Trades | P/E | P/B | % of Total M. Cap |
|----------------|----------------|------------|-------|-------|--------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|------|-----|-------------------|
| Premier Market | 31,376 | 7,291.68 | -0.2% | 2.1% | -10.2% | 615,519,690 | 197,224,133 | 33,148 | 16.4 | 1.2 | 77.5% |
| Main Market | 9,112 | 5,453.48 | 0.2% | 1.1% | -2.6% | 528,374,292 | 99,814,263 | 26,144 | 12.0 | 0.7 | 22.5% |
| All Share | 40,488 | 6,653.84 | -0.2% | 1.9% | -8.8% | 1,143,893,982 | 297,038,395 | 59,292 | 13.4 | 0.8 | 100% |

| Sector | M. Cap (KD ml) | Last Close | WTD % | MTD % | YTD % | Quantity Traded | Value Traded | No. of Trades | P/E | P/B | % of Total M. Cap |
|------------------------|----------------|------------|-------|-------|--------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|------|-----|-------------------|
| Banking | 23,908 | 1,596.34 | -0.1% | 1.2% | -11.0% | 229,939,326 | 100,998,019 | 12,752 | 16.2 | 1.1 | 59.05% |
| Basic Materials | 455 | 807.01 | 4.7% | 6.5% | -6.7% | 4,543,334 | 2,700,364 | 715 | 11.0 | 2.1 | 1.12% |
| Consumer Discretionary | 1,023 | 1,489.61 | 1.5% | -0.9% | 0.2% | 28,464,365 | 13,271,061 | 4,122 | 11.4 | 0.9 | 2.53% |
| Consumer Staples | 183 | 601.77 | 1.4% | 2.9% | 25.4% | 3,398,124 | 1,703,546 | 279 | 12.7 | 1.1 | 0.45% |
| Energy | 197 | 944.22 | -1.5% | 4.7% | -17.1% | 4,191,420 | 388,778 | 355 | 10.6 | 0.7 | 0.49% |
| Financial Services | 4,343 | 1,202.86 | -1.1% | 4.1% | -4.3% | 509,119,886 | 93,947,128 | 19,563 | 17.0 | 0.8 | 10.73% |
| Health Care | 239 | 482.15 | 2.7% | 3.1% | 4.4% | 400,000 | 187,600 | 1 | 13.0 | 1.0 | 0.59% |
| Industrials | 3,143 | 906.31 | -0.7% | 2.1% | -16.0% | 47,329,740 | 23,594,443 | 5,087 | 12.5 | 0.8 | 7.76% |
| Insurance | 900 | 2,200.37 | -1.6% | -1.7% | 41.9% | 328,243 | 72,873 | 84 | 9.7 | 0.8 | 2.22% |
| Real Estate | 2,566 | 1,196.65 | 0.6% | 3.8% | -1.0% | 273,166,908 | 38,703,571 | 11,494 | 16.4 | 0.6 | 6.34% |
| Technology | 8 | 609.64 | 0.0% | 1.0% | -12.4% | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | NM | 0.7 | 0.02% |
| Telecommunications | 3,328 | 1,088.78 | -0.5% | 3.4% | -7.8% | 41,405,145 | 21,189,204 | 4,595 | 9.8 | 1.4 | 8.22% |
| Utilities | 196 | 468.42 | 1.1% | 2.3% | -5.3% | 1,607,491 | 281,810 | 245 | 13.8 | 1.5 | 0.48% |

Top Gainers

| Stock | Last Close | Change % | Volume | Value | Trades |
|---------|------------|----------|-------------|------------|--------|
| IFHR | 564 | 22.61% | 11,862,823 | 6,114,157 | 1,748 |
| GFC | 59 | 19.43% | 35,084 | 1,760 | 10 |
| ALDEERA | 270 | 17.39% | 93,687 | 23,989 | 34 |
| IFA | 278 | 10.32% | 108,311,270 | 30,126,861 | 4,357 |
| INOVEST | 85 | 10.25% | 3,051,901 | 253,136 | 175 |

Top Losers

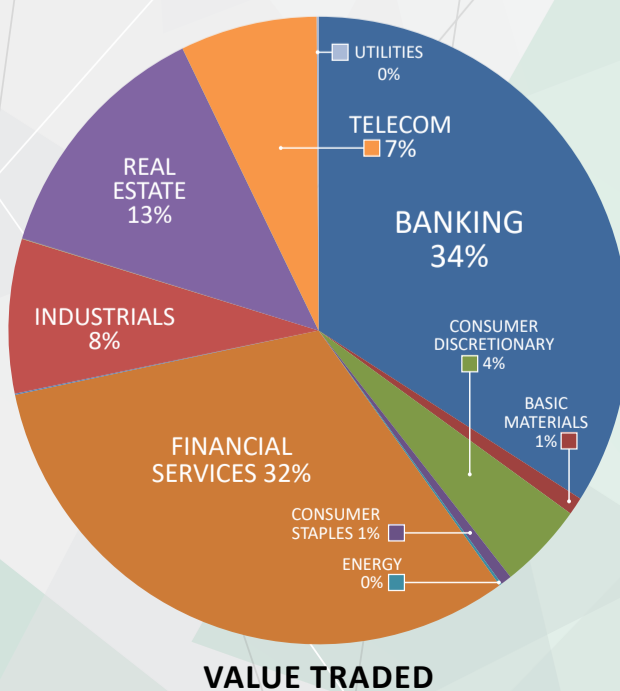
| Stock | Last Close | Change % | Volume | Value | Trades |
|---------|------------|----------|------------|-----------|--------|
| SANAM | 167 | -9.73% | 40,506,974 | 6,950,368 | 2,940 |
| COAST | 72 | -7.46% | 15,039,770 | 1,129,992 | 739 |
| ABAR | 92.3 | -7.42% | 3,950,911 | 376,540 | 322 |
| FTI | 61 | -6.01% | 43,460 | 2,641 | 17 |
| TAAMEER | 12.8 | -5.88% | 2,971,692 | 39,290 | 123 |

Top Volume

| Stock | Last | Change % | Volume | Value | Trades |
|--------|------|----------|-------------|------------|--------|
| IFA | 278 | 10.32% | 108,311,270 | 30,126,861 | 4,357 |
| ARZAN | 196 | -2.00% | 98,809,682 | 19,682,174 | 3,061 |
| KRE | 186 | 2.76% | 75,750,020 | 13,782,175 | 2,430 |
| GBK | 253 | 1.20% | 63,603,900 | 16,078,902 | 1,225 |
| SOKOUK | 48.2 | 4.78% | 51,150,993 | 2,459,896 | 867 |

Top Value

| Stock | Last | Change % | Volume | Value | Trades |
|-------|------|----------|-------------|------------|--------|
| IFA | 278 | 10.32% | 108,311,270 | 30,126,861 | 4,357 |
| KFH | 699 | -0.29% | 43,230,035 | 30,119,870 | 5,330 |
| NBK | 885 | 0.68% | 28,270,607 | 24,814,081 | 2,377 |
| ARZAN | 196 | -2.00% | 98,809,682 | 19,682,174 | 3,061 |
| ZAIN | 489 | -2.00% | 34,401,699 | 16,864,883 | 2,517 |



Market Summary:

- Premier and Main markets volume and value increased 26% 32%, and 7% 23%, respectively.
- Premier and Main indexes moved horizontally last week awaiting the inflation data and FED spokesman.
- Technically, the All Share index closed at 6653, with support levels at 6621, 6526, and 6487, while resistance at 6670. The Premier index closed at 7291, with support levels at 7259, 7195, and 7094, while resistance at 7343. The Main index closed at 5453, with support levels at 5424, 5393, and 5339, while resistance at 5447.

Business

Maghreb farmers embrace drones to fight climate change crisis

Tunisia, Morocco reeling from unprecedented drought



NABEUL, Tunisia: Yassine Gargouri (left), a farmer who hired the RoboCare startup company, to fly drones over his agricultural domain to scan the trees from the air and assess their hydration levels checks his citrus trees in Nabeul, southwest of Tunis.



NABEUL, Tunisia: A technician from the RoboCare startup company, prepares to fly a drone over an agricultural domain in southwest of Tunis on August 30, 2023. — AFP photos

NABEUL, Tunisia: A drone buzzed back and forth above rows of verdant orange trees planted near Nabeul, eastern Tunisia. The black unmanned aircraft, equipped with a multi-lens camera and sensors, has been enlisted by Tunisian farmers to help adapt to years of drought and erratic weather patterns caused by climate change.

"The seasons are not like they were before where we knew exactly what to do," said farmer Yassine Gargouri, noting temperatures now can begin to climb as early as May while in August there have been unusual summer rains. He hired start-up RoboCare to scan the trees from the air and assess their hydration levels, soil quality and overall health — to prevent irreversible damage.

The technology "provides us with information on how much water each plant needs, no more, no less", he said. The use of modern technologies in agriculture is

globally on the rise, including in North Africa where countries rank among the world's 33 most water-stressed, according to the World Resources Institute.

RoboCare, employing about 10 people, is the only company in Tunisia, according to its 35-year-old founder Imen Hbiri, to use drones to help farmers combat the impacts of climate change and reduce costs, crop losses and water consumption. "Resorting to modern technologies in the sector of agriculture has become inevitable," Hbiri told AFP while monitoring the drone's path on her computer screen.

The daughter of farmers, the entrepreneur knows well the limits of existing farming methods. Now, in just a few clicks, she can access scans that detect signs of illness or malnourishment before they are visible to the naked eye.

On the screen, fields appear in RGB (red, green, blue) imagery — the

greener the plants, the healthier.

Farmers can then use medicine-filled sprinklers mounted to the drones to target the sickly plants with more precision and consequently less expense. "By relying on this technology, we can save water consumption by up to 30 percent and reduce about 20 percent of the cost of fertilizers and medicine, while raising crop production by 30 percent", Hbiri explained. Gargouri, who spends about 80 percent of his budget on fertilizers and other remedies, says this technology is the future.

"We must adapt to these upheavals," Gargouri added. "It's the challenge of tomorrow". Tunisia is currently experiencing its eighth year of drought (four of which were consecutive) in recent years, according to its agriculture ministry. The country's dams, which are the primary source for drinking water and irrigating crops, are currently only filled to about 22 percent

capacity. And about 20 dams — mostly located in the south — have gone completely out of service. In neighboring countries, water scarcity is also a major issue.

Licensing hurdles

Morocco — where agriculture accounts for 13 percent of the gross domestic product, 14 percent of exports and 33 percent of jobs — also suffered its worst drought in four decades in 2022. Only about three percent of nearly two million Moroccan farmers use new technologies in their fields, Loubna El Mansouri, director of the digital centre at Morocco's agriculture ministry, told AFP. A study they conducted found that using drones to water crops could use "less than 20 liters of water to irrigate one hectare compared to nearly 300 liters" used with traditional methods, Mansouri added.

Similarly, Algeria's agriculture min-

istry said it was using drones and satellite imagery for mapping "to optimize the use of agricultural land by evaluating its characteristics and suitability for production", local media reported. For the use of these technologies to become widespread, however, Hbiri says the law needs to be changed in Tunisia and awareness raised.

Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia ban the use of unmanned drones without a permit, which in the case of commercial uses can take months to be issued. Hbiri hopes authorities will help start-ups reach more farmers as she estimates "only 10 percent of farmers in Tunisia depend on this type of technology".

"We want to focus our work on the use of technology and not spend time and effort on administrative issues and moving between departments and banks, which is slowing our progress," she said. — AFP



DUBAI: CEO of France's energy giant EDF Luc Remont (left), Engie's Chairman Jean-Pierre Clamadieu (center) and French manager and businessman Gerard Mestrallet (right) look on during an event at the COP28 United Nations climate summit in Dubai on December 2, 2023. — AFP

130 nations agree agriculture, food must top priorities

DUBAI: More than 130 countries agreed to prioritize food and agriculture in their national climate plans at COP28 in Dubai Friday in a move hailed by observers despite fears over its silence on the role of fossil fuels. Food systems are estimated to be responsible for roughly a third of human-made greenhouse gases, but are increasingly threatened by global warming and biodiversity loss.

A total of 134 countries who produce 70 percent of the food eaten worldwide signed the declaration, summit hosts the United Arab Emirates said.

"There is no path to achieving the goals of the Paris climate agreement and keeping 1.5 degrees Celsius within reach that does not urgently address the interactions between food systems, agriculture and climate," the UAE's climate change minister Mariam Almheiri said. The declaration said that countries will strengthen efforts to integrate food systems into their emissions-cutting plans.

Nations would also pursue efforts to support farmers and other vulnerable food producers, including through increased funding, more infrastructure and developing early warning systems, it added.



Mariam Almheiri

It also emphasized the importance of restoring land, changing away from greenhouse-gas emitting agricultural practices and reducing food loss. The United States, European Union, China and Brazil were among the countries to sign the declaration. The 134 nations are home to 5.7 billion people and represent more than three quarters of all greenhouse gas emissions from the global food system — or 25 percent of total emissions worldwide, the COP28 statement said.

The US think-tank World Re-



DUBAI: A handout picture provided by the UAE Presidential Court shows President of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan (right) meeting with US Vice President Kamala Harris during the COP28 climate summit in Dubai on December 2, 2023. — AFP

sources Institute praised the announcement. "This declaration is the moment when food truly comes of age in the climate process, sending a powerful signal to the nations of the world that we can only keep the 1.5 degree goal in sight if we act fast," said the group's CEO Ani Dasgupta.

However Patty Fong, of the Global Alliance for the Future of Food, said the declaration not directly referencing fossil fuels was a "glaring omission". "The declaration doesn't set out how governments will tackle

food emissions, and makes no reference to fossil fuels, despite food systems accounting for at least 15 percent of fossil fuels burned each year — equivalent to the emissions of all EU countries and Russia combined," she said. Sustainability group IPES-Food also criticized what it said was vague language and missing concrete actions or targets. There was "no commitment to shift to healthy, sustainable, diets nor reducing overconsumption of industrially produced meat," the group said. — AFP

Over 110 countries support tripling renewables by 2030

DUBAI: More than 110 countries want the COP28 climate negotiations to adopt a goal of tripling renewable energy and doubling energy efficiency by 2030, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said Friday. The European Union first appealed for the new target earlier this year, and the cause has since been taken up by COP28 hosts the United Arab Emirates, then the G7 and G20 groups of nations.

G20 nations alone account for nearly 80 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. Von der Leyen told leaders at the UN climate talks in Dubai that it was "fantastic" that more than 110 nations had already embraced the goal. "I call now on all of us to include these targets in the final COP decision, because this sends a strong message to investors and consumers alike," she said from the podium.

The discussions about the renewables goal are both separate but closely linked to far more difficult negotiations about whether a final COP28 deal will commit nations to phasing down — or phasing out — all fossil fuels. In September, when G20 nations committed to "encourage efforts" towards tripling renewables capacity, their final statement remained silent about the future role played by fossil fuels, which account for the bulk of greenhouse gas emissions.

All credible pathways for achieving global carbon neutrality by mid-century depend on massively scaling up wind, solar, hydroelectric and other renewable energies such as biomass to displace the demand for planet-heating oil, gas and coal. This is "the single most important lever" for reducing carbon pollution from burning fossil fuels, and capping warming under the Paris Agreement's ambitious threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius compared with the pre-industrial period, the International Energy Agency (IEA) has said. There has already been progress. Between 2015 and 2022, renewable capacity increased on average by 11 percent each year. — AFP

Climate threatens 20% of GDP erosion in Pakistan: WB

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's GDP is anticipated to experience a decline of 18 to 20 per cent by the year 2050 due to the escalating impact of severe weather-related events, environmental degradation, and rampant air pollution, the World Bank has warned. In its report, titled 'Climate Silence in Pakistan,' the World Bank has cautioned about the serious repercussions of climate change on the nation which are already evident through erratic weather patterns and devastating floods that have ravaged the country. A staggering eight out of 10 people in Pakistan are concerned about the escalating effects of climate change, while the concerns appear to be higher among women and the educated populace.

However, despite the widespread apprehensions, a disparity in trust towards climate-related information exists, particularly noticeable among individuals with limited education, who tend to show higher levels of skepticism towards climate data from all sources. Moreover, while parents exhibit a burgeoning demand for climate change education for their children, the discourse within households on the pressing issue remains minimal, reflecting a significant gap between concern and action. Despite the pervasive unease regarding climate change, both personal and governmental support for tangible actions remains remarkably low, the report pointed out.

The World Bank further emphasized the urgency of strategies aimed at inducing behavioral changes by reframing the narrative around climate action, advocating for approaches that underscore financial savings rather than merely highlighting environmental impacts. The report underscored the critical need for comprehensive analyses delving into the intricate drivers of individual perceptions and behaviors concerning climate change within Pakistan.

It suggested a correlation between person's perceptions of climate change and their encounters with income shocks, citing that those affected by events like the COVID-19 pandemic or flood-related income loss demonstrate heightened concern regarding climate change impacts. The report revealed a 4-percentage point increase in considering climate change crucial when economic concerns in discussions precede social issues. Moreover, there is a correlation between education levels and perceptions of climate change, with a more pronounced difference in preferences between groups when economic issues are emphasized first, indicating the perception of climate change as an economic predicament. 'Pakistan, like many developing nations, stands vulnerable to the repercussions of climate change, including soaring temperatures and a surge in natural calamities such as floods,' the report said. Despite expressions of concern when directly probed about climate change, it is notably not a primary priority for many individuals. In conclusion, the report called for nuanced interventions that address the multifaceted dimensions shaping attitudes and actions towards climate change in Pakistan, urging for a concerted effort to bridge the gap between concern and meaningful action in combatting the existential threat. — Agencies

US Commerce chief warns against China 'threat'

SAN FRANCISCO: US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo on Saturday urged lawmakers, Silicon Valley and US allies to stop China from getting semiconductors and cutting-edge technologies key to national security. Speaking at an annual national defense forum in Simi Valley, California, Raimondo called Beijing "the biggest threat we've ever had" and stressed "China is not our friend." The world's top two economies are locked in a fierce commercial and geopolitical rivalry, in which her department plays a leading role.

In October, Raimondo unveiled a series of restrictions on the export of advanced chips to China, including those used in the development of artificial intelligence (AI), to prevent their use by Beijing for its military. "I know there are CEOs of chip companies in this audience who were a little cranky with me when I did that, because you're losing revenue. Such is life, protecting our national security matters more than short term revenue." "Newsflash: democracy is good for your businesses. Rule of law here and around the world is good for your businesses," she said. Raimondo noted that Nvidia, maker of the most sophisticated chips needed to develop the latest generation of AI, had developed a product that performs just below the limit set by her department for export to China. — AFP



Joanne Gartell takes part in a 'Cow Cuddling' experience.



Ella Gartell-Bishop takes part in a 'Cow Cuddling' experience.



Charleigh Gartell takes part in a 'Cow Cuddling' experience.

FEELING STRESSED? CUDDLE A COW, SAYS UK DAIRY FARM

Morag an imposing Highland cow with a caramel coat, ambles out of the main shed at Dumble Farm in northern England and stands ready to meet her guests. Visitors have travelled from far and wide to the farm near Beverley in east Yorkshire, not to buy milk, yoghurt or cheese, but to enjoy a cuddle with Morag and her companions. Fiona Wilson and her co-farmers at Dumble Farm started offering the cuddling sessions in February when it became obvious that economic difficulties of modern dairy farming had become untenable.

"Some people like to engage with dogs or cats or horses and other people find that cows are the animals they want to be with," Wilson told AFP. "People are coming for a wellbeing point of view. That anxiety relieving-ness of being with animals is almost like a therapy."

Horn of a dilemma

Dumble Farm's owners looked to diversify because a sharp fall in the price of milk and high inflation was crippling their dairy farming business.

Economic hardship has forced farmers to leave the industry in their droves for decades. According to a House of Commons Library research brief, the UK had 196,000 dairy farms in 1950. By 1995 there were just 35,700.

Lower milk prices and rising energy, fuel, feed and fertiliser costs since the outbreak of war in Ukraine



Joanne Gartell takes part in a 'Cow Cuddling' experience with a small herd of retired dairy cows.

20 months ago has been a nail in the coffin for many more. In its latest survey of major milk buyers, the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, which represents farmers, estimated that there were 7,500 dairy producers in Britain in October 2023. For Dumble Farm, flooding in six out of the past seven years was an added challenge, leaving the farm under water often for months at a time.

Wilson said she and her partners at the farm, who include her husband and brother, were working 14 hours every day of the year and losing money.

"It's impossible to live like that," she said. "There was just no future. We

were just getting nowhere." In January 2022, the farmers decided to diversify and sold off their dairy herd other than five cows that they could not bring themselves to leave.

"They were our friends really, with placid friendly natures," Wilson said. "We thought maybe that we could try having a go at cow cuddling, just to earn a bit of extra money on top of our conservation scheme and also to engage people with what we were doing here." The farm prepared the cows for months before inviting customers to come and cuddle them -- and the cows appeared happy to oblige. "They are inquisitive animals. They



Charleigh Gartell takes part in a 'Cow Cuddling' experience.

are interested when people come down to see them," said Wilson.

Udder bliss

The experience, which also includes educational activities on conservation and sustainable farming, draws couples, families and cow lovers from across the country.

The £50 (\$63) per person tickets sell out months in advance. Inside the barn, dozing cows delight in having their chins scratched and their soft coats brushed by the paying visitors.

Steven Clews said he bought the experience for his wife who loves Highland cattle. "I'm fond of all animals, especial-

ly cuddly ones, so being able to cuddle a big one is really cool," he said.

"They are so easy to brush," his wife, Emma Clews, said. "I didn't think I would find it relaxing, but they are just so cuddly. It's very therapeutic."

When the sessions end, the visitors are herded outside the cowshed and into the sun where Morag awaits. Morag raises her head to the sky as visitors brush and caress her soft furry chest, drawing smiles and hums of delight from her human companions.—AFP



Emma Clews grooms a young highland cow as she takes part in a 'Cow Cuddling' experience.



Alison Ross takes part in a 'Cow Cuddling' experience.

Venezuela zoo welcomes three white lion cubs



A South African white lion is seen in its enclosure at Las Delicias Zoo.

A Venezuelan zoo this week welcomed the country's first three white lion cubs born in captivity, a boost for the genetically rare animal whose wild population numbers only about a dozen living in their native South Africa. The cubs were born this week to Camatagua and Sebastian, white lions brought to Venezuela in May last year from the Hodonin zoo in the Czech Republic as part of a breeding program. "They are the first white lions born in Venezuela. We have three cubs, two males and a female," said Anthony De Benedictis, director of the Las Delicias zoo in Maracay, Venezuela.

The cubs were taken from their mother to be hand raised to improve their chances of survival, said De Benedictis. Lionesses in captivity have been known to kill their offspring. White lions are not albinos but a genetic rarity unique to a region of South Africa, according to the Global White Lion Protection Trust. The coloration is caused by a recessive gene similar to what causes blue eyes in humans. The trust states on its website there are hundreds of white lions in captivity around the world, but fewer than 13 in the wild in their endemic habitat.

It added white lions are not listed as endangered because they are scientifically not classified as distinct from *Panthera leo*—classified as "vulnerable" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Taking care of the babies is a 24/7 job. They need to be fed around the clock with milk enriched

with a special supplement. "We are all dedicated to their care," said Leonel Ovalle Moleiro, head of a team of three veterinarians and seven other carers tasked with the cubs' wellbeing.

"We do night shifts, day shifts, we are... monitoring their weight gain, their food intake and of course the health

of the cubs and their mother." Ovalle Moleiro pointed to one of the male cubs as the "sleepiest" and most reticent to drink. The female, however, "devours the bottle... is hyperactive, constantly moving," he smiled. Venezuela now has a total of six white lions.—AFP



A zookeeper shows a South African white lion cub born last Monday at Las Delicias Zoo.





Morocco gardening school cultivates hope for marginalized youth

After Hind Bensbitia dropped out of school as a teenager, she was stuck at home with few prospects for her future -- until she stumbled across Morocco's first gardening school.

Now at 20, she has already seen a change in her outlook both on her own future as well as the planet's, after joining the school in the northwestern Moroccan city of Sale. The school provides free training mainly to dropouts and other marginalized youths threatened with unemployment.

"After leaving school, I spent two years at home," said Bensbitia. "I wasn't satisfied. I wanted to be active."

it in a different way." Bensbitia says she feels "more in my element than anywhere else" at the school. Bouregreg Med-O-Med aims to raise awareness about climate change while promoting the social inclusion of marginalized young people, particularly those affected by unemployment, as well as championing gender equality. In October, it received the European Training Foundation's "Green Skills" award.

Unemployment and drought

Based in an eight-hectare field near an old landfill, the school promotes eco-responsible methods. "The gardening model

Planning Commission. In 2022, the commission found that more than one in four in the 15-24 age category were "not working, not in school or in any training".

'Complicated family situations'

Every year, the school takes in up to 90 apprentices, "young people who come from complicated family situations... and from really precarious and difficult surrounding neighbourhoods," said Elexpuru.

They are "motivated, want to have a dignified life and earn money to support themselves and their families", she said. She added that the three-year apprenticeship also contributes to "curbing irregular migration" as 70 percent of apprentices find a formal job once they graduate.

Between 20 and 25 percent of the trainees are young women, who are disproportionately affected by unemployment, at a rate of 19.8 percent compared to 11.7 percent for men.

Gardening "is always associated with men", said Elexpuru. "At the beginning, it was complicated, with clients who were looking to recruit only men, but things are starting to change." Bensbitia said people sometimes showed her contempt for choosing this trade.

"For them, it's not fit for girls," she said. "But I don't care... I have the support of my family and I will carry on."

Loubna Nassif, another apprentice aged 17, also said there were "a lot of stereotypes around jobs that women are not supposed to do. "I say we should prove them wrong."—AFP



to official forecasts, as rainfall is expected to drop by 11 percent while temperatures are projected to rise by 1.3 degrees Celsius (about 2.3 degrees Fahrenheit) on average by 2050.

"Through this training, I realized that the life of a plant depends on our will to take care of it," said Mohssine Errahimi, an 18-year-old trainee. "Simple actions can make a difference."

Errahimi has been working as an apprentice gardener in hotels and for private employers since the age of 16. He joined the school with the encouragement of a former employer.

"After my training, I hope to start my own gardening business to help build my country," he said. The professional integration of young Moroccans is key for the school, as they are often the hardest hit by economic difficulties.

Unemployment rates for those aged 15-24 reached 38.2 percent in the third quarter of 2023, compared to an overall unemployment rate of 13.5 percent, according to the kingdom's High



A woman attends a practical course at Bouregreg Med-O-Med, Morocco's first gardening school, in the coastal city of Sale.



Three years ago, she came across the gardening school, Bouregreg Med-O-Med, by sheer coincidence. Launched by the Spain-based Islamic Culture Foundation (FUNC1) in 2018, the school is the first of its kind in Morocco. "Before, I never imagined making gardening my job," said Bensbitia. "This training brought me a lot. I'm seeing the environment and the need to protect

is entirely ecological," Ines Elexpuru, communications director at FUNC1, told AFP. "The building is bioclimatic, built with raw earth, and the electricity is solar."

The school has a nursery of local plants that are better adapted to water stress, which is crucial for Morocco as the country suffers its worst drought in almost 40 years. The drought will get even worse, according



A name plaque hangs on a building of Bouregreg Med-O-Med, Morocco's first gardening school.



Lifestyle



A student training to be a tattoo artist practices on a silicon canvases at a studio in Iran's capital Tehran.



A customer looks through designs at a tattoo studio in Iran's capital Tehran.



An Iranian girl shows her tattoos.



A students training to be a tattoo artist practices on a silicon canvas at a studio in Iran's capital Tehran.



A tattoo artist traces a design on a customer at a tattoo studio in Iran's capital Tehran.

Within a flat in northern Tehran, concealed from the public eye, Sean proudly showcases the tattoo motifs crafted by his students, each meticulously etched onto silicon canvases.

The 34-year-old opened the studio only eight months ago, aspiring to share the art of tattooing that over the years has largely thrived underground in the Islamic republic. "All tattoo artists in Iran usually work at home," Sean, using his artistic nickname, told AFP in his studio.

"We risked a lot this year by opening this place and turning it into an academy." While Iran has not explicitly banned tattooing, conservatives still view the practice as linked with immorality, delinquency and Westernization. Yet tattoos have gained popularity in recent years in the country, with many young people proudly displaying their ink in public. Seeing the growing trend, Sean opened other studios in the southeastern city of Kerman and the resort island of Kish.

Now, he has more than 30 students eager to learn the craft, which he describes as a "bottomless art". "All sorts of people now are doing tattoos," said Sean, who has been a tattoo artist for 17 years. In the past, he said, "people wanted something small, simple, that no one can see." "But now they're saying 'Ink me up'."

'Satanic and obscene symbols'

In recent years, some Shiite scholars in Iran have declared that tattoos are not forbidden under Islamic law. "Tattooing is not forbidden, provided that it does not promote non-Islamic culture," according to the website of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Despite the growing acceptance, there are still some in Iran who frown upon the practice.

In September last year, Iran's volleyball federation said players must

cover any tattoos or risk being barred from taking part in the 2022-2023 season. Several prominent football players faced summons to Iran's sports morality committee in recent years for displaying their tattoos.

In 2019, a Tehran police official said having "visible and unconventional tattoos" may require individuals to undergo a "psychological examination" before obtaining a driver's licence.

Others faced arrest, including in 2016, when authorities rounded up

arrested, he added. Sean says he is aware of the conservative societal and cultural perceptions in Iran, aspects he has conscientiously addressed within his studios. "Women (artists) do tattoos for women, men (artists) do tattoos for men," he said.

'Woman, life, freedom'

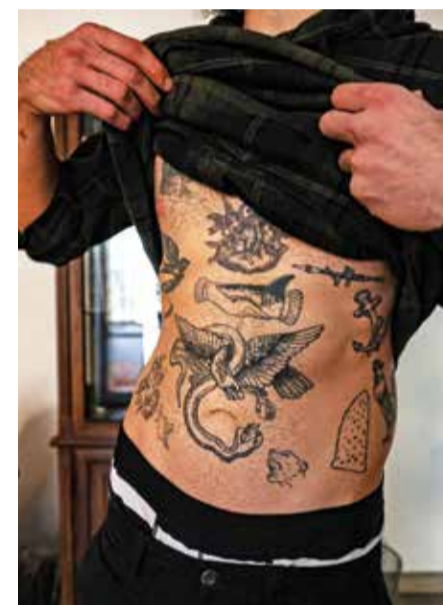
In Iran, women with tattoos face more intense scrutiny than their male counterparts, compelled to adhere to a stringent dress code that mandates

women. Others only see it as a form of self-expression. "I like tattoos a lot and I wanted to express my thoughts that way," says Sahar, a 26-year-old nurse who has a tattoo on her arm reading "do not be afraid of anything" in Arabic.

But she acknowledges that having tattoos "is likely (to cause problems), especially if you want to work in the public sector". Undeterred by the challenges, Kuro, a 24-year-old student at the studio, remains steadfast in her determination to practice her craft.



Sean, the owner of a tattoo studio in Iran's capital Tehran, poses for a picture during an interview with AFP.



An Iranian youth shows his tattoos in Iran's capital Tehran.

a "tattoo gang" for allegedly tattooing "satanic and obscene symbols" on people, as reported by the Tasnim news agency.

Benyamin, a 27-year-old cafe owner, says some people often perceive him as a criminal because of the tattoos covering his torso and back. "Tattoos are not a crime on their own, but you will be stigmatized as a thug, should something happen," like being

covering their heads and necks. Some even see it as an act of defiance.

In Tehran, numerous tattoo studios showcased designs featuring the slogan "Woman, life, freedom" - a rallying cry during nationwide protests sparked by the death in custody last year of Mahsa Amini. A 22-year-old Iranian Kurd, Amini had been arrested in September 2022 for allegedly violating the Islamic republic's strict dress code for

"Now people are generally more supportive," she said after touching up a Koi fish design etched on a silicon sheet. She hopes that "as a woman tattoo artist, I will be able to work without restrictions." — AFP



An Iranian youth shows his tattoos in Iran's capital Tehran. — AFP photos



Students training to be tattoo artists practice on silicon canvases at a studio in Iran's capital Tehran.

Pfizer to rethink weight loss pill after high side effect rate

US drugmaker Pfizer on Friday said it would end a clinical trial of its developmental weight loss pill after high side effect rates caused most participants to stop using it. A twice-daily dosing of the highly anticipated drug danuglipron was found to be effective, resulting in weight reductions of between 8-13 percent at 32 weeks, compared to a placebo.



But nearly three-quarters of trial participants experienced nausea, almost half had vomiting, and a quarter had diarrhea. Consequently, the discontinuation rate was greater than 50 percent, compared to 40 percent on placebo. "At this time, twice-daily danuglipron formulation will not

advance into Phase 3 studies," the US drugmaker said in a statement. Pfizer stocks were trading nearly five percent down after the morning announcement.

Danuglipron belongs to a growing field of powerful and lucrative obesity medications known as GLP-1 agonists.

JPMorgan analysts have predicted annual sales for so-called GLP-1 drugs to reach \$140 billion by 2032, with the market dominated by Novo Nordisk and Eli Lilly. Pfizer won't abandon danuglipron entirely but instead focus on improving it and changing the dosing to once a day, the statement added.

"We believe an improved once-daily formulation of danuglipron could play an important role in the obesity treatment paradigm, and we will focus our efforts on gathering the data to understand its potential profile," said Pfizer's Mikael Dolsten.

In October, Pfizer reported a third-quarter loss of \$2.4 billion, compared with \$8.6 billion in profits in the year-ago period, following a sharp fall in the sales of its COVID-19 vaccine and therapeutic from pandemic peaks. GLP-1 agonists have been found to cut the risk of cardiovascular disease associated with obesity - but they also heighten the risk of certain severe gastrointestinal problems, studies show.

Novo Nordisk's obesity drug Wegovy cuts the risk of heart attacks and strokes by a fifth, according to a recent study. But GLP-1 agonists have also been linked with an increased risk of stomach paralysis, pancreatitis and bowel obstruction. — AFP

Peru boosts Machu Picchu access to up to 5,600 visitors a day

Peru is sharply boosting access to its top attraction Machu Picchu, officials said Saturday, in an effort to revive tourism that has yet to rebound from the pandemic.

Access to the Inca citadel has been increased to 4,500 per day "and on very specific dates may be increased to 5,600" from January 1, a Culture Ministry statement said. The site currently allows 3,600 to 3,800 visitors per day. Last September Peru temporarily closed three sectors of Machu Picchu due to the impact of the heavy volume of visitors at the site.

Machu Picchu, 130 kilometers (80 miles) from Cusco, was built in the 15th century at an altitude of 2,500 meters (8,200 feet) on orders from the Inca ruler Pachacutec. It is considered a marvel of architecture and engineering and was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1981.

Tourism is key to Peru's economy, with the country attracting about 4.5 million visitors prior to the Covid pandemic in 2020. It's expected to finish this year with about half that, 2.2 million. Known as "the lost city of the Incas," Machu Picchu was stumbled upon in 1911 by the American explorer Hiram Bingham. On the silver screen, the character of the adventurer Indiana Jones is partially inspired by Bingham. — AFP



Sports

Zain 'the main sponsor' of KEF showjumping Tour's 3rd season

Company awarded winners of first round's Grand Prix competition



Kuwait Equestrian Federation Chairman Masoud Johar Hayat and Zain Kuwait's Corporate Relations Department Manager Hamad Al MUSAIBEEH awarding the winners.



Zain is a main supporter of Kuwaiti equestrian athletes.

News in Brief

Fan dies after stabbing

NANTES: A fan of Ligue 1 club Nantes has died after being stabbed before the club's 1-0 win over Nice, the public prosecutor in the western French city confirmed on Sunday. The fatality occurred when several vehicles transporting Nice supporters were attacked by rival Nantes fans while on their way to the Beaujoire stadium before Saturday's game. "During these events, in circumstances which remain to be determined, a 31-year-old man, a supporter of FC Nantes, collapsed (and) died on the spot, despite the rapid intervention of emergency services," Nantes public prosecutor Renaud Gaudel said. The deceased received "a wound in the back, which could correspond to a bladed weapon", the prosecutor explained, adding that an investigation for "voluntary manslaughter" had been opened. A source close to the case told AFP the victim, a member of Nantes supporters group Brigade Loire, had been stabbed by one of the vehicle drivers. Gaudel confirmed a 35-year-old driver had been taken into custody on Sunday after turning himself in at a police station in the early hours of the morning. — AFP

Japan football great retires

SAPPORO: Japanese great Shinji Ono retired from football at the age of 44 on Sunday, ending a career that saw him become the first player from his country to win a European club trophy. Ono was part of the Feyenoord team that beat Borussia Dortmund in the 2002 UEFA Cup final, during a successful four-year stint with the Dutch club. The attacking midfielder was part of a pioneering wave of Japanese players moving to Europe in the late 1990s and early 2000s, along with Hidetoshi Nakata and Kazuyoshi Miura. Nicknamed "Genius", Ono made his international debut as an 18-year-old and played for Japan at the 1998 World Cup in France two months later. He played at three World Cups and won 56 caps, scoring six international goals. Ono was named Asian player of the year in 2000 and also had stints with clubs in Germany and Australia, winning the A-League Premiership with Western Sydney Wanderers in 2013. He also won the J League and Asian Champions League with Urawa Red Diamonds and the 2000 Asian Cup with Japan. — AFP

Haughey wins 100m free

WASHINGTON: Siobhan Haughey won the 100m freestyle in a meet record 52.94 sec to claim her third title at the US Open swimming championships on Saturday as Katie Ledecky closed the meeting with a dominant 1,500m free win. Hong Kong's Haughey, the 100m free silver medalist at the Tokyo Olympics and at the World Championships this year, powered to the win over Americans Torri Huske and Abbey Weitzeil, Huske finishing in 53.17 and Weitzeil in 53.53. The victory at the meet in Greensboro, North Carolina, followed Haughey's two triumphs on Friday, when she beat Ledecky in the 200m free and returned less than half an hour later to upset Tokyo Olympic gold medalist Lydia Jacoby in the 100m breaststroke. Ledecky, who had also settled for second in the 400m free behind Canadian teenager Summer McIntosh, closed with a characteristically dominant 1,500m win in 15 min 46.38 sec. — AFP

Rodman shines in USA win

MIAMI: Trinity Rodman starred as the new-look United States women's team enjoyed a 3-0 friendly win over China in Fort Lauderdale on Saturday. Rodman had a goal and an assist while Sophia Smith and Lindsey Horan were also on target as the USA enjoyed a positive performance in their first game since the appointment of Englishwoman Emma Hayes as the team's new coach. Interim coach Twila Kilgore was in charge of the game with Hayes, who is committed to her club Chelsea until the end of the English Women's Super League season in May. Hayes had been involved in the selection of the roster for the game which saw 10 players from August's ill-fated World Cup squad, including star Alex Morgan, not called up. The youthful side featured two debutants in the second-half with Olivia Moultrie and Jenna Nighswonger both making their debuts off the bench. — AFP

KUWAIT: Continuing its ongoing support to local showjumping athletes, Zain announced its sponsorship of the third season of the Kuwait Equestrian Federation's (KEF) Showjumping Tour (2023-2024 season). The company remains a key supporter of this exciting competition for the third year running to reflect its commitment to support equestrian sports and encourage local athletes to pursue excellence.

During the event to mark the new season's kick-off, Zain awarded the top six winners in the first round's Grand Prix competition, held at Messila Equestrian Club in Sabhan. In attendance were Kuwait Equestrian

Federation Chairman Masoud Johar Hayat and Zain Kuwait's Corporate Relations Department Manager Hamad Al MUSAIBEEH. Zain honored the top six winners of the Grand Prix in the new season's first round: first place winner Ali Al Kharafi, second place winner Fawaz Al Subaie, third place winner Abrar Al Musallam, fourth place winner Ghazi Al Jerafi, fifth place winner Abdulrahman Al Fuzae, and sixth place winner Antonio Murruzzu.

The company is proud to continue supporting this exciting local sport event since its inception. The competition is organized by the Kuwait Equestrian Federation (KEF) in col-

laboration with the Kuwait Olympic Committee and Public Authority for Sport. Every year, it is joined by hundreds of showjumping athletes representing local clubs, along with crowds of equestrian enthusiasts. Zain supports this event under the umbrella of its strategic goals to support, grow, and develop the local sports and youth sectors. The company is a fervent believer in the exceptional talents of Kuwait's young athletes, many of whom are passionate about equestrian sports, which are deep rooted in the Kuwaiti, Arab, and Islamic identities.

The KEF Showjumping Tour is set to feature eight rounds, with

each round's activities being held over a period of two days. The tour runs until May 2024 and will also feature several 2-star and 3-star international competitions. Hundreds of showjumpers from Kuwait's public and private equestrian clubs will compete in the thrilling competitions. As a leading private sector company in Kuwait, Zain is constantly looking to identify and support excellence across the sports sector. The company will continue to put Kuwaiti sports and athletes at the forefront of its priorities and pledges to continue motivating them to achieve all the recognition and support they deserve.

Niemann and Buhai taste victory in tense Australia Open finale

SYDNEY: Chilean LIV Golf star Joaquin Niemann kept his cool to win a maiden Australian Open Sunday at the second playoff hole, while South Africa's Ashleigh Buhai successfully defended her women's title. Niemann, a two-time US PGA Tour winner before joining the Saudi-backed circuit last year, denied Japan's Rikuya Hoshino with an eagle to earn his first DP World Tour title and with it exemption to the British Open next year.

"It was a nice day. These last two playoff holes showed how I have been playing the last few weeks here in Australia," said Niemann, a former world number 15, who endured an anxious 90-minute wait as the clubhouse leader. "My putting hasn't been the best, but I've been working hard on it and it was nice to make that last putt."

"I always practice those three-, four-, five-foot ones and know that one of those will be to win a tournament. It's amazing." The Chilean fired six birdies and a bogey to card 66 and finish at 14-under at the Australian Golf Club in Sydney. Hoshino, looking to become the first Japanese winner of the tournament in its more than 100-year history, carded a 70 to match him and send

it to a tense finale. The pair played the par-five 18th in the playoff where at the first attempt Niemann missed a five-foot eagle putt to win.

But after they went back down the same hole he made no mistake from similar range to secure the win as rain began to lash down. Hoshino and Min Woo Lee—the winner last week at the Australian PGA Championship—were the overnight leaders by a shot, but the Australian struggled to get going. He finished third with his 72 leaving him two behind the leaders. Australia's Adam Scott, England's Laurie Canter and Scotland's Grant Forrest tied for fourth at 11-under, with the playoff drama capping a see-sawing final day.

Back-to-back Buhai

Buhai overcame late nerves to hold off charging fellow major winner Minjee Lee for a one-shot win in the women's tournament. In doing so, the 2022 British Open champion became the first back-to-back winner since Taiwan's Tseng Ya-ni in 2010-11. The 35-year-old carded a three-over-par 75 to end at nine-under for the tournament, a stroke ahead of Lee whose 69 ensured a tense finale. Buhai began a blustery day at the Australian Golf Club in Sydney with a three-stroke cushion over South Korean veteran Shin Ji-yai and seven clear of world number five Lee.

"To be honest, I wasn't feeling the pressure, I knew Minjee and Ji-yai would come at me today," she said. "But



SYDNEY: Chile's Joaquin Niemann kisses the men's trophy after he wins the Australian Open golf tournament at The Australian Golf Club in Sydney on December 3, 2023. — AFP

the conditions were so tough, I just said hit it into your spaces, play par golf and make them catch you." Shin collapsed to a 77, ending tied for third with fellow South Korean Jenny Shin, five behind Buhai. The mixed Australian Open involved men and women teeing off in alternating groups on the same courses. The Jack Nicklaus-designed Australian Golf Club was the main venue across all four days, while the nearby Lakes Golf Club co-hosted play during the first two rounds. — AFP

Columbus comeback earns MLS Cup final clash with LAFC

MIAMI: The Columbus Crew came back from two goals down to beat top-seeded FC Cincinnati 3-2 after extra-time in a thrilling Major League Soccer Eastern Conference final, booking a place with defending champions Los Angeles FC in the MLS Cup final. LAFC beat Houston Dynamo 2-0 thanks to a first-half Ryan Hollingshead goal and an 80th minute own goal from Houston Dynamo defender Franco Escobar. Home side Cincinnati scored twice in the first half of the Ohio derby, with goals from Brandon Vazquez and Luciano Acosta and they held that lead until 15 minutes from the end of regulation.

But an own goal from Alvas Powell and then a Diego Rossi goal in the 86th minute, forced the game into extra-time and Columbus utterly dominated from then on. The decisive goal came five minutes from the end of extra-time when substitute Christian Ramirez slotted in from close-range. It was an enthralling encounter from start to finish with Eastern Conference champions and regular season table toppers Cincinnati striking first. Aaron Boupendza whipped in a cross from the left which US international Vazquez collected before swivelling and burying the ball in the far corner.

Cincinnati had finished rock bottom of the league in their first three seasons in MLS but after tasting the playoffs last year, they have been

transformed this season. They doubled their advantage on the stroke of half-time when, from an indirect free-kick, the league's Most Valuable Player, Argentine Acosta fired in off the inside of the post. Columbus had played the better football and enjoyed the bulk of possession but trailed 2-0 at the break but French coach Wilfried Nancy resisted the temptation to make changes at the interval.

Boupendza almost killed off the Crew when he found space inside the box but his shot, heading to the far corner, was superbly saved by Crew keeper Patrick Schulte. But the introduction by Nancy of German wing-back Julian Gressel and striker Ramirez from the bench in the 65th minute, proved to be inspired. It was Gressel's cross from the right, with Ramirez lurking at the back post, that flew in off the unfortunate Powell to give Columbus a lifeline.

Superb Rossi

Uruguayan Diego Rossi, who had been superb throughout the game with his clever movement, headed over from a promising position in the 80th minute. Five minutes later though, the Crew got their reward, when after a clever exchange inside the box by Ramirez and Cucho Hernandez, Rossi poked in the equalizer. With Columbus having dominated the ball for long stretches, they were the team that had



CINCINNATI: Columbus Crew players celebrate after defeating FC Cincinnati during the 2023 MLS Cup Playoffs Eastern Conference Final at TQL Stadium on December 02, 2023. — AFP

the energy in extra-time with Cincinnati looking spent. But it was not until five minutes from the very end when Columbus got the winner, Kevin Molino floating a cross to the back post which Hernandez headed across to Ramirez to tap in.

Ramirez had got the late winner in the previous round of the playoffs against Orlando and the 32-year-old Californian was hailed as the hero again at the final whistle. "The goal was to win MLS Cup and I think we were close, and that's why it hurts," Cincinnati coach Pat Noonan told reporters. "It hurts because of losing at home, it hurts because of the scoreline mid-game, it hurts because of who

beat us. So there's a lot of things that make this a hard one to take and I feel for the guys," he added.

Columbus will be looking for their third MLS Cup title after triumphs in 2008 and 2020 when they take on an LAFC team that enjoyed a relatively comfortable win against US Open Cup winners Houston. The home side started strongly with their Mexican forward Carlos Vela hitting the bar in the opening minute, scooping the ball over Houston keeper Steve Clark but being denied by the woodwork. The 34-year-old Vela, whose contract with LAFC runs out at the end of this season, had the ball in the net three minutes later but his effort was flagged for offside. — AFP

Sports

Milan close gap on Juventus

Defeat leaves Cagliari inside the relegation zone

MILAN: AC Milan bounced back from Champions League disappointment with Saturday's 3-1 win over Frosinone which moved them to within four points of Serie A leaders Juventus. Goals either side of half-time from Luka Jovic and Christian Pulisic, and Fikayo Tomori's close-range finish in the 74th minute gave injury-hit Milan the three points to relieve some pressure after being beaten by Borussia Dortmund midweek.

Milan are unlikely to reach the last 16 of Europe's top competition following Tuesday's loss but are in decent shape at home despite wobbly form and nine first-team absences. Key attackers Olivier Giroud and Rafael Leao were among those unavailable, while the situation in defence was so desperate that France full-back Theo Hernandez played alongside Tomori in the centre of Milan's defence.

"It was also his idea. He told me that if needed, he can play that position," said coach Stefano Pioli to Sky. Milan are third, trailing Juve and three points behind second-placed Inter Milan, who will reclaim the summit in Italy's top flight as long as they don't lose at fourth-placed Napoli in Sunday's big match. "It's a little step forward, but there is a long way to go and we need to be more consistent if we're going to challenge for the top spots," added Pioli.

"The sooner we can get players back, the more options we'll have, meaning we can rotate more or turn to the bench to change things when needed." Under-fire Pioli was boosted both by the return of Algeria midfielder Ismael Bennacer and Jovic scoring his first goal for Milan since arriving in the sum-

mer, the Serbian lashing the hosts ahead in the 43rd minute just after Marvin Cuni wasted a glorious chance to give Frosinone the lead.

Milan bounce back

Pulisic doubled Milan's lead four minutes after the break with a sumptuous piece of play, brilliantly controlling goalkeeper Mike Maignan's boot upfield before carefully dinking home his fifth goal of the season. And Tomori ended the match as a contest when he poked home Jovic's knockdown, making Marco Brescianini's late free-kick no more than a consolation goal. Frosinone dropped down to 11th following their sixth defeat of the campaign, two points and places behind Lazio whose 1-0 win over 10-man Cagliari was greeted by loud disapproval from frustrated supporters.

Lazio, who finished second last season, are ninth after veteran Pedro's eighth-minute winner but the manner of their slender victory enraged the home crowd who unleashed a volley of boos and whistles at the end of the match. Cagliari were a man down from the 27th minute when Antoine Makoumbou was sent off for pulling back Matteo Guendouzi as the Lazio man raced through on goal.

But the away side went close to equalising twice in stoppage time as Ivan Provedel pulled off a magnificent save to deny Leonardo Pavoletti's powerful header. And just before the final whistle Manuel Lazzari nearly handed Gaetano Oristanio the leveller, leading to a barrage of boos for a team who on Tuesday reached the knockout stages of the Champions League for just the third time in the



MILAN: AC Milan's English defender #23 Fikayo Tomori (left) kicks the ball and scores his team's third goal during the Serie A football match between AC Milan and Frosinone at San Siro stadium in Milan. — AFP

club's history by beating Celtic. "We won a difficult match, we're more pleased with the result than we are with the performance, but the game with Celtic took a lot out of us," said Lazio assistant manager

Giovanni Martusciello. Defeat left Cagliari just inside the relegation zone after Empoli earned a 1-1 draw at Genoa in the day's early match and moved out of the bottom three. — AFP

Nice lose unbeaten record; Lens inflict more pain on Lyon

PARIS: Nice slumped to their first defeat of the season on Saturday as they lost 1-0 at Nantes and missed the chance to reclaim top spot in Ligue 1. Florent Mollet's first-half strike was enough to get new coach Jocelyn Gourvennec off to a winning start at the Stade de la Beaujoire, where he took over from Pierre Aristouy this week. Nice had gone eight games without conceding since their 3-2 victory over Paris Saint-Germain in mid-September, but the visitors saw their unbeaten start ended after they fell behind in a match for the first time this season.

"It's a logical defeat," said Nice coach Francesco Farioli. "We need to move on from it. This loss definitely hurts. But, like with our wins, we need to forget about this defeat. We had chances to take the lead or equalise. We came up against a goalkeeper on top form," he added. Nice's defeat will allow leaders PSG to pull four points clear if they



NANTES: Nice's French defender #26 Melvin Bard (left) fights for the ball with Nantes' Nigerian forward #27 Moses Simon during the French L1 football match between FC Nantes and OGC Nice on December 2, 2023. — AFP

win at Le Havre on Sunday.

Lens shook off their midweek Champions League humiliation by Arsenal to condemn crisis-hit Lyon to a 3-2 defeat in the club's first match since the exit of coach Fabio Grosso. Irish defender Jake O'Brien volleyed Lyon in front from a corner at Stade Bollaert in northern France, but last sea-

son's Ligue 1 runners-up levelled midway through the first half courtesy of Wesley Said.

Przemyslaw Frankowski put Lens ahead with a penalty early in the second half before O'Brien poked home a flick-on at another corner to equalize. Frankowski grabbed the winner on 74 minutes as Lens closed out a fourth win in five league games and extended their unbeaten run in the top flight to nine despite losing Florian Sotoca to a late red card. Lens made a dreadful start to the season and picked up one point from their first five fixtures. Frank Haise's side have righted the ship domestically but were dumped out of the Champions League on Wednesday following a crushing 6-0 loss away to Arsenal.

Lyon slid to an eighth defeat in 13 matches and remain rooted to the bottom of the table, five points from safety and on the hunt for a new coach after Grosso was stood down from his position on Thursday. The 46-year-old Italian, a World Cup winner in 2006, lasted just over two months in the hot seat after he replaced Laurent Blanc on September 16. It was an unhappy time in the dugout for Grosso, who oversaw just one win in seven matches and was left requiring stitches to his face in October after the Lyon team bus was attacked on its way to a game at Marseille. — AFP

Leicester stay top of Championship

LONDON: Harry Winks struck a stoppage-time winner as Leicester beat West Brom 2-1 on Saturday to stay on top of the Championship as Ipswich maintained their promotion push. After a blistering start to life under Enzo Maresca, Leicester had won just one of their previous four matches and looked set to drop points once more at the Hawthorns. Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall opened the scoring with a header 18 minutes from time but in-form West Brom appeared to have snatched a point when Josh Maja scrambled home an equaliser in the 89th minute.

The Baggies then went looking for a winner but were caught on the counter-attack at the death. Dewsbury-Hall led the charge from deep inside the Leicester half and squared for Winks to tap into an unguarded net. "It was a very difficult game because of them and because when you play Wednesday night and Saturday lunchtime it's not easy," said Maresca, who was unhappy that West Brom had played 24 hours earlier, on Tuesday.

"For me it's unbelievable when you play Wednesday night and Saturday -- both teams have to play together (at the same time), not one on Tuesday and one on Wednesday because the difference is huge." A ninth home victory in 10 games kept Ipswich, 2-1 winners against Coventry, just a point behind the Foxes at the top of the table. Wes Burns' wonder goal stole the show at Portman Road after George Hirst had opened the scoring and a late own goal by Brandon Williams did not prove costly. Leeds kept the pressure on the top two as they edged a thriller against Middlesbrough 3-2 at Elland Road. — AFP

Italy and Spain to meet in Euro 2024 group stage

HAMBURG: Reigning champions Italy were placed in the same group as Spain in Saturday's draw for Euro 2024, while France will come up against the Netherlands and England avoided any of the toughest opponents. Gareth Southgate's much-fancied England side will meet Slovenia, Denmark and Serbia, with hosts Germany taking on Scotland in the tournament's opening game on June 14 in Munich. Italy, who beat England on penalties at Wembley in the final of the last European Championship in 2021, and Spain will also face Croatia and Albania in Group B.

Spain, victors over Italy in the final of Euro 2012, will take on 2018 World Cup runners-up Croatia in their opening match in Berlin on June 15. Italy were always likely to face a difficult draw after being placed in the bottom pot based on their results in qualifying, when they scraped through with a 0-0 stalemate against Ukraine in their final match.

"When you're in the fourth pot you know that you have a lot of teams ahead of you, but you can't forget that you represent Italy and you have to play every match with pride," coach Luciano Spalletti told broadcaster RAI. The meeting of France, the 2022 World Cup runners-up, and the Netherlands will be the other heavyweight tie of the opening phase. They were in the same section in qualifying, with France winning both encounters. The two nations are in Group D along with Austria and a play-off winner, which will be one of Poland, Wales, Finland or Estonia.

'Ready for the expectation'

England, in contrast, will have few complaints about their opponents in Group C, although a Denmark side ranked 19th in the world were arguably the team to avoid from the second pot of seeds. Southgate's team, considered the favorites along with France for

| GROUP A | GROUP B | GROUP C |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| GERMANY | SPAIN | SLOVENIA |
| SCOTLAND | CROATIA | DENMARK |
| HUNGARY | ITALY | SERBIA |
| SWITZERLAND | ALBANIA | ENGLAND |
| GROUP D | GROUP E | GROUP F |
| PLAY-OFF WINNER A | BELGIUM | TÜRKİYE |
| NETHERLANDS | SLOVAKIA | PLAY-OFF WINNER C |
| AUSTRIA | ROMANIA | PORTUGAL |
| FRANCE | PLAY-OFF WINNER B | CZECHIA |

HAMBURG: This combination of pictures created shows the groups A to F being displayed on a screen after the final draw for the UEFA Euro 2024 European Championship football competition in Hamburg, northern Germany. — AFP

the tournament, will take on Serbia in their opening game in Gelsenkirchen on June 16. "I've stood here after quite a few draws and you always feel the same way, you can look at it on paper but the games aren't played on paper," Southgate told the BBC. "One or two teams that you are obviously glad to avoid, especially in pot three, pot four, but all the teams we play are more than capable."

He added: "We've developed a lot as a team over the past few years, we're used to these big games, we're ready for the expectation and we hope we can give our supporters some more brilliant nights as I think we have in the last few tournaments." If England top their group, and France also finish first in their section, the two sides would find themselves on the same side of the draw in the knockout phase and would be on course to meet in the semi-finals.

Scotland, who famously lost to Brazil in the opening match of the 1998 World Cup, will again have the honor of featuring in the tournament's

curtain-raiser when they meet Germany to start in Group A. Hungary and Switzerland complete that section, which could be one of the most evenly-matched. "It'll be nice to open the tournament, be involved in that first game, and hopefully we can set the tournament off with a good match," Scotland manager Steve Clarke told the BBC.

Germany have been European champions three times, a record shared with Spain, but there are big doubts about their form heading into the tournament. "It will be a very nice start against Scotland in Munich. The other games will also be exciting duels. It's not a group of death, but a very good one," said Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann. Euro 2016 winners Portugal were drawn in Group F with Turkey, the Czech Republic and a play-off winner from either Greece, Georgia, Luxembourg or Kazakhstan. Belgium are in Group E alongside Slovakia, Romania and the winner of the other play-off path, which will be the Zionist entity, Iceland, Bosnia and Herzegovina or Ukraine. — AFP

Strikers beat Heat, win women's Big Bash title

ADELAIDE: Tight bowling helped propel Tahlia McGrath's Adelaide Strikers to a nail-biting three-run win over Brisbane Heat for a second straight women's Big Bash League title on Saturday. Jess Jonassen's Heat restricted the Strikers to a modest 125-5 off their 20 overs after losing the bat flip at Adelaide Oval. The home side had looked on track for a decent total on 71-2 at halfway but managed just 54 runs in the last 10 overs, with a clinical Nicola Hancock the pick of the bowlers with 3-23.

Heat's hard work went to waste in the run chase, with the visitors compiling just 122-8 with player-of-the-match Amanda-Jade Wellington taking 3-16 and Megan Schutt 2-30 in a game decided on the last ball. "This is such a special team, seriously, everyone knows their roles," said skipper McGrath. "We have so much fun and we keep showing up. I'm so proud of this group." It was the Strikers' second consecutive title in the tournament's ninth season, having beaten the Sydney Sixers in last year's decider. The Strikers had a mixed start to the season but have been a near unstoppable force since, winning 10 their past 11 games. Their only loss during that run was against the Heat. "A bit emotional to be honest. A few tears out there," said Schutt. "We set out a bold goal last year to go back-to-back and to achieve it is amazing." — AFP

Classifieds

Clinics

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| Kaizen center | 25716707 |
| Rawda | 22517733 |
| Adaliya | 22517144 |
| Khaldiya | 24848075 |
| Kaifan | 24849807 |
| Shamiya | 24848913 |
| Shuwaikh | 24814507 |
| Abdullah Salem | 22549134 |
| Nuzha | 22526804 |
| Industrial Shuwaikh | 24814764 |

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| Qadsiya | 22515088 |
| Dasmah | 22532265 |
| Bneid Al-Gar | 22531908 |
| Shaab | 22518752 |
| Qibla | 22459381 |
| Ayoun Al-Qibla | 22451082 |
| Mirqab | 22456536 |
| Sharq | 22465401 |
| Salmiya | 25746401 |

Change of Name

I, **Bushra Mohamed Yusuf Gigani**, holder of Passport No. L3084351, do hereby change my name to **Bushra Usamah Zariwala** for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name **Bushra Usamah Zariwala** and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents.

3-12-2023

I, **Jawashar Basha Sarthar Kasim** holder of Indian Passport No. W7992735 having permanent address O NO 13 N No 42 New Street No 10, Thiruvannamalai, Tiruvannamalai, Pin:606601, Tamil Nadu, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: given name **Jawahar Basha** and surname **Sarthar Kasim**

3-12-2023

Liverpool maintain home record

Ten-man Chelsea shrug off a red card to edge Brighton 3-2



LIVERPOOL: Fulham's Mexican striker #07 Raul Jimenez (left) vies with Liverpool's Dutch defender #04 Virgil van Dijk during the English Premier League football match between Liverpool and Fulham at Anfield on December 3, 2023. — AFP

LONDON: Liverpool produced a sensational finish to beat Fulham in a seven-goal thriller on Sunday as high-flying Aston Villa battled back to draw against Bournemouth on a dramatic afternoon in the Premier League. Ten-man Chelsea shrugged off a red card for captain Conor Gallagher to edge Brighton 3-2 while West Ham drew 1-1 with Crystal Palace. Champions Manchester City are in action against Tottenham later on Sunday, seeking to cut Arsenal's lead at the top of the table to just one point.

Liverpool appeared set for a rare and damaging home defeat but turned the tables on Fulham at Anfield with two late goals to close within two points of the top of the

table. Trent Alexander-Arnold helped set Liverpool on their way in the 20th minute, crashing a free-kick off the underside of the bar and into the net via the unfortunate Fulham goalkeeper Bernd Leno for an own goal.

But the visitors were level just four minutes later when Harry Wilson poked Antonee Robinson's cross past goalkeeper Caoimhin Kelleher, standing in for the injured Alisson Becker. Alexis Mac Allister produced a moment of magic to restore Liverpool's lead, lashing a drive into the top corner from distance for his first goal for the club but Kenny Tete pounced from close range shortly before half-time to level.

Fulham looked set for a sensational victory when they scored in the 80th minute, with

substitute Bobby De Cordova-Reid leaping highest. However, Liverpool were not finished. Mohamed Salah blasted over from close range as the home side pushed for an equalizer, but he then turned provider for Wataru Endo, who found the net from the edge of the box in the 87th minute. A minute later they were ahead again when Alexander-Arnold drove the ball home after the ball fell to him just inside the box, sparking wild scenes at Anfield.

Vital Chelsea win

Chelsea recorded just their second Premier League home win of the season against Brighton, despite being reduced to 10 men before half-time. Chelsea were cruising

midway through first half after goals from Enzo Fernandez and Levi Colwill. Facundo Buonanotte halved the deficit for the visitors shortly before half-time but there was still time for Gallagher to pick up a second yellow card, changing the complexion of the match.

Chelsea were awarded a penalty when James Milner was adjudged to have fouled Mykhailo Mudryk and Fernandez made no mistake to restore Chelsea's two-goal cushion. Joao Pedro pulled a goal back in the 92nd minute to ramp up the pressure on Chelsea and the home fans' hearts were in their mouths when Brighton were awarded a penalty for a handball by Colwill in the 101st minute. But the referee reversed the on-field

decision after reviewing the incident on the pitchside monitor and Chelsea held on.

Ollie Watkins headed home a cross from Moussa Diaby in the 90th minute to rescue a point for Aston Villa, who remain in fourth place. Bournemouth's Antoine Semenyo opened the scoring early before a fine individual goal from Leon Bailey. Dominic Solanke put the home side back ahead early in the second half and Bournemouth looked like hanging on for a win before Watkins' late equalizer. At the London Stadium, Mohammed Kudus put West Ham ahead in the first half, before Odsonne Edouard equalised in the second period to earn a point for Crystal Palace. — AFP

Newcastle inflict more misery on Man United

LONDON: Newcastle inflicted a sixth Premier League defeat of the season on Manchester United as Arsenal beat Wolves 2-1 on Saturday to extend their lead at the top to four points. Anthony Gordon scored the only goal at St James' Park to lift Newcastle up to fifth in the table and within two points of the top four. By contrast, United slip to seventh and are still to beat any side in the top nine of the Premier League this season.

Eddie Howe's men deserved to win by a bigger margin despite missing 11 first-team players due to injury or suspension and losing goalkeeper Nick Pope late on to a shoulder problem. Kieran Trippier's free-kick came back off the underside of the bar and Alexander Isak's effort was deflected inches wide before the break.

Gordon finally made the breakthrough 10 minutes into the second period when he was picked out by Trippier to convert at the back post. "I couldn't be happier with the players tonight," said Howe after his under-strength side took seven points from three games in a week against Chelsea, Paris Saint-Germain and United. "The performances we put in against three top teams were brilliant so that will give confidence, and when we get some players back we can push on even further."

Arsenal hold on

Arsenal were made to survive a late scare despite getting off to a flying start at the Emirates. Goals from Bukayo Saka and Martin Odegaard put the Gunners 2-0 up inside 13 minutes. But they failed to put the game to bed and were made to sweat when Wolves forward Matheus Cunha found the top corner in the 86th minute to set up a tense finale. Despite the wobble, Arsenal, last year's runners-up, held on to notch their 10th win in 14 league games, which moves them four points clear of champions Manchester City, who host Tottenham on Sunday.

"I can only praise the players," said Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta. "They were excellent. We played against a really good side and generated so much and conceded almost nothing. The scoreline should have been very



NEWCASTLE: Manchester United's Brazilian midfielder #21 Antony (left) fouls Newcastle United's English defender #21 Valentino Livramento during the English Premier League football match between Newcastle United and Manchester United at St James' Park. — AFP

different. We were very unlucky because we hit the post three times I think. "At the end we made an error close to the goal - in the Premier League you get punished big time for that. Then it's game on. Overall I'm really happy with how we performed again."

Five-star Burnley

At the other end of the table, Burnley got their first home win of the season in style with a 5-0 thrashing of Sheffield United. Jay Rodriguez fired the home side ahead with just 15 seconds on the clock - the fastest goal of the season so far. Jacob Bruun Larsen extended their lead and the Blades' task was made almost impossible when Oli McBurnie received a second yellow card shortly before the break.

Zeki Amdouni, Luca Koleosho and Josh Brownhill all struck in the final 17 minutes as the floodgates opened. Paul Heckingbottom's men have now conceded five goals or more goals on three occasions this season and sink to the bottom of the table. Burnley close to within two points of safety after only their second win of the season - and Vincent Kompany said he hoped the three points would be a launch pad. "I think the guys have deserved it," he told the BBC. "They have performed well for a while. This league is brutal." — AFP

Madrid keep pace with Girona in Liga title race

GIRONA: Rodrygo continued his fine goalscoring form to help Real Madrid ease to a 2-0 win over Granada on Saturday and reclaim the lead in La Liga. After Catalan minnows Girona snatched a 2-1 win over Valencia they moved temporarily top, but Madrid slid back above them on goal difference on a tranquil evening in the capital. Brahim Diaz opened the scoring midway through the first half and Rodrygo doubled the lead after 57 minutes at the Santiago Bernabeu. The Brazilian forward has scored seven goals in his last five games across all competitions, appearing at the perfect time to keep Madrid's strong start to the season going despite various absences. Madrid are missing several key figures through injury, from goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois to winger Vinicius Junior. However Los Blancos had more than enough to sweep past the Andalusians, 19th and battling against relegation.

"(Rodrygo) has returned to his best level, scoring a lot of goals," Ancelotti told reporters. The coach reserved some praise for midfielder Toni Kroos, who set up Diaz's opener with a clever pass. "He doesn't give balls away, he always chooses the best option, he's a midfielder who wants the ball," added Ancelotti. "He is not afraid and he positions himself very well, it's his biggest virtue, his control too ... when he doesn't play, he's irreplaceable."

Without creating an excess of chances, Madrid quickly took control of the game. After 26 minutes Kroos' superb pass sent Diaz in on goal and he stayed cool to gently nudge home and put Madrid ahead. It was the former Manchester City playmaker's second goal in four matches, with Diaz showing he can help the red-hot Rodrygo fill the gap left by Vinicius' injury. "We played the football that we know, it was a nearly perfect game, we dominated the match and they created very few chances against us," Diaz told Real Madrid TV.



GIRONA: Girona's Spanish midfielder #14 Aleix Garcia (top) vies with Valencia's Spanish forward #9 Hugo Duro during the Spanish league football match between Girona FC and Valencia CF at the Montilivi stadium in Girona. — AFP

Controlled performance

Jude Bellingham, La Liga's top goalscorer with 11 strikes, could have added another just before half-time but scuffed his shot across goal, the ball bobbling wide. Madrid's second arrived after a neat team move, with Joselu and Diaz combining to tee up Bellingham. Granada goalkeeper Andre Ferreira denied the midfielder but Rodrygo galloped onto the rebound and smashed home before the hour mark - he has now netted in five consecutive matches. Atletico Madrid, third, visited champions Barcelona, fourth, on Sunday, both looking to cut down the seven-point gap on the top two.

Earlier Girona fought back brilliantly to ensure they would not drop further points in the title race after a draw against Athletic Bilbao on Monday. Trailing to Hugo Duro's 56th-minute strike with under 10 minutes remaining, Girona finally broke down Valencia's walls through veteran striker Cristhian Stuani's brace. Stuani leveled after 82 minutes and bundled home another with two minutes to go, with both goals set up by Yan Couto crosses as fans at Girona's tiny Montilivi stadium went wild. — AFP