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5 Dozens killed in Russian strike on Ukrainian city of Poltava



8 Zain awarded 'Best Corporate Governance in Kuwait' accolade



11 Beirut family keeps up dessert tradition



14 Bangladesh beat Pakistan for historic Test series win



Kuwait, UAE boost bilateral ties

FM opens new Kuwaiti Embassy • Several MoUs signed after official talks

NEWS IN BRIEF

UAE pardons 57 Bangladeshis

DUBAI: The UAE has pardoned 57 locally based Bangladeshis who were jailed for protesting against the now-toppled government in their home country, state media said Tuesday. UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan "ordered a pardon for the Bangladeshi nationals involved in... protests and disturbances across several emirates", the official Emirati news agency WAM reported. "The decision includes canceling the sentences of those convicted and arranging for their deportation," it added. — AFP

Lebanon ex-top banker arrested

BEIRUT: Lebanon's former central bank governor Riad Salameh was arrested Tuesday after being questioned over alleged embezzlement, a judicial official told AFP. The public prosecutor "arrested Salameh after questioning him for three hours on suspicions of embezzlement from the central bank exceeding \$40 million", the official said. It is the first time Salameh has appeared before Lebanon's judiciary since he left his post of 30 years at the end of July last year without a successor. — AFP

No mobile-brain cancer link

LONDON: There is no link between mobile phone use and an increased risk of brain cancer, according to a new World Health Organization-commissioned review of available published evidence worldwide. Despite the huge rise in the use of wireless technology, there has not been a corresponding increase in the incidence of brain cancers, the review, published on Tuesday, found. That applies even to people who make long phone calls or those who have used mobile phones for more than a decade. — Reuters

Zionists kill dozens in Gaza but pauses allow polio jabs

GAZA: Zionist forces killed at least 35 Palestinians across Gaza on Tuesday as they battled Hamas-led militants, Palestinian officials said, but brief pauses in fighting allowed medics to conduct a third day of polio vaccinations for children. Among those killed were four women in the southern city of Rafah and eight people near a hospital in Gaza City in the north, the Palestinian Civil Emergency Service said.

Later on Tuesday, a Zionist airstrike killed nine Palestinians inside a house near Omar Al-Mokhtar Street in the middle of Gaza City, medics said. Another strike hit near a college in Sheikh Radwan, a northern suburb of the city. Others were killed in separate air strikes across the territory, medics said. The armed wings of Hamas and Islamic Jihad said they were battling Zionist forces in the Zeitoun suburb of Gaza City, and also in Rafah and Khan Younis in the south.

Nevertheless, the World Health Organization (WHO) said that it was ahead of its targets for polio vaccinations in Gaza on Tuesday, day three

Continued on Page 6



ABU DHABI: (Left) UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan receives Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya on Sept 2, 2024. (Right) Yahya inaugurates Kuwait's new embassy alongside UAE Deputy PM and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed. — KUNA photos



ABU DHABI: UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan received Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya on Monday, where the Kuwaiti diplomat conveyed greetings from HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the Emirati president and the brotherly Emirati people for more progress and prosperity. Sheikh Mohamed extended similar greetings to HH the Amir and the Kuwaiti people. The two discussed deep-seated fraternal ties, cooperation within the GCC framework

and regional and international developments. As part of his official visit, Yahya inaugurated Kuwait's new embassy in Abu Dhabi, alongside UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed. The visit also featured the fifth session of the Kuwaiti-Emirati Joint Higher Committee, where both countries signed several memoranda of understanding and executive programs in areas such as standardization, infrastructure, IT, education, sports, culture,

cybersecurity and defense industries. Kuwait's Ambassador to the UAE Jamal Al-Ghunaim praised the inauguration of the new embassy as a symbol of the enduring brotherly relations and a commitment to enhancing cooperation, particularly in investment, economic and cultural fields. On Tuesday, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense and Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah headed to the UAE on an official visit. — KUNA (See Page 3)

Exhibition, Sadu mark 125 yrs of Kuwait-UK ties

LONDON: Kuwait Cultural Week kicked off on Tuesday in the United Kingdom under the patronage of HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. The event is part of the "Year of the Kuwaiti-British Partnership" celebrations, marking the 125th anniversary of the Anglo-Kuwaiti Agreement of 1899. The week features cultural and craft exhibitions and a musical concert highlighting the historical ties between the two nations.

Key events include the "Kuwaiti-British Relations in Travelers' Books, Historical Documents and Photographs" exhibition, organized by the Kuwait Heritage Society in collaboration with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL). Additionally, the "Bait Al-Sha'ar: A Mobile Cultural Space" event, organized by Kuwait Al-Sadu Society, highlights traditional Bedouin crafts such as Sadu weaving.

The exhibitions, held at the Kuwaiti Embassy in London, have been attended by diplomats and officials, including Deputy Minister of Foreign



LONDON: Kuwaiti Deputy FM Sheikh Jarrah Al-Sabah attends the Kuwait Cultural Week's opening ceremony on Sept 3, 2024. — KUNA

Affairs Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis. The events will continue until Sept

6, emphasizing the deep-rooted cultural and historical connections between Kuwait and the United Kingdom. — KUNA (See Page 2)

Hand in hand: Biden, Harris hit campaign trail

PITTSBURGH: US President Joe Biden and Kamala Harris campaigned together for the first time Monday, in a public display of teamwork after she replaced him as candidate and revived Democratic election hopes. Seeking to attract voters in the key battleground state of Pennsylvania, the pair met union members in Pittsburgh before standing side-by-side to speak to about 600 supporters.

Biden repeatedly name-checked Vice President Harris, who is in a close race to beat Donald Trump to the White House on Nov 5. "We have made a lot of progress, and Kamala and I are going to build on that prog-

ress, and she's going to build on it," Biden said. "I'll be on the sidelines, but I'll do everything I can to help."

The Labor Day event at the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers union underlined how Biden will play a role in the campaign in the final months before the vote. Biden, 81, initially resisted bowing out of the presidential race after his disastrous debate performance against Trump, but he has since swung behind Harris, 59. "There's only one person you have a rational choice with this time — that's Kamala Harris," he said to cheers.

"I know her. I trust her," he added. "She has a backbone like a ramrod, and the compass of a saint. This woman knows what she's doing. I promise you, if you elect Kamala Harris as president, it will be the best decision you will have ever made." Riding a wave of enthusiasm, Harris has held packed rallies across the country and raked

Continued on Page 6



PITTSBURGH: US Vice President Kamala Harris and US President Joe Biden raise their hands during a campaign event at IBEW Local Union #5 on Sept 2, 2024. — AFP



Local

Kuwait Cultural Week kicks off in UK

London exhibition showcases Kuwaiti-British relation in travel literature, documents



Opening ceremony of the Kuwait Heritage Society exhibition in London.



LONDON: Kuwait Cultural Week kicked off on Tuesday in the United Kingdom under the patronage of His Highness the Crown Prince of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. The cultural week comes as part of a series of activities between the two countries within the framework of "the Year of Kuwaiti-British Partnership." In a statement to KUNA, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah said that the events would include a number of cultural and craft exhibitions, hosted by the Kuwaiti Embassy in London.

A musical concert will be held in one of the theaters in the British capital. Ambassador Jarrah Al-Sabah pointed out that this event came as part of celebration marking the 125th anniversary of the signing of the Anglo-Kuwaiti Agreement in 1899. He praised the efforts to organize this event in London, stressing at the same time the importance of these activities in strengthening cultural and social relations between the two countries.

Kuwaiti-British relation

Honoring 125 years of Kuwaiti-British relations, the Kuwait Heritage Society or-



LONDON: The Kuwait Heritage Society, in cooperation with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), organized an exhibition on Kuwaiti-British relations in travelers' books, documents and photos at the Kuwaiti embassy in London as part of the Kuwait Cultural Week.



ganized an exhibition in cooperation with the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters (NCCAL). In remarks to KUNA, President of Kuwait Heritage Society Fahad Al-Abduljalil affirmed Kuwaiti-British bilateral relations. 'Travelers' books, historical documents, and photographs were displayed at the exhibition.

"The relation between Kuwait and the

United Kingdom is deeply rooted since the late Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah signed the Anglo-Kuwaiti agreement in 1899," Al-Abduljalil added. The exceptional relationship between the two countries increased Kuwait's trade, especially with India. In 1904, Captain SG Knox arrived in Kuwait, serving as London's first political representative, and after 20 other successful British

agents, the late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah announced the cancellation of the treaty by signing Kuwait's declaration of independence in 1961.

Kuwaiti heritage researcher Hani Al-Asousi and Associate Professor of Archaeology and Anthropology Hasan Ashkanani were key members in the exhibition as they explained these documents. The

exhibition — which lasts until September 6 — was attended by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Dean of the Arab Diplomatic Corps and Bahraini Ambassador to the United Kingdom Shaikh Fawaz bin Mohammed Al-Khalifa, British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis, and other officials. — KUNA



The Bait Al-Sha'ar: A mobile cultural space. — KUNA photos



Traditional old Kuwaiti art of Sadu weaving.

Bait Al-Sha'ar promotes Kuwait cultural heritage and hospitality

LONDON: The Bait Al-Sha'ar: A Mobile Cultural Space event was launched within the Kuwait Cultural Week in the United Kingdom as part of Kuwait's celebrations on the 125th anniversary of the Kuwaiti-British partnership. This event, organized by the Kuwait Al-Sadu Society at the Kuwait Embassy late Monday, highlighted the role of the Bait Al-Sha'ar (a tent made from Camel's hair) in promoting values of Kuwaiti cultural heritage and hospitality, providing opportunities to enjoy, learn about, and participate in some Bedouin arts like Sadu weaving.

The organizers of the event, led by the society's representative Rawan Al-Otaibi, provided free brief guided tours and workshops on sadu weaving, with the participation of the two Kuwaiti craftswomen Sharifa Bo Shalifa and Sittha Al-Marri. In a statement to KUNA, British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis praised the event, saying that it showcased the ancient traditional craft of weaving, practiced by Bedouin women in the past, and the various materials used in it.

In a similar statement, Sharifa Bo Shalifa told



KUNA that the celebrations of the 125th anniversary of the Kuwaiti-British partnership provided a good opportunity to highlight the Bedouin culture in Kuwait to the exhibition's visitors and the craft of weaving Sadu, which was used in the construction of Bait Al-Sha'ar, inhabited by families in the desert. The opening of the exhibition, which continues until September 6, was attended by the Dean of the Arab Diplomatic Corps, Ambassador of Bahrain to the United Kingdom Sheikh Fawaz Al-Khalifa, the UK Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis, and several ambassadors and senior officials. — KUNA

slogan 'Promoting the One Health Approach'.

The celebration slogan was approved by the Council of Arab Health Ministers in its regular session, which was held in Geneva on May 26, which included the first paragraph approving Egypt's request to host the celebration, noting that choosing September 4 of each year as Arab Health Day is in line with the activities marking the anniversary of the founding of the Council of Arab Health Ministers.

Abu-Ghazaleh explained that the One Health Approach is an integrated approach that aims to achieve a balance between human and animal health and uses the close and interconnected links between these fields to create new methods for monitoring and combating diseases to improve global health, as lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. — KUNA



250 tons of local fish sold for KD 631,000

KUWAIT: The Central Statistical Administration (CSA) said Tuesday that the quantities of local fish sold during the second quarter of this year amounted to 250 tons, with a total value of about KD 631,000 (around \$2 million) at wholesale prices. The CSA added in its quarterly bulletin on the total quantities and values of local fish sold for the second quarter of this year. The average kilogram recorded KD 2.52 in the second quarter.

It explained that the total quantities of local fish in April amounted to a value of KD 232,700 (around \$767,000) according to wholesale prices in the aforementioned month, while the total quantities in May amounted to a value of KD 237,900 (around \$785,000). It indicated that the quantities of local fish sold in June amounted to a value of KD 160,000 (around \$528,000). The administration's statistics include 25 different types of fish. It is worth noting that the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources sets fishing dates in order to give them a chance to reproduce and turn them into a sustainable wealth for the country. — KUNA



Arab League promotes 'One Health Approach'

CAIRO: The Arab League stressed on Tuesday the importance of activating the One Health approach at all national, regional, and global levels to ensure a healthy, safe, and dignified life for humans while preserving the health of animals and the environment alike to reduce the risk of disease and epidemic outbreaks. Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the Social Affairs Sector at the Arab League, Ambassador Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, said in a statement that Arab countries celebrate on Wednesday, September 4, Arab Health Day, which comes this year under the

Local

Kuwait, UAE hold official talks, sign several MoUs

Ambassador to UAE praises brotherly relations



Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya during the inauguration of the new Kuwaiti embassy in the UAE capital, Abu Dhabi. — KUNA photos



Kuwait, UAE officials hold talks, sign several MoUs.

ABU DHABI: Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates held on Monday the fifth session of the joint supreme committee between the two countries in the Emirati capital, Abu Dhabi. In a statement, the Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the Kuwaiti delegation was headed by Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya, while the UAE delegation was headed by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed.

The statement noted that during the meeting, joint official talks were held and aspects of bilateral cooperation between all sectors in the two countries were reviewed, including areas of development and growth in various fields that serve the two countries and their peoples. It stated that the work of the joint committee culminated in the signing of a number of agreements within the framework of memoranda of understanding and executive programs that reflect the determination of the two brotherly countries to strengthen the close bond between them in various vital and important fields.

The signing of a memorandum of understanding between the two countries in the field of standardization activities, a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the field of infrastructure, a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the field of communications and information technology, the executive program for educational cooperation between the two sides 2024-2027, and also an executive program in the field of sports for the years. The two sides also signed MoUs in the field of cybersecurity, procurement and defense industries, and signed the minutes of the joint committee between the two countries.

Earlier, Al-Yahya reviewed with UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed the historic relations that bind the two countries and ways to enhance and develop them in all fields. This came within the framework of the official visit that Minister Al-Yahya is making to



head Kuwait's delegation to the fifth session of the Kuwaiti-Emirati Joint Higher Committee in the capital, Abu Dhabi.

Kuwait's Ambassador to the UAE, Jamal Al-Ghunaim, hailed on Monday the deep-rooted brotherly relations that ties Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates and the commitment of both to bolstering the historical bilateral relations. The ambassador made the remarks, following the inauguration of the new Kuwaiti embassy in the UAE capital, Abu

Dhabi, as he affirmed the importance of enhancing bilateral cooperation in various fields, particularly in investment, economic, and cultural sectors.

Al-Ghunaim stated that the opening of the new embassy is "a distinguished architectural landmark in the capital Abu Dhabi, which reflects Kuwait's dedication to strengthening its presence and relations with the UAE. It also enables us to provide better services to all visiting and resident citizens and to work on enhancing bilateral cooperation in various fields." The new building is not just a diplomatic headquarters but a symbol of the strong historical and familial bonds that connect our two brotherly peoples and the principle of 'Our Gulf is One.'

It reflects our shared values and aspirations for a brighter future," noting the importance of the strategic partnership between the two nations. Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya inaugurated the new Kuwaiti embassy in Abu Dhabi earlier Monday, in the presence of UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and the rest of the Kuwaiti delegation as part of the official visit. — KUNA



The new Kuwaiti embassy in the UAE capital, Abu Dhabi.

Students claim KD 200 allowance is insufficient to meet their needs

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti university students enjoy the benefit of receiving a monthly student allowance of KD 200. However, due to rising prices and the increased cost of living affecting every aspect of life, this amount of financial support has become insufficient for many students. They argue that the allowance is often spent before the end of the month and are calling for an increase of at least KD 100 to help cover their financial needs. Kuwait Times spoke to three students from different universities in Kuwait to look into their needs.

Mariam Boushehri, student at Kuwait University, Faculty of Arts, said: "We are very grateful for the benefit our country provides us with, which makes many things easier. However, today the allowance almost runs out before the next month's allowance is due. We heard rumors some time ago about an increase in the student allowance from KD 200 to KD



300, and students were very hopeful, but unfortunately, this decision was not implemented. Perhaps in the past, the allowance was sufficient or even exceeded students' needs and monthly expenses, but today everything is becoming more expensive, so I believe that increasing the student's allowance has become necessary to ease students' lives."

On the other hand, Yaqoub, who recently graduated from a private university in Kuwait, shared his view based on his personal experience as a student: "The allowance is like a monthly support for university students. After entering university and receiving the student allowance, I no longer asked my parents for financial support since I received KD 200 monthly, which was expected to be sufficient, but

unfortunately, it was not. Personally, I did not own a car as a student and I spent my university years using taxis, which cost me about KD 8 to KD 10 daily for transportation to and from the university. This consumed a significant portion of my allowance, not to mention the expenses for food within the campus because I had to stay at the university for long hours until I completed all my lectures before returning home. Therefore, I strongly advocate for an increase in the student allowance, especially for those who do not own a car during their studies. I also believe that even those who drive need an increase since they spend part of their allowance on fuel."

Zainab Dashti highlighted the major expenses consuming a significant portion of the student allowance. She mentioned that a large part is spent on supplementary courses and private tutoring, which many students need to meet the requirements of their academic majors and achieve good grades. She noted that while some might be lenient about the expenses needed while on campus, the costs of food and drinks from campus cafés take up a large part of the allowance. She agreed with Yaqoub regarding transportation costs and also mentioned the need to buy more clothes, as there is no uniform at the university, which means more shopping, especially for female students. Although some may see these needs as trivial, they are not insignificant to university students.

Kuwait, Jordan seek to modernize, boost security systems

AMMAN: Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior for Special Security Affairs Major General Abdullah Al-Mulla on Tuesday underscored the existing cooperation between the Kuwaiti and Jordanian security agencies in combating terrorism and riot control, stressing the importance of building on and developing it. This came in a statement made by Al-Mulla to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) following his participation, as a representative of the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior, and Minister of Defense Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Saud Al-Sabah, in the opening of the Special Operations Equipment Exhibition and Conference (SOFEX 2024) in the Jordanian city of Aqaba.

Al-Mulla pointed out Kuwait's Interior Ministry's keenness to implement the directives of the wise political leadership to develop and modernize the security system, enhance it, and support its members with all possible means in a way that serves the national interest. Regarding Kuwait's Interior Ministry's participation in the SOFEX exhibition, he said that the Kuwaiti delegation watched a Jordanian military parade on combating terrorism, which witnessed the use of modern technology, equipment,



Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior for Special Security Affairs Major General Abdullah Al-Mulla, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Jordan and Kuwaiti security delegation participating in the exhibition are pictured during the event. — KUNA

and new weapons in the field of combating terrorism. He pointed out that the delegation was briefed on the Jordanian K9 unit, which is a specialized police dog unit that supports security patrols to pursue wanted persons and arrest smugglers and terrorists, noting the Ministry's interest in adding it to the work of its special forces. Major General Al-Mulla said that participating in the exhibition represents an opportunity to view the pavilions of other countries and the advanced weapons that rely on new technology.

Earlier on Tuesday, Jordanian King Abdullah II

inaugurated the Special Operations Equipment Exhibition and Conference (SOFEX 2024) in Aqaba under the slogan 'Cooperation and Convergence to Consolidate Global Security' with the participation of 73 countries and more than 300 international companies specializing in defense and security industries. The opening was attended by Major General Al-Mulla, the Kuwaiti Ambassador to Jordan Hamad Al-Marri, the military attaché at the Kuwaiti embassy, Brigadier General Muhammad Al-Ayada, and a security delegation from the Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior. — KUNA

In my view

Who's still supporting Netanyahu and why?



By Hussain Sana

hussain.sana@kuwaittimes.com

Benjamin Netanyahu, the enemy's prime minister, might carry the adorable nickname of "Bibi" in Hebrew (and English by default, due to the Hebrew influence). However, in Arabic, his common name is "Neten" [stinky]. Since October 7, international media coverage has increasingly highlighted how unpopular he is. Criticizing Neten in this "antisemitic" (whatever antisemitism means these days) sense includes American media like The Atlantic, Time and The Economist, among other magazines and platforms, which is very odd and unusual for such media platforms.

Questioning the popularity of Neten has also been increasingly noticeable in Zionist local media. This raises a question: If Neten is so unpopular, how come he is still in power? And how dare all these media and journalism institutions engage in such "antisemitic" discourse by criticizing the Zionist prime minister?

By now, the Likud chairman has been in power longer than Ben Gurion, for over a total of 16 years. His political survival has exceeded many of his Zionist rival politicians and has aligned of late with the shift of Zionist local politics further towards the right, a fascist regime that shifted further towards fascism. The Zionist entity under Neten's policies expanded settlements significantly, in a move towards annexing the West Bank (maybe for good, to demonstrate how unrealistic the two-state solution is).

Neten enabled Zionist supremacists and included them in his government. He recently gave his fourth speech at the US Congress, surrounded by applause and cheers this time, despite the absence of many Democrats. As far as I know, this is the highest number of speeches any foreign leader has given in Congress!

However, Neten's political career seems to be on the decline. The unpopular judicial adjustment that he introduced sparked one of the largest protests in the Zionist entity that accused him of trying to place the judiciary under his political influence. Before October 7, his actions seemed to aim at tweaking public matters to protect himself from a very real threat of imprisonment over corruption charges, going as far as allying with the ultra-Orthodox and far-right parties.

He failed domestically in providing the expected support to tens of thousands of Zionists displaced after October 7. Photos of his son Yair Netanyahu enjoying the beaches in Miami led to controversy, while other Zionist youths were sent to Gaza in military operations. Instead of holding himself accountable for the Zionist security failure on October 7, Neten blamed the heads of the army, Shin Bet and other security apparatuses.

Neten's diplomacy has also witnessed a setback, as foreign relations deteriorated with multiple countries, and the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for him and his "defense" minister Gallant, for obvious war crimes in Gaza. Polls have shown all-time low levels of Neten's unpopularity amongst Zionists.

Who is still supporting Neten then? How come he is still in power? There are the far-right partners in the government who are lobbying to rebuild the settlements in Gaza after displacing its Palestinians. There are also the ultra-Orthodox groups that are still supporting him, as long as he prevents the drafting of their youth into the "secular" army.

While many Zionists are protesting the war and on not negotiating the prisoners' return, the close allies of Neten such as Ben Gvir and Smotrich threatened to topple the government if the war ends. Since wars are exceptional times, Neten might manage to run forward and escape any accountability.

Neten might be losing ground but his politics resonate with most Zionists. The settler society (all settler colonizers, on all of Palestine) might dislike Neten, but support the war in Gaza. In one recent poll, 63 percent of Zionists do not support the creation of an independent and demilitarized Palestinian state. They are right in their decisions, as independence and liberation are matters that are obtained with blood and force — they are not given as gifts.

It is common consensus that many Zionists still want "victory in the war against Hamas" and "military pressure to be applied to Hamas so that it agrees to acceptable conditions for the release of prisoners". The Gaza death toll and destruction do not mean much to the Zionists, who are indifferent to Palestinian suffering. Accusations of genocide and war crimes are viewed as "antisemitism" rather than facts. Neten is not imposed upon this society, but rather an actual "democratic" representative of it.

While the colonial supremacist movement of Zionism is doomed to fail by laws of history, many pro-Zionists across the globe want to scapegoat Neten as the carrier of the current crimes and guilts. So that when this round is over, and he is ousted from power, this colonial project carries on for the next round. Neten is guilty of the crimes of now, but so is the whole Zionist project, and its American, European and Arab supporters. Neten is guilty, but so was Olmert, and so is that Arab news channel that hosted him during the current war to brand him as a moderate. These are all different shades of Zionism, and we are aware.

Local

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P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.

Email: info@kuwaittimes.com

Website: www.kuwaittimes.com

SACGC opens
registration for
AI program in US

KUWAIT: Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity (SACGC) announced on Tuesday the opening of registration for the artificial intelligence (AI) innovative program in partnership with Bridge the Mind institution in Silicon Valley, San Francisco. Director General of the Center Neda Al-Daihani told KUNA that this program comes in the framework of the center's commitment to promote innovation and support Kuwaiti inventors regionally and internationally as well as encourage the spirit of talent and creativity.



The ten-day program - which begins from November 18 till 27 - aims to support Kuwaiti inventors to deeply recognize the American markets, develop their innovative strategies, and networking with key successful partners in the United States, Al-Daihani added. He also noted that the program is organized by the most prominent innovations centers in the world, which offers many benefits to the participants, including one-on-one sessions with experts, overview of the US markets, as well as other exceptional opportunities.



Al-Daihani further said the registration is open for Kuwaiti inventors who own a product in either Minimum Viable Product (MVP) version or Beta-version, as the priority would be for innovative ideas in education, health, water and food security, energy, and digital transformation. He called for all young Kuwaiti inventors to apply and participate, affirming that the program is an extraordinary opportunity to expand their business globally. He expressed his excitement with this program, and its great offers and benefits for the Kuwaiti inventors. Al-Daihani urged inventors to visit the website for more information at (<https://sacgc.org/en/ai-program-sv/>). — KUNA

Vaccination campaign continues

MoH ensures health and safety of citizens and residents

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Health's official spokesman, Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad, said that the seasonal winter vaccination campaign continues throughout the winter season and includes the influenza vaccine, which provides protection against four main types of the virus. More than one million doses of it have been given in Kuwait in recent years.

Al-Sanad added in a press statement on Tuesday on the occasion of the launch of the seasonal winter vaccination campaign for the ninth year in a row. The program also includes vaccination against pneumococcal bacteria, as more than one and a half million doses have been administered in the country since 2007. He explained that seasonal microbes are microorganisms that may include bacteria and viruses, and their concentration and types change with the change of seasons and differ from others.

He stated that these microbes are more active and widespread in certain seasons, which makes prevention and combating them imperative, pointing to the spread of influenza, bacterial pneumonia, and colds during the winter, while cases of food poisoning due



Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad

to Salmonella bacteria increase in the summer. The influenza virus infects about one billion people annually around the world, with children under five and the elderly over 65 being the most vulnerable to the complications.

This virus also causes the death of about half a million people annually worldwide. Al-Sanad pointed out the danger of pneumococcal bacteria, which causes several diseases, including pneumonia, bacterial meningitis, bacterial blood poisoning, and even otitis media. He stressed that this bacteria causes the death of about 40 cases annually in Kuwait alone, adding that seasonal winter microbes are active in the country from mid-September to May and are at their peak from October to March.

He pointed out that the Ministry of Health attaches utmost importance to preventing these diseases, indicating that when looking at public health or when assessing the risks of contracting diseases, it is necessary not to assume that all members of society are exposed to the same level of risk of contracting diseases. There are groups more vulnerable to these diseases, including children, the elderly, healthcare providers, those with chronic diseases, pregnant women, and those with low immunity, so prevention and health-care for these groups require special attention.

Al-Sanad stressed that the Ministry of Health aims, through these efforts, to protect all segments of society and ensure the health and safety of citizens and residents alike, based on its duties and responsibilities in preserving public health in the country and adopting means of prevention and treatment of diseases and epidemics. He pointed out that vaccinations are available in preventive health departments in hospitals and a large number of specialized centers and primary health care centers throughout the country. — KUNA



Officials from Al-Salam Society for Humanitarian and Charity Work. — KUNA photos

Kuwait's 11th
air bridge flight
departs to Sudan

KUWAIT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced on Tuesday that its 11th air bridge plane took off heading to Port Sudan International Airport, loaded with 10 tons of various aid relief supplies. It was or-

ganized by the Al-Salam Society for Humanitarian and Charity Work in cooperation with Kuwait's Ministry of Social Affairs, Defense and Foreign Affairs and the Sudanese authorities. The Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Society, Khaled Al-Furajj, confirmed to KUNA before the take-off that the efforts of Al-Salam Society continue to support the people of Sudan and provide all the necessary humanitarian needs, especially food, in light of the situation of more than 25 million people in Sudan who are facing acute hunger and displacement. Al-Furajj pointed out that these supplies will help the people in Sudan and provide assistance in order to overcome the crises and disasters. — KUNA



An ambulance is being loaded onto the plane.

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Interior seizes drugs,
guns; nabs suspects

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Interior announced on Tuesday the seizure of about 24 kilograms of various drugs, about 28,500 psychotropic pills, six unlicensed firearms and ammunition, and a huge sum of money from seven suspects. The General Department of Security Relations and Media at the Ministry said in a press statement that security personnel carried out intensive and continuous campaigns to arrest drug and psychotropic substance dealers as part of ongoing efforts to protect the country and fight drug-related crimes.

The suspects have been referred to the competent

authorities for necessary legal actions against them. The Ministry of Interior will continue to monitor and follow up on the movements of anyone trying to trade narcotics in the country. It called on everyone to cooperate with security personnel and report any suspicious activities via the emergency phone (112) or the hotline of the General Department for Combating Drugs (1884141).

Environment Police

In another development, the Ministry of Interior, represented by the Environment Police, announced on Tuesday the arrest of a number of people for violating the laws regulating camel herding. A number of environmental violations were recorded and 22 camels were seized. The Ministry said in a press statement that the violating camel herders were referred to the Public Prosecution for further necessary legal measures. — KUNA

Money supply
decreases to
KD 39.9 billion

KUWAIT: The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced on Tuesday that the broad money supply (M2) decreased by 0.4 percent to KD 39.9 billion (around \$131 billion) in July on a monthly basis. The bank's Economic Research Department told KUNA that private sector deposits in local banks in dinars decreased by 0.3 percent to KD 36.5 billion (around \$120.6 billion).

It added that private sector deposits in foreign currencies decreased by 1.2 percent to KD 1.82 billion (around \$6 billion), while the total balances of local banks' claims on the CBK in dinars, represented by CBK bonds, decreased by 6.8 percent to KD 2.7 billion (around \$8.9 billion). The total assets of local

banks decreased by 0.7 percent in July to KD 87.9 billion (about \$290 billion), while net foreign assets of local banks increased by 1 percent to KD 13.4 billion (about \$44 billion).

It stated that time deposits at the Central Bank increased by 9.7 percent to KD 1.1 billion (about \$3.6 billion) in July, while cash credit facilities (loans) decreased by 0.8 percent to KD 55.3 billion (about \$182.4 billion). It indicated that the average interest rates on one-year treasury bonds stabilized at 4.625 percent in July, while financing of Kuwaiti imports increased by 24 percent to KD 786.4 million (about \$2.5 billion). The average exchange rate of the US dollar against the dinar decreased by 0.2 percent to 305.9 fils.

Money supply in its narrow sense means the volume of current transactions and includes paper and metal currencies that people use in their daily transactions and money deposited in banks in the form of current accounts or demand deposits, while money supply in its broad sense includes, in addition to current money, time deposit accounts and savings accounts. — KUNA



Hong Kong's flag carrier grounds Airbus planes after engine issues

Venezuela issues arrest warrant for opposition leader Gonzalez

Page 6

Page 7



KYIV: A man places flowers to commemorate fallen Ukrainian military members at the "Wall of Remembrance of the Fallen for Ukraine" in Kyiv, on August 29, 2024, on the Day Of Remembrance for Ukrainian Defenders. — AFP

51 killed in deadliest Russian attack on Ukraine in 2024

Ukraine says Russian strike hit military institute; cadets, soldiers may be victims

KYIV: At least 51 people were killed and 235 wounded when Russia struck a military institute in Ukraine's central town of Poltava with two ballistic missiles on Tuesday, the war's deadliest single attack this year. Photographs posted on social media showed several bodies of young men on the ground covered in dust and debris, with the badly damaged side of a large building behind them. Reuters could not immediately verify the images. "The Russian scum will definitely be held accountable for this strike," President Volodymyr Zelensky said on the Telegram messaging app. He ordered a full and prompt investigation, saying the strike damaged a building of the Military Institute of Communications. A further 15 people may still be under the rubble, according to Poltava regional governor Filip Proinin. "Every 15-20 minutes there are 'minutes of silence' to listen out for people who are under the rubble," Oleksandr Khorunzhyi, press officer of the emergency services, said in televised comments.

Officials did not immediately disclose the identity of the victims, but Ukrainian military bloggers suggested some might be cadets or mobilized men undergoing training. Serhiy Beskrestnov, a blogger specializing in communications and electronic warfare, posted a tribute to "my signals operator comrades". The use of ballistic missiles — which hit targets hundreds of kilometers away within a few minutes of their launch — meant the victims had little time to find cover after the air raid siren sounded, the foreign ministry said. "This is a stunning tragedy for all of Ukraine. The enemy hit an educational institution and a hospital," Ukraine's first lady, Olena Zelenska, wrote on X. Some Ukrainians left worried messages on the institute's Facebook page seeking information about their loved ones. "One of the institute's buildings was partially destroyed, and many people were trapped under the rubble," the defense ministry said on Telegram. "Thanks to the coordinated work of rescuers and medics, 25 people were rescued, 11 of whom

were taken from the rubble. The rescuers are currently continuing their work." Russia did not immediately comment on the attack. **Increase in missile strikes** Russia has intensified its missile and drone attacks on Ukraine two-and-a-half years into the full-scale war. Last week Ukraine was pummeled with the heaviest bombardment to date, and on Monday ballistic and cruise missiles targeted Kyiv causing loud explosions. Ukraine also targeted Russia with more than 158 drones at the weekend, damaging an oil refinery near Moscow and a power station. Fighting has intensified over the past month, with Russian forces advancing in eastern Ukraine, while Kyiv's troops have mounted their first large-scale cross-border assault into Russia. Moscow has vowed to retaliate for the incursion into the Kursk region. Zelensky repeated his calls for more Western air defenses and urged allies to allow their long-range

weapons to be used for strikes deeper into Russian territory in order to protect Ukraine. "We keep telling everyone in the world who has the power to stop this terror: air defense systems and missiles are needed in Ukraine, not in a warehouse somewhere. "Long-range strikes that can protect us from Russian terror are needed now, not some time later. Unfortunately, every day of delay means loss of life." In Poltava, some 300 km (186 miles) southeast of Kyiv and 120 km to the nearest Russian border, governor Proinin said about 150 residents had donated blood for the wounded. Local authorities announced three days of mourning. Defense Ministry spokesman Dmytro Lazutkin told national TV that classes at the institute were underway at the time of the attack. He said the alarm sounded at 09:08 local time (0608 GMT) prompting people to rush the shelter. "A few minutes after the air alert, explosions sounded," he said, adding that there were no parades going on at the time. — Reuters

Mongolia rolls out red carpet for Putin despite ICC warrant

ULAANBAATAR, Mongolia: Russian President Vladimir Putin was welcomed by honor guards and red carpets in the Mongolian capital on Tuesday on his first visit to an International Criminal Court (ICC) member since it issued a warrant for his arrest last year. Putin landed in Ulaanbaatar on Monday night at the start of a high-profile trip seen as a show of defiance against the court, Kyiv, the West and rights groups that have all called for him to be detained. He met Mongolian President Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh on Tuesday at Ulaanbaatar's imposing Genghis Khan Square, also known as Sukhbaatar Square, where a band played martial tunes and both national anthems. The Russian leader praised Mongolia's "respectful attitude" and told Khurelsukh the two nations had "close positions" on "many current international issues". Putin is wanted by the Hague-based ICC for the alleged illegal deportation of Ukrainian children since his troops invaded the country in 2022. Ukraine has reacted furiously to the trip, accusing Mongolia of "sharing responsibility" for Putin's "war crimes" after authorities did not detain him at the airport. "Today, Putin humiliated Mongolia by cynically using it as a bargaining chip in his geopolitical game," Ukrainian Prosecutor General Andriy Kostin said on social media platform X. "By refusing to arrest Putin, Mongolia has deliberately jeopardized its international standing," he said. The ICC said last week all its members had an "obligation" to detain those sought by the court. In practice, there is little that can be done if Ulaanbaatar does not comply. A vibrant democracy situated between authoritarian giants Russia and China, Mongolia enjoys close cultural links to Moscow as well as a critical trading relationship with Beijing. On the streets of Ulaanbaatar, Altanbayar Altankhuyag, a 26-year-old economist, told AFP it would have been "immoral and improper" to arrest Putin. "China and Russia both are very important to us as neighbors," he said.



ULAANBAATAR: Russia's President Vladimir Putin and Mongolia's President Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh walk past honor guards during an official welcoming ceremony in Ulaanbaatar on September 3, 2024 in this Sputnik photo. — AFP

'No chance' of arrest

Mongolia was under Moscow's sway during the Soviet era but has sought to keep friendly relations with both the Kremlin and Beijing since the Soviet collapse in 1991. It has not condemned Russia's offensive in Ukraine and has abstained during votes on the conflict at the United Nations. The Kremlin said last week it was not concerned that Putin would be arrested during the visit. "Obviously there was no chance of arresting Putin," Bayarikhagva Munkhnaran, a political analyst and former adviser on Mongolia's National Security Council, told AFP. "In Ulaanbaatar's view the current ICC warrant-related scandal is a passing matter compared to the need to maintain secure and predictable relations with the Kremlin," he said. **'War criminal' Putin** Genghis Khan Square was decked out with huge Mongolian and Russian flags for Putin's first visit to the country in five years. The two leaders

stood near Mongolian soldiers in traditional costume, some of them on horseback. A small group of protesters had gathered there a day earlier, with demonstrators holding a sign demanding "Get war criminal Putin out of here". Tight security prevented another protest planned for Tuesday from getting near Putin. Tsatsral Bat-Ochir of the NoWar movement said she and other activists had been held by police for trying to protest against Putin's visit. "We tried to protest against war criminal Putin, but then here we were illegally detained for five hours," she told AFP. Police Colonel N Batbayar said the activists had been held for ignoring warnings against entering a "security area established on the square during Putin's visit". "This was not an arrest," he told AFP, adding that seven people had been taken in to give statements. Other protesters gathered about a block from the Monument for the Politically Repressed, which honors those who suffered under Mongolia's decades-long Soviet-backed communist rule. — AFP

China school bus crashes into parents, students, killing 11

BEIJING: A school bus ploughed into a crowd of people outside a middle school in eastern China on Tuesday, killing 11 parents and students, state media reported. State broadcaster CCTV said the driver "lost control" of the vehicle as it approached the school in Shandong province's Tai'an city at 7:27 am (2327 GMT Monday). The bus ran into a group of parents and children on the side of the road, according to CCTV. "As of now, (the incident) has caused the deaths of 11 people, of whom six were parents and five were students," the broadcaster reported in an update just after 11:30 am. It said one other person was in a "critical" condition, while the vital signs of another 12 people were "stable". Photos and videos circulating on social media showed people in blood-soaked clothes lying in the road near a hulking grey bus. Several adults knelt over children sprawled unmoving on the ground, while other people could be heard screaming in the background. "They're all dead, it's so heart-breaking," a woman's voice could be heard saying off-camera in one clip of the aftermath of the crash. "I'd have been killed too if I'd stood there, but luckily I ran away fast," she said. AFP was able to geolocate several of the social media photos and videos to the school in Shandong where the crash took place. The driver was being held by local police and the cause of the incident was "under investigation", CCTV said. Many public schools in China reopened for the new academic year this week. Deadly traffic accidents occur frequently in the country due to lax safety standards and widespread disorderly driving. In July, police said a vehicle crashed into pedestrians in the central city of Changsha, killing eight people and injuring five. A 55-year-old suspect living in the area was detained pending an investigation, but it was not clear if the incident was intentional or not. — AFP

International

Venezuela issues arrest warrant for opposition leader Gonzalez

Leader accused of conspiracy; warrant considered major escalation in crackdown on opposition

CARACAS: Venezuela's attorney general's office said on Monday a court has issued an arrest warrant for opposition leader Edmundo Gonzalez, accusing him of conspiracy and other crimes amid a dispute over whether he or President Nicolas Maduro won a July election. Attorney general Tarek Saab shared a photo of the warrant with Reuters via a message on the application Telegram.

The issue of an arrest warrant against Gonzalez would amount to a major escalation in Maduro's government's crackdown against the opposition following the disputed election. Venezuela's national electoral authority and its top court have said Maduro was the victor of the July 28 election with just over half of the votes, but tallies shared by the opposition show a resounding victory for Gonzalez.

The warrant follows weeks of comments from top government officials saying Gonzalez and other members of the opposition should go to jail. "This man has the nerve to say he doesn't recognize laws, he doesn't recognize anything. What's up with that? That's unacceptable," Maduro said in a broadcast on state television. "Citizens agree that laws have to work and that officials do their job."

The opposition, some Western countries and international bodies like a United Nations panel of experts have said the vote was not transparent and demanded publication of full tallies, with some outright decrying fraud. A Gonzalez spokesperson said they were awaiting any notification of a warrant but made

no further comment. The opposition has always denied any wrongdoing. "They have lost all notion of reality," opposition leader Maria Corina Machado said on X. "Threatening the President-elect will only achieve more cohesion and increase the support of Venezuelans and the world for Edmundo Gonzalez."

The opposition has published what it says are copies of over 80 percent of ballot box-level tallies on a public website, while the electoral council says a cyber attack on election night has prevented its publication of the full tallies. The warrant request appeared to be the government's latest salvo in what the opposition says is a crackdown on dissent.

Saab has also launched criminal probes into Machado and the opposition vote tally website itself and detentions of opposition figures and protesters have continued in the weeks since the vote. Protests have led to at least 27 deaths and some 2,400 arrests.

Gonzalez ignored three summons to testify about the website, allowing a warrant to potentially be issued for him in that case. The warrant was issued after prosecutor Luis Ernesto Duenez requested Gonzalez be arrested for usurpation of functions, falsification of public documents, instigation to disobey the law, conspiracy and association, all allegedly committed against the Venezuela state.

Lawyers consulted by Reuters said that Venezuelan law does not allow those over 70 to serve sentences in jails, instead requiring house arrest. Gonzalez, who turned 75 last week, is married and has two daughters: one lives in



CARACAS: A woman covers her face with a Venezuelan flag during a rally called by the opposition in Caracas on August 28, 2024. — AFP

Caracas and the other lives in Madrid. The US has drafted a list of about 60 Venezuelan government officials and family members who could be sanctioned in the first punitive measures following the election, two people close to the matter told Reuters.

Since the vote, the ruling party-controlled national assembly passed a law tightening rules on NGOs and unions denounced alleged forced resignations of state employees espousing pro-opposition views. The warrant request came hours af-

ter the Biden administration said an aircraft used by Maduro had been confiscated in the Dominican Republic after determining that its purchase violated US sanctions, a move the Venezuelan government slammed as an act of "piracy." — Reuters

Student's murder inflames immigration debate in southern US

ATHENS, United States: Along the edge of a peaceful lake in the southern US state of Georgia, a pile of sneakers forms a makeshift memorial to Laken Riley, a nursing student who was murdered nearby while out on a morning jog. Riley's death, blamed on a 26-year-old undocumented migrant from Venezuela, has catalyzed the immigration debate in Georgia, one of the key swing states in November's US presidential election. "It makes me afraid for myself," said Emma Turner, a 23-year-old university student in Athens, the site of the murder 90 minutes east of Atlanta.

Riley's body was found in a wooded area near a lake on the University of Georgia campus, and authorities determined the 22-year-old died of blunt force trauma to the head and asphyxiation. The suspect was charged with murder, aggravated assault and intent to rape Riley, a student at Augusta University in Athens.

As hundreds flocked to a vigil to honor her life, Riley's death was quickly pulled into the debate over immigration that has split the country. For Turner, Riley's murder should not be seen through the lens of immigration. "We need to look at him as an individual, as a person," she said, referring to the suspect. "America was founded on the basis of freedom for people to come."

But to Will Schlieff, the problem is the policy that allowed him into the country. "The dude that killed her, he came across the border," said the 20-year-old physics student at the University of Georgia. "How is this not a political issue? So that totally goes into my vote in November," Schlieff added, asserting that the suspect was released from an overcrowded detention center in Texas "because there's so many people coming across."

'Say her name'

Both Democrats and Republicans are battling for votes in Georgia, a state that Joe Biden



ATHENS: A memorial to Laken Riley at Lake Allyn Herrick on the campus of the University of Georgia on June 7, 2024, in Athens, Georgia. — AFP

won over Donald Trump four years ago by the thinnest of margins — 12,000 votes. Trump, the Republican presidential nominee who made a border wall with Mexico a major element of his first White House bid, mentioned Riley specifically at the party's national convention in July and spent time there with her parents.

Republicans have spotlighted other deaths blamed on undocumented immigrants, including that of 12-year-old Jocelyn Nungaray who was strangled and dumped in a Houston creek in June. Two Venezuelan migrants face murder charges in the case. At his campaign rallies, Trump slams immigrants as "killers, drug dealers and human traffickers" who have been released by the "hundreds of thousands" to "invade" the United States, placing the blame squarely at the feet of his election rival, Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris. According to several studies, however, there is no evidence immigrants commit more crimes than native-born Americans. That didn't stop US Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene, a Republican from Georgia, from shouting "Say her name!" in reference to Riley during President Joe Biden's annual State of the Union address in March.

'Weaponized'

The Biden administration has been struggling to address immigration, and the Democratic Party is walking a fine line of seeking to be tougher on migrants while also introducing

reforms to the country's inefficient immigration system. Republicans seized on Riley's death to build a narrative that "one of the reasons you should vote for Donald Trump is because Joe Biden is not protecting the country," Charles Bullock, a political science professor at the University of Georgia, told AFP. "What Republicans are trying to do is to make the immigration problem something which is geographically more widespread than along the border," he said.

Kelly Girtz, the Democratic mayor of Athens, decried the politicization of Riley's death, saying there's "a lot of trauma" in the city of 130,000, a third of whom are university students. Given Trump's rhetoric, however, Girtz was not surprised "that it was going to be weaponized." "The politicization seemed more to come from outside forces," said Girtz, who said social media has helped spread the narrative.

He said several Athens residents who hailed from Latin America told him they were concerned they would be targeted for their ethnicity. Kim Willingham, an Athens native who works at a middle school, thinks these high-profile cases distract from more pressing problems. "I just feel like sometimes the locals get left behind," she told AFP. "We have, like, a lot of gang violence, in Athens, a lot of youth dying, but nobody shines a light on it." For Willingham, "It's just an excuse to speak out about the immigration ... to get some votes." — AFP

Shortages and delays hit morale of Kenyan officers in Haiti

NAIROBI: Pay issues and shortages of equipment and manpower have sapped morale among Kenyan police officers deployed to Haiti and hampered their ability to confront heavily armed gangs, four officers told Reuters. After three years of rampant killing, rape and extortion by gangs that control most of the capital Port-au-Prince, Haiti's transitional government and its international allies are counting on the Kenyan-led mission to restore enough security to hold elections by February 2026.

The Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission was authorized by the UN Security Council last October, but the initial deployment was delayed by political turmoil in Haiti, court challenges in Kenya, and difficulties mobilizing funds. The first nearly 200 Kenyan officers arrived in Port-au-Prince in late June and were joined by a similar-sized contingent three weeks later. The force is supposed to increase to around 2,500 personnel from at least 10 countries.

But progress is slow, in part because of financing issues. While the United States has contributed \$369 million in money, equipment and services, a UN fund only has about \$68 million, leaving it over \$150 million short of the estimated \$589 million needed for the first year's operations. The four officers, who spoke to Reuters over the past week on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the mission, said they had been told more equipment was on the way but had not yet seen it and had to fight in the meantime with inadequate resources. "The sluggish pace of the whole process means it will be very difficult to stick to the deadlines that the transitional government has agreed," said Diego Da Rin, International Crisis

Group's Haiti analyst. Asked about the concerns voiced by the officers, Kenyan police spokesperson Resila Onyango replied: "Last week, MSS received additional vehicles and equipment from the US Government, thus enhancing their joint operations with their Haitian counterparts." The US State Department said the United States has stepped up deliveries of armored vehicles, radio sets and computer systems. It said the start of joint patrols in July by Haitian and Kenyan officers was an example of "remarkable" recent progress in Haiti. Haiti's police spokesperson declined to comment.

Two officers said they regularly took heavy fire from gunmen who would position themselves in tall buildings, but that the police had limited ability to respond because their vehicles do not have armored platforms from which to shoot. They also said they do not always have radios in their vehicles. The State Department said the US Air Force had begun delivering the armored platforms and that sufficient radio systems were now available. Some of the officers questioned why they had been deployed before the equipment was ready. Some people have been saying ... we should just go back home and come when things are ready," one said.

The officers said they had mostly been patrolling major Port-au-Prince roads but had carried out some joint operations with Haitian police - with mixed success. One was in Ganthier, a town on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince, where the Kenyan and Haitian police were initially able to drive out the gangs in July. But the gangs moved back in when the police, who did not have the numbers to hold the town, returned to base, according to one of the officers and Da Rin. — Reuters

Hand in hand: Biden, Harris hit...

Continued from Page 1

in cash donations over recent weeks. Polls show her entry improving the Democrats' chances at defeating Republican Trump, but with the outcome highly uncertain. In Pittsburgh, Biden and Harris embraced and held hands before she paid him fulsome praise.

"Joe Biden has been one of the most transformative presidents in the United States that we have ever witnessed, and it comes from his heart," she said. "Joe and I talk a lot about the fact that we are so proud to be the most pro-union administration in America's history." "We're not going back!" the crowd chanted, using one of her campaign slogans.

Trump took the weekend off from campaigning, and did not have public events scheduled Monday. "For a candidate that claims to be rallying the support of workers, why is Donald Trump M.I.A. on Labor Day?" the Harris campaign needed in a statement. The Republican, in a post on his Truth Social platform, touted claims about his economic record and accused

Harris and Biden of having "undone all of that".

Harris last appeared with Biden after his speech two weeks ago at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. As she hurries to define her platform, the vice president has sought to promise change — while avoiding criticism of Biden's tenure. Harris has faced scrutiny for pivoting from liberal positions she ran on when competing against Biden for the Democratic nomination in 2020. She had previously pledged to ban fracking — a major source of income in Pennsylvania — but now has ruled that out. Pennsylvania is one of a handful of states that will decide the election, and is possibly the one on which the whole result will hinge. Monday's joint appearance with Biden also launched the two-month sprint to the vote, with Labor Day marking the traditional end of the US summer.

"Friends, 64 days until the most important election of our lives, and probably one of the most important in the life of our nation," Harris said, describing herself as the underdog in the race. "We have some hard work then ahead of us. But here's the beauty of us in this room — we like our work. Hard work is good work." Harris's running mate, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, separately campaigned in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. — AFP

Zionists kill dozens in Gaza but...

Continued from Page 1

of a mass campaign, and had inoculated about a quarter of children under 10. The campaign, which was hastened by the discovery of the first polio case in a Gazan baby last month, relies on daily eight-hour pauses in fighting between the Zionist entity and Hamas militants in specific areas of the besieged enclave.

Diplomatic efforts to secure a permanent ceasefire and release foreign and Zionist captives held in Gaza and return many Palestinians jailed by the Zionist entity have stalled, however. Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Monday that Zionist troops would remain in the Philadelphia corridor on the southern edge of Gaza, one of the main sticking points in reaching a deal to end the fighting and return hostages. Hamas, which wants an agreement to end the war and see Zionist forces out of all of the Gaza Strip, says such a condition, among some others, would prevent a deal.

The United Nations, in collaboration with the local health authorities, embarked on the third day of a complex campaign to vaccinate around 640,000 children in Gaza against polio. United Nations Sec-

retary-General Antonio Guterres described pauses in fighting to allow the vaccinations as a "rare ray of hope and humanity in the cascade of horror," his spokesperson said on Tuesday. "If the parties can act to protect children from a deadly virus...surely they can and must act to protect children and all innocents from the horrors of war," UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said.

Rik Peeperkorn, WHO representative for the Occupied Palestinian Territories, told reporters in Geneva that it had vaccinated more than 161,000 children under the age of 10 in the central area in the first two days of its campaign, compared with a projection of around 150,000. "Up until now things are going well," he said. "These humanitarian pauses, up until now they work. We still have 10 days to go." He said that some children in southern Gaza were thought to be outside the agreed zone for the pauses and that negotiations continued in order to reach them. Palestinians say a key reason for the return of polio is the collapse of the health system and the destruction of most Gaza hospitals.

The Zionist campaign has so far killed at least 40,819 people in Gaza, mostly women and children. Abu Obeida, spokesman for Hamas' armed wing the Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades, said remaining captives would return "inside coffins" if the Zionist entity maintains its military pressure on Gaza. — Agencies

International

Cathay Pacific grounds Airbus planes after engine issues

Qatar Airways, Japan Airlines monitoring Airbus A350-1000 fleets as Cathay repairs 15 aircraft

HONG KONG: Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific Airways said on Tuesday it had inspected its entire Airbus A350 fleet after the in-flight failure of an engine part and found 15 aircraft with components that needed replacement. Cathay Pacific said three of the 48 Rolls-Royce-powered planes it had inspected had already gone through successful repairs and all of the jets were expected to resume operation by Saturday. It cancelled at least 34 round-trip flights due to the disruption to its fleet.

Other airlines said they had not yet been issued instructions to examine similar engines after a part failed on one of Cathay Pacific's A350-1000 widebody planes minutes after take-off from Hong Kong on Monday.

Data from flight tracking service FlightRadar24 showed other major operators of the A350-1000 and the smaller, more popular A350-900, appeared to be flying their aircraft normally on Tuesday. Tokyo-based Japan Airlines (JAL), which has five A350-1000s that are all less than a year old, said it had asked Rolls-Royce for more information and had not stopped A350 flights in the meantime. "If the engine manufacturer takes any further action, we will respond accordingly," a JAL spokesperson said.

Qatar Airways said its fleet of 24 A350-1000s was not affected and it continued to monitor any developments. Rolls-Royce had not yet issued a directive to airlines regarding possible inspections, according to an industry source who was not authorized to speak publicly about the matter.

Cathay Pacific said it had secured spare parts for the engine components that needed to be replaced. Rolls-Royce on Tuesday also noted the replacement

could take place while the engine remained on-wing. The engine manufacturer said it was committed to working closely with Cathay Pacific, Airbus and authorities conducting an investigation of the incident.

Cathay Pacific has not specified which engine component failed, but the carrier said it was the "first of its type to suffer such failure on any A350 aircraft worldwide". A person familiar with the matter told Reuters the incident involved a problem with a fuel nozzle inside a XWB-97 engine, the Rolls-Royce model used on the A350-1000.

Experts say such problems are rare but, barring a deeper flaw, generally raise fewer alarms than the failure of one of the major rotating parts such as a turbine blade. However, any widespread further inspections could be disruptive to airlines. Airbus said in a statement it was in contact with Rolls-Royce and Cathay Pacific and offering "full technical support".

'Precautionary measure'

Singapore Airlines said it was reviewing the Rolls-Royce Trent XWB-84 engines in its fleet of A350-900s as a precaution, but there was no impact on its flights. It does not have any A350-1000s. Taiwan's China Airlines, which operates 15 A350-900s but no A350-1000s, said its fleet did not use the affected engines, so its operations would not be impacted. "The company will continue to pay attention to the instructions of the original manufacturer and take the initiative to arrange for testing operations to ensure the safety of aircraft operations," it said in a statement.

Malaysia's national carrier, which also has A350-900s in its fleet, has consulted Airbus and was oper-



NEW YORK: A Cathay Pacific Airbus A350 aircraft from Hong Kong prepares to land at the JFK International Airport in New York in this file photo. — AFP

ating as normal, the country's Transport Minister Anthony Loke Siew Fook was quoted by the state news agency Bernama as saying. Although the part failure occurred on one of its 18 A350-1000 jets, Cathay Pacific said it was also inspecting its 30 A350-900s as a "precautionary measure".

The airline said it had "identified a number of the same engine components that need to be replaced" but did not say on which model aircraft. There are around 88 A350-1000 jets in operation worldwide, according

to Swiss aviation intelligence provider ch-aviation.

The top six operators are Qatar Airways with 24, British Airways which is owned by the International Airlines Group with 18, Cathay Pacific with 18, Virgin Atlantic with 12 and Etihad Airways and JAL with five each. British Airways, Virgin Atlantic and Etihad did not immediately respond to requests for comment. The flights Cathay cancelled included those between Hong Kong and Sydney, Osaka, Tokyo, Taipei, Bangkok and Singapore. — Reuters

Canada turning away more foreigners, approving fewer visas

TORONTO: Canada is closing its doors to more visitors and temporary residents by approving fewer visas and turning away more people who reach its borders with official documents, according to government data obtained by Reuters. The spike in rejections of foreign travelers comes as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal government, trailing in polls ahead of an election expected next year, tries to lower the numbers of temporary residents — and possibly permanent immigrants. Migrants have been blamed for the shortage and high prices of housing.

Canadians have prided themselves on embracing newcomers but polls show a growing number say Canada is admitting too many immigrants. That stance is filtering down to border and immigration officers, observers say. In July, Canada refused entry to 5,853 foreign travelers, who were "allowed to leave," as Canada puts it, and who include students, workers and tourists, the most since at least January 2019, according to border agency data that has not been previously reported.

Border officers turned away 3,727 foreign travelers per month on average through the first seven months of 2024, an increase of 633 people or 20 percent from a year earlier. Separately, officers deemed 285 visa-holders inadmissible in July, also the most in any month since at least January 2019, the data showed.

A Canada Border Services Agency spokesperson said changes in findings of inadmissibility can be caused by migration patterns or policy changes and are decided case by case. CBSA did not identify any specific policy changes. "The CBSA's role, policy, and practice has always been to assess the admissibility of persons coming to Canada. This has not changed," the spokesperson said.

At the same time, Canada's immigration department is approving fewer visas. The ratio of refused visitor visa applications to approved ones was higher in June than at any point since the height of the pandemic. In January, February, May and June 2024, more applications were refused than approved, according to immigration department data. The number of approved study and work permits also dropped from multi-year highs in 2023 and 2022, respectively. "Canadians want a system that is not out of control," Immigration Minister Marc Miller said in August.

Miller's spokesperson said the immigration department was "committed to a fair and non-discriminatory application of immigration policy and procedures" and attributed the drop in study-permit approvals to a cap announced in January. The decline appears to have begun last year, however. Eight lawyers told Reuters they have heard from clients of greater scrutiny of visa-holders at airports and land border crossings.

British Columbia lawyer Will Tao said he has represented half a dozen visa-holders who border officials disbelieved about the nature of their plans in Canada and suggested they turn back voluntarily or risk deportation. Some did so, not knowing the implications this could have for their visa or travel authorization, including potential cancellation. Tao sees increased border officer skepticism stemming from a "180-degree" attitude shift on immigration from the government. The idea that foreigners are entering Canada without meeting requirements, or are causing the country harm, is trickling down from politicians to front-line officials, he added. — Reuters

Pope arrives in Indonesia to start Asia-Pacific tour

JAKARTA: Pope Francis arrived in Muslim-majority Indonesia on Tuesday to kick off a four-nation tour of the Asia-Pacific that will be the longest and farthest of the 87-year-old's papacy. The head of the world's 1.3 billion Catholics touched down in capital Jakarta for a three-day visit devoted to inter-religious ties, and will then travel to Papua New Guinea, East Timor and Singapore.

The 12-day tour will test the pontiff's increasingly fragile health, but he is often energized by being among his flock and he emerged from the 13-hour flight smiling and waving. "I thank you for coming on this journey. I think it is the longest one (flight) I have done," he told reporters aboard his chartered plane after landing, according to an AFP journalist.

He disembarked in Jakarta in a wheelchair to an honor guard, greetings by Indonesian officials, including the religious affairs minister, and a traditional bouquet from two children. The pontiff was then picked up from the red carpet by a civilian Toyota car, choosing a modest vehicle over one of luxury typically used by world leaders.

He had no official engagements scheduled Tuesday following the long flight from Rome, but the Vatican said he hosted a meeting with a group of orphans, migrants and homeless people at its Jakarta mission shortly after he arrived.

'Historic visit'

The pope is scheduled to meet President Joko Widodo on Wednesday in the first major set piece of his visit to the world's most populous Muslim-ma-

DR Congo jail break attempt leaves 129 dead

KINSHASA: An attempted jail break from DR Congo's largest prison has left at least 129 people dead and led to women being raped, the interior minister said Tuesday. The circumstances around the bid to bust out of the Makala prison in the capital Kinshasa, which holds 10 times the number it is meant to house, in the early hours of Monday remain unclear.

On Monday, witnesses told AFP they had heard gunfire at around 2:00 am which lasted for several hours in the area of the prison, a popular and residential neighborhood. Democratic Republic of Congo Interior Minister Jacquemain Shabani in a statement released by video on Tuesday announced a provisional death toll of 129 people. They included "24 who were shot after warnings", he said.

At least 59 others had been wounded and were receiving care, he said, adding that many people had been crushed or suffocated and that a number of women had been raped. In the early hours of Tuesday, gunshots rang out again in the neighbor-

'Queen of Trash' on trial in Sweden's toxic waste scandal

STOCKHOLM: Eleven people went on trial in Sweden on Tuesday, accused of illegally dumping toxic waste in the country's biggest-ever environmental crime case. A once-acclaimed waste management company is accused of dumping or burying some 200,000 tons of waste from the Stockholm area at 21 sites, with no intention of processing it correctly. Among those



JAKARTA: Pope Francis (center, in wheelchair) is welcomed during his arrival at Soekarno - Hatta International Airport in Jakarta on September 3, 2024. — AFP

charity country. "This is a very historic visit," Widodo, popularly known as Jokowi, told reporters Tuesday. "Indonesia and the Vatican have a similar commitment to peace and brotherhood."

Catholics represent fewer than three percent of the population of Indonesia — about eight million people, compared with the 87 percent, or 242 million, who are Muslim. But they are one of six officially recognized religions or denominations in the nominally secular nation, including Protestantism,

hood, several witnesses said. "I heard the gunshots around 5:00 am." Sacre, a taxi driver who did not want to give his surname, told AFP.

He also said that the streets in the area were unusually calm with police and soldiers on patrol, AFP journalists saw. Daddi Soso, an electrician in his forties, said he had seen security force vehicles taking bodies away in the early hours of Monday. Police cordoned off the streets leading to the prison.

Situation 'under control'

The authorities have given no indication as to how many inmates escaped or attempted to do so. On Monday morning, government spokesman Patrick Muyaya only said that the security services were at the scene and asked residents not to panic. A few hours later, he told national television the situation was "under control".

Justice Minister Constant Mutamba later announced on X that inquiries were under way "to identify and severely punish the sponsors of these acts of sabotage". As well as the human toll, the escape attempt caused damage to buildings. Part of the prison, mainly housing the administrative offices, was set on fire, the government said.

The prison was already badly damaged during an attack by armed men in 2017, which led to more than 4,000 prisoners escaping, some of them de-

charged with "aggravated environmental crime" is its former chief executive Bella Nilsson, an ex-stripper who once called herself the "Queen of Trash". She was the last of the accused to arrive at the courthouse in northern Stockholm as the trial, which is expected to last until May, opened on Tuesday morning. Wearing big dark sunglasses, Nilsson refused to answer questions as she shoved away reporters' microphones.

High levels of PCBs, lead, mercury, arsenic and other chemicals were released into the air, soil and water, prosecutors said, endangering the "health of humans, animals and plant life". They say the now-bankrupt NMT Think Pink "collected waste with no intention or ability to handle it in line with environmental legislation."

The waste consisted of everything from building

Buddhism, Hinduism and Confucianism.

On Thursday, Francis will meet representatives of all six at Istiqlal Mosque, the largest in Southeast Asia and a symbol of religious co-existence. It is linked via a "tunnel of friendship" to the cathedral across the road, where Christians in recent days have been taking selfies with a life-sized pope cutout. He will then host a mass and deliver a sermon at Indonesia's 80,000-seat national football stadium. — AFP



KINSHASA: Military reinforcements walk in front of the entrance of Makala Prison in Kinshasa on September 3, 2024. — AFP

scribed as "dangerous" by police. Makala prison has capacity for 1,500 inmates. But it is overcrowded, and rights organizations regularly complain about the conditions of detention at the jail.

It holds between 14,000 and 15,000 prisoners, according to official statistics. "The conditions are deplorable," Emmanuel Cole, a defender of prisoners' rights who regularly visits the prisons, told AFP. Cole warned of a possible "revolt" in the prison and said the situation in Makala could "degenerate" after authorities banned visits following the escape attempt. — AFP

materials to electronics, metals, plastics, wood, tyres and toys. Think Pink left the piles "unsorted" and abandoned, according to the charge sheet. Nilsson's ex-husband Thomas, the company's founder, and Leif Ivan Karlsson, an eccentric entrepreneur who starred in a reality show about his over-the-top lifestyle, are also among those indicted, along with "waste broker" Robert Silversten.

An environmental consultant who helped the company pass inspections, Magnus Karlsson, has been charged as an accessory. All 11 accused have denied committing any crime. In its heyday from 2018 to 2020, the company's fuchsia-colored construction waste sacks could be seen on many a Stockholm sidewalk, and the prize twice won a prestigious Swedish business prize. — AFP

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2024



Zain HQ building

Zain awarded 'Best Corporate Governance in Kuwait' accolade

Award from World Finance for milestone fourth consecutive year

- Bader Al-Kharafi: Sound corporate governance plays a significant role in providing long-term sustainable value to all stakeholders
- Zain's Investor Relations, Sustainability and Corporate Governance team proactively raising awareness on issues related to the environment, social, and governance matters

KUWAIT/LONDON: Zain, a leading provider of innovative technologies and digital lifestyle communications operating in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, has been awarded World Finance's 'Best Corporate Governance Award 2024 for Kuwait', for a milestone fourth consecutive year. London-based World Finance is a reputable print and online magazine providing comprehensive coverage and analysis of the financial industry, international business, and the global economy.

Corporate Governance is becoming an increasingly important differentiator for organizations, particularly those such as Zain, which are listed on public bourses, with respect to giving all stakeholders confidence that the company is being run in a compliant and transparent manner. As such, Zain's Investor Relations and Corporate Governance Framework is a cornerstone of the company's regional appeal, and has attracted ongoing praise and admiration

from shareholders, industry analysts, and regulatory authorities. As a leading entity listed on the Premier Market, Zain abides fully to market regulations issued by all financial regulatory bodies in Kuwait and across our footprint, including the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Capital Markets Authority (CMA), and Boursa Kuwait as well as other regulatory bodies where Zain is listed.

Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO said, "Zain believes sound corporate governance plays a significant role in providing long-term sustainable value to all stakeholders. This milestone fourth consecutive recognition justly rewards our Investor Relations, Sustainability and Corporate Governance team's consistent high ethical standards, professionalism and diligence."

Zain's Corporate Governance framework helps it mitigate risks and facilitates an effective Board oversight over the company's executive management by



monitoring the implementation of policies when running daily operations. Corporate Governance promotes strong internal controls to improve integrity of financials and establishes a culture of compliance. This governance structure has helped Zain to win the confidence of the market and attract global investors.

Furthermore, Zain's Investor Relations, Sustainability, and Corporate Governance departments are committed to raising awareness on issues related to the environment, social, and governance (ESG) matters in response to global trends and best practices. Accordingly, Zain has developed new policies and is working to increase transparency in addition to focusing on social responsibility. Such policies and procedures are flexible, and take into account both short- and long-term challenges and risks.

Notably, both Zain's Annual Report as well as its Sustainability Report demonstrate the company's efforts to provide meaningful connectivity leading to equitable systemic change, as well as



highlighting how Zain is placing ESG activities and sustainable growth at the forefront of its activities, believing in the nurturing of positive relationships among all stakeholders.

中非合作论坛第九届部长级会议 9th Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation 9^e Conférence Ministérielle du Forum sur la Coopération Sino-Africaine

Beijing, September 2024 | 2024年9月 北京 | Beijing, Septembre 2024



BEIJING: (Front second left to right) Senegal's Economy Minister Abdourahmane Sarr, Senegal's FM Yassine Fall, China's FM Wang Yi, China's Commerce Minister Wang Wentao and Chairman of CIDCA Luo Zhaohui attend the FOCAC in Beijing on Sept 3, 2024. — AFP

Angola weighs China, European financing bids to fuel economy

BEIJING: China needs to step up its financing for Angola if the African nation is to absorb more Chinese-made goods from solar panels to electric cars, Angola's finance minister said on Tuesday, as the former OPEC member considers vying bids from Beijing and Europe. China approved loans worth \$4.61 billion to Africa last year, the first annual increase since peaking at \$28.4 billion in 2016, when 68 percent of lending went to Angola alone, even as it began to turn off the cash spigot and move away from big-ticket infrastructure projects as resource-rich Africa struggles with a growing debt crisis and grasps for quicker financing solutions.

Since quitting the Organization for Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in December, Angola has been looking for ways to firm up its finances and food security, grow its fisheries sector and attract more job-creating investment inland, Vera Daves De

Sousa said in an interview with Reuters ahead of a major China-Africa summit in Beijing.

The littoral state has plentiful reserves of base metals and ample agricultural resources such as sugar cane, coffee, cotton and livestock, but they have been neglected compared with oil, which accounts for 95 percent of its exports. China has expressed willingness to help Angola modernize its agricultural sector, grow its industries and diversify its economy in exchange for imports of more Chinese goods, but faces competition from the West.

"This is a tough discussion, because in our case, this comes together with the financing solution," Daves de Sousa said. "If Angola's fiscal revenues were strong enough to allow us to choose based on the criteria of quality and price, we would have a totally different discussion."

Beijing's pitch would not only need to include further financing to help Luanda bring down high inflation and grow jobs in the short term, but also ensure it had robust industries it could depend on into the future, Daves De Sousa added. Otherwise, China could lose out to competition from Europe, who Daves De Sousa said required Angola to buy its wares but had been funneling fresh financing more readily in exchange. — Reuters

China plans to launch anti-dumping probes into Canadian canola

BEIJING: China said Tuesday it would launch an anti-dumping probe into Canadian canola and chemical products, in apparent retaliation for Ottawa's new restrictions on imports of Chinese electric vehicles (EVs). Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau last month announced tariffs of 100 percent on Chinese EVs, accusing Beijing of "not playing by the same rules as other countries" in areas like environmental and labor standards. The United States and the European Union have also respectively slapped tariffs of 100 percent and 36 percent on Chinese EVs, arguing that Beijing unfairly subsidizes domestic producers whose products then flood foreign markets and undercut local competitors. China has repeatedly criticized the imposition of levies and launched a series of its own investigations in response.

Its commerce ministry said in an online statement Tuesday that it "will initiate an anti-dumping investigation into canola imported from Canada, in accordance with the law". The ministry said domestic industries had recently reported that Canadian canola exports to China "have increased significantly", reaching US\$3.47 billion in 2023 while prices "have continued to fall".

It added that Canadian exporters were "suspected of dumping" products into the Chinese market and that "China's domestic canola-related industries have continued to incur losses under the influence of unfair competition by the Canadian side". The statement also said Beijing was "strongly dissatisfied and resolutely opposed" to the Canadian tariffs and planned to raise the issue with the World Trade Organization's dispute resolution mechanism. China would also launch a similar probe into "relevant Canadian chemical products, based on applications by domestic industries", according to the ministry.

"China... will take all necessary measures to defend the legitimate rights and interests of its enterprises," it said. Ottawa's EV surtax, on top of existing import



AIRDRIE: Farmer Ian Chitwood walks at his canola farm near Airdrie, Alberta, Canada. — AFP

duties of 6.1 percent, will be imposed from October 1. It will target Chinese electric and certain hybrid passenger automobiles, trucks, buses and delivery vans.

Canada will also limit eligibility for EV incentives to those made in countries with which Canada has free trade deals, which would exclude China. A separate surtax on imports of steel and aluminum products from China will be effective from Oct 15.

Canada is among the world's top producers of canola — an oilseed crop that is used to make cooking oil, animal feed and biodiesel fuel — and China has historically been one of its largest customers.

But bilateral ties plunged into a deep freeze for several years from 2018, when Canada detained Meng Wanzhou, a top executive from Chinese tech giant Huawei, prompting Beijing to arrest two Canadian nationals in retaliation. In 2019, Beijing banned imports from two Canadian canola providers — Richardson International and Viterra Inc. — citing the detection of harmful organisms in the shipments.

The move was described by the Canadian side at the time as having no scientific basis and was widely seen as motivated by the broader row between the two countries. Relations took a positive turn in September 2021, when Meng and the two Canadian nationals being held by China were all released after Meng reached a deal with US prosecutors. And in May 2022, China lifted its ban on canola imports from the Canadian firms, further easing the prolonged spat. — AFP

Business

China, South Africa agree to seek balanced trade, more investments

Beijing willing to increase employment in South Africa operations

BEIJING: China and South Africa, whose top leaders met in Beijing, agreed to promote balanced trade and discussed boosting two-way investments between their industrial and commercial communities, a joint statement on Tuesday showed. President Xi Jinping and his South African counterpart Cyril Ramaphosa met on Monday, ahead of the ninth forum on China-Africa cooperation. Both sides called Ramaphosa's visit of "great significance" to the development of bilateral relations.

Ramaphosa had sought with Xi to narrow South Africa's trade deficit with Beijing and review his country's trade structure with China, petitioning for more sustainable manufacturing and job-creating investments. China, the world's second-biggest economy, is South Africa's largest trading partner globally but the value of its imports from China far outstripped exports last year.

In the joint statement, China showed it was willing to uplift job creation, citing recruitment conferences for Chinese enterprises to promote local employment in South Africa. The statement also mentions adding manufacturing bases near the source of relevant raw materials, and promoting transfer of technology and skills among their businesses. China was also willing to share more of its experience in poverty reduction and rural revitalization, according to the statement published by the Chinese foreign ministry. After the

meeting, both countries signed numerous cooperation documents that included the application of a satellite navigation system, housing and settlement and export requirements for dairy products and raw wool from South Africa to China. Both nations are looking to expand cooperation in renewable energy, energy storage, transmission and distribution, the statement said, adding that they will co-host a new energy investment conference to be organized by their chambers of commerce and associations.

But that document did not include any specific fresh investment or financing pledges. In contrast, when the two leaders met in Johannesburg last August ahead of a BRICS summit, Chinese power companies committed to help upgrade South Africa's nuclear power plants, extend the life of its coal-fired power stations, and set up transformer and solar PV panel manufacturing facilities across the country. Then, Ramaphosa said Beijing had extended a grant worth 500 million rand for the power sector, without giving timelines. In Beijing, the two leaders also jointly called on the international community to support African countries in implementing the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, an FTA that would make up the world's largest free trade area creating a single continental market for goods and services, helping Africa advance its integration. — Reuters



BEIJING: South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa (center) arrives at the Beijing Capital International Airport, ahead of the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Beijing on September 2, 2024. - AFP

State oil firm's 'financial strain' compounds Nigeria's fuel shortage

LAGOS: Weeks of fuel scarcities in Nigeria are compounding a cost-of-living crisis, with the state-run oil company acknowledging "financial strain" was hampering supplies. Olufemi Soneye, a spokesman for government-controlled Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL), blamed the lingering scarcity on financial issues, in a statement at the weekend.

Nigeria, a major African oil producer, often sees sporadic fuel shortages that cause long lines at NNPCL-run petrol stations that sell fuel at cheaper prices than private operators. "This financial strain has placed considerable pressure on the company and poses a threat to the sustainability of fuel supply," Soneye said in the statement.

It comes after NNPCL declared a record profit of 3.3 trillion naira (about \$2 billion) last month and an initial public denial of its huge debt burden. As well as vehicles, most households in Nigeria rely on petrol and diesel to power their generators as the public power supply is unreliable and prone to blackouts. Though an OPEC oil producer, Nigeria imports most of its fuel needs because it has very little working refining capacity.

Africa's most populous country is already struggling under higher living costs after government reforms to end a fuel subsidy and free the naira currency drove a spike in inflation. "The fuel scarcity is

really hard," Ismael Abdullai, 36, a delivery bike rider for a food delivery company, told AFP. "We look, but you always have to look harder to see fuel." Fuel scarcities have been more frequent since President Bola Tinubu removed the costly fuel subsidies that saw the government pay billions of dollars a year to keep the price of petrol artificially low.

Its price has since more than tripled in some states, with a knock-on effect on food and transport costs.

"The cost of transportation is now very high due to the hike in the price of fuel," a video editor Hogan Samuel told AFP. "I spent 1,100 naira (\$0.70) to get to the office this morning instead of the usual 750 naira."

Many stations were shuttered on Monday morning in parts of the commercial capital Lagos. Long lines formed at those that were selling, causing traffic jams. "We would queue from 6 am and still not get fuel until 12 or 1 pm or 2 pm," Sola Adewusi, a 36-year-old private driver told AFP. "It is because of our leaders, they are bad." Drivers looking to save as much as 15,000 naira on a full tank form longer queues at NNPCL filling stations where it is sold at the cheapest rate of 560 naira for a liter. But it goes for as much as 950 naira elsewhere. "Most of us like to buy at NNPCL because of the difference in the price between the NNPCL and the private fuelling stations," Abdullai said.

The junior oil minister Heiniken Lokpobiri told an energy labor summit in Nigeria's capital Abuja last week that NNPCL needed to hike the price of petrol it sells to independent marketers, claiming that the current price of 600 naira was fuelling the smuggling of the product out of the country. "The situation does not make us happy," a painter Uzochukwu Christian told AFP in Abuja. "Government should help us." — AFP



OGUN: Motorists queue to buy fuel at a petrol station at Magboro, Ogun State in southwest Nigeria. — AFP

Canada's insurance sector faces climate disaster claim deluge

TORONTO: Hotter summers in Canada that have sparked wildfires in tourist areas, intense hailstorms and thunderstorms with severe flooding in major cities, all likely linked to climate change, are leading to personnel shortages and potentially claims adjustment delays, according to insurance sector insiders. The industry depends on teams of insurance adjusters to look into claims and determine the amount of loss, or damages covered by insurance policies. They are a vital cog in a business being stretched thin by mounting claims from homeowners and businesses.

Insurance claims are rising globally as climate change spurs more severe weather, but Canada is particularly at risk as one of the world's most vast and forested lands. Many adjusters are retiring and certifications are different in each province, making it challenging for Canada to handle increased claims, companies, consumers and industry groups told Reuters.

"These events have placed immense pressure on insurance adjusters, who are critical following natural catastrophes, as they ensure the industry can support consumers as quickly as possible," Insurance Bureau of Canada, an industry group, said. In August, insurance adjusters toured Jasper by bus after firefighters had battled a blaze that damaged or destroyed a third of the mountain community, making it the second most expensive wildfire in the province of Alberta's history

by insured losses. The fire surpassed C\$880 million (\$653.55 million) in insured damages, according to initial estimates from Catastrophe Indices and Quantification, the Insurance Bureau of Canada said.

Globally, many insurers have coped with unexpected claims in recent years, mainly by raising premiums and excluding some businesses. But Intact Financial, Canada's biggest property and casualty insurer, estimates about 250 policy holders had damage in Jasper and it expects losses within its annual range of C\$900 million for all catastrophic events. The company insures about 700 families and businesses in the Jasper area.

The insurance division of TD, Canada's second largest bank, said weather events in August, including Calgary hailstorms and Montreal floods, would lead to claims and related costs of more than C\$300 million in the fourth quarter, after it recorded claims costs of C\$186 million due to floods in Toronto and Alberta wildfires in July. Last year, wildfires burned 18.5 million hectares (45.7 million acres) of land, more than double than the previous record set two decades ago, turning European and American skies orange and the air grey. Over the last 10 years, the number of Canadian claims tied to extreme weather events has risen to more than 1.3 million, up 93 percent from a decade ago, according to the IBC. "I remember when I would only get one catastrophic event a year... now we're looking at a dozen of them a year," said Anita Paulic, director of operations and catastrophe response at ClaimsPro, an independent claims management firm. Paulic, whose firm services insurers by sending out teams of claims adjusters, said that in the last few weeks she has had to redeploy personnel to handle flood claims in Toronto, hail damage claims in Calgary, and those related to the wildfire. — Reuters



"For sale" estate agency sign on a street of typical British terraced houses.

British home price rises to outpace inflation

LONDON: British home prices will make solid gains in the next two years, outpacing overall inflation, but affordability for first-time buyers is likely to improve based on expectations for lower borrowing costs, a Reuters poll of housing market experts forecast. Those saving for a cash deposit and wanting to get on the property ladder face rents increasing at an even faster pace, however, eating into disposable income and making it harder to save the money needed to be granted a mortgage.

Home values would rise 2.5 percent this year and then 3.0 percent in 2025 and 4.0 percent in 2026, the Aug. 19-Sept. 3 poll of 21 analysts predicted, largely unchanged from a May survey. Consumer inflation was predicted at 2.3 percent next year and 2.0 percent in 2026, a separate Reuters poll found.

"There is likely to be a modest surge in prices next year as interest rates fall back a bit," said Mike Scott at estate agency Yopa. Like its peers the Bank of England raised borrowing costs sharply after the COVID-19 pandemic to combat inflation but trimmed Bank Rate last month and is expected to do so again once more this year. By the end of 2025 it is forecast to stand at 3.75 percent versus the current 5.00 percent. "It's the fall in mortgage rates that has provided a small boost to the housing market and seems to have set a firm floor under future price falls," said Aneisha Beveridge at Hamptons estate agency. British home prices unexpectedly fell in August in their first monthly drop since April but the outlook for the property market is likely to strengthen, mortgage lender Nationwide Building Society said on Friday.

With interest rates falling, affordability for first-time buyers would improve, 15 of 17 respondents to an extra question said. "As wages continue to increase above the rate of inflation and the Bank of England reduces rates further, with house prices only just in positive territory, logic says affordability is improving," said Russell Quirk at estate agency Emoov. Incomes were expected to rise 4.8 percent in 2024 and 3.2 percent next year, the other Reuters poll found. Valuations in London, long a draw for foreign investors, are also forecast to increase, by 1.8 percent this year and 3.2 percent in 2025. In 2026 they are predicted to rise 3.5 percent.

"As for London, it is 'back' and given a world on fire, the UK capital is also a more and more popular safe haven," said Tony Williams at advisory firm Building Value. Average home prices in London have risen from around seven times median income in 2002 to about 13 times last year, according to data from the Office for National Statistics. Nationally, rents would rise far faster than home prices, increasing 6.0 percent in the coming year, the survey predicted.

"There is a dramatic shortage of houses/flats for owner-occupiers, but it is even worse in the rental market because so many landlords are exiting the market due to regulatory changes," Williams added.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer's government plans a Renters' Rights Bill that will remove the threat of arbitrary evictions and make it illegal for landlords to discriminate against families with children, while insurers have pulled back from offering cover, particularly for residential landlords. Starmer has pledged to boost the supply of cheap properties, building 1.5 million homes in his parliamentary term, and shake up planning laws. — Reuters

News in Brief

Turkish inflation slows to 52%

ISTANBUL: Turkey's annual inflation rate slowed further in August to 52 percent after reaching 61.8 percent in July, official data showed on Tuesday. The central bank began to raise interest rates last year in an effort to battle soaring prices, after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan dropped his opposition to orthodox monetary policy. Turkey's annual inflation rate reached a decades-long high of 85 percent in October 2022. It fell to 38.2 percent in June 2023 before rising again. It reached 75 percent in May this year but started to fall in June. The biggest price rises in August were in education, at 120.8 percent, housing at 101.5 percent, and hotels and restaurants at 67.7 percent, according to the Turkish statistics institute. On a month-to-month comparison, consumer prices rose 2.5 percent in August. — AFP

MasOrange to cut 800 jobs

MADRID: Spanish telecoms firm MasOrange plans to cut around 800 jobs, or around 10 percent of its workforce, in Spain, a union and the firm said on Tuesday, the latest in a string of layoffs in the sector in the country. The company, which was born in March from the merger of French telecoms giant Orange's unit in Spain and Spanish rival MasMovil, is the country's second-largest telecoms firm after former state monopoly Telefonica. The job cuts plan was presented by the firm on Tuesday and it "aims to cut a maximum of 795 jobs in six of the nine companies that make up the group, the UGT union said in a statement. MasOrange and unions will start negotiating the layoffs on September 17, the union added. — AFP

Brazil economy outperforms in Q2

BRASILIA: Brazil's economy surprised to the upside in the second quarter as the strength of its services and industry sectors offset the impacts of deadly floods in a southern state, bolstering expectations for a solid full-year performance. The country's gross domestic product (GDP) expanded 1.4 percent in the three months through June 30 on a sequential basis, accelerating from the revised 1.0 percent growth recorded in the first quarter, statistics agency IBGE said on Tuesday. The quarter-on-quarter performance was above the 0.9 percent increase expected in a Reuters poll of economists. — Reuters

Escriva new Bank of Spain chief

MADRID: The Spanish government will appoint Digital Transformation Minister Jose Luis Escriva as governor of the Bank of Spain for the next six years, a government source told Reuters on Tuesday, confirming earlier reports in local media. Escriva would succeed Pablo Hernandez de Cos as governor and become a member of the European Central Bank's governing council. De Cos stepped down after his term expired in June and the bank has been led on an interim basis by Deputy Governor Margarita Delgado. As a current member of Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's Socialist cabinet who previously headed the social security ministry and oversaw a reform of the pension system, Escriva's appointment is poised to raise concerns about the bank's independence. — Reuters

UK awards 131 green energy projects

LONDON: The UK on Tuesday said it had awarded a record 131 new green infrastructure projects in a single auction, including plans for Europe's two biggest offshore wind farms. The new Labour government hailed the outcome to power millions of homes across the island nation with cleaner energy and which followed a similar unsuccessful auction in 2023 under the previous Conservative administration. "We inherited a broken energy policy, including last year's disastrous auction round which gave us no successful offshore wind projects," Energy Secretary Ed Miliband said in a statement. — AFP

Business

Volkswagen plans to close plant, cut jobs in Germany

Move adds to concerns for Scholz as domestic economy struggles

FRANKFURT: German automotive giant Volkswagen said Monday it could take the unprecedented move to close production sites in Germany and threatened further job cuts as its savings plans stalled. Rising costs at the carmaker were cutting into profits, leaving Volkswagen facing "particularly significant challenges", the group said in an internal memo seen by AFP. "In the current situation, even plant closures at vehicle production and component sites can no longer be ruled out," Volkswagen said in the note sent to employees.

Unions and government officials responded with alarm to the idea of plant closures in the group's home market, a decision never before taken by Volkswagen. The announcement by one of Germany's blue-chip companies adds to concerns for Chancellor Olaf Scholz after the domestic economy has struggled in recent months. "The European automotive industry is in a very demanding and serious situation," Volkswagen CEO Oliver Blume was quoted as saying in the memo.

"The economic environment became even tougher, and new competitors are entering the European market," Blume said. The difficulties were particularly acute in Germany, which "is falling further behind in terms of competitiveness" as a manufacturing location, he added.

"We as a company must now act decisively," the CEO said. Volkswagen last year announced plans for a 10-billion-euro (\$11-billion) savings program and has flagged cuts to its workforce over the coming years to improve profitability. But the group said further measures were now required after disappointing results published in August that showed a dip in profits. Rising costs and cooling demand in China also meant the group had to lower its profit margin forecasts for the rest of the year.

Despite the cost-saving measures already announced, "the current developments in the automotive market and the German economy demand further action", according to the memo.

The company's board had determined that "the brands within Volkswagen AG must undergo comprehensive restructuring". "The goal must be to optimize product costs, material costs, and sales performance, as well as factory and labor costs," according to the memo.

"Simple cost-cutting measures" were no longer enough, it continued, while the group said it was considering cuts to jobs previously not at risk. The need for greater reductions in staff meant that the company was "compelled" to terminate a job protection agreement that had been in place for the last three decades. Workers' representatives reacted angrily to the announcement, saying they would resist the changes at the carmaker.

Volkswagen's board had "failed", works council chairwoman Daniela Cavallo said in a statement published by the union IG Metall. "This puts VW itself and the heart of the group at risk. We will fight bitterly against this," Cavallo said. "With us there will be no site closures," she said. According to IG Metall, Volkswagen management believes that "further savings in the billions of euros are necessary to prevent the core (VW) brand from slipping into the red".

The leader of the German region of Lower Saxony, which holds 20 percent of the voting shares in the carmaker, called on Volkswagen to avoid plant closures. The German auto industry was in a difficult position and the need for a response from Volkswagen was "incontestable", Stephan Weil said in a statement. "In this environment, Volkswagen's costs need to be examined to ensure continued success,"



WOLFSBURG, Germany: The VW logo is reflected in a window at the headquarters of German carmaker Volkswagen (VW) in Wolfsburg. — AFP

said Weil, a member of Scholz's Social Democrats. The option of plant closures should however "simply not come into question", said Weil, whose region includes Volkswagen's headquarters in Wolfsburg. Markets, by contrast, reacted positively to the news, with Volkswagen's stock gaining some two percent on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange in afternoon trading. Some 680,000 people are employed by Volkswagen worldwide, with over

300,000 working for the group in Germany. The group's Audi subsidiary last month announced it was considering closing its Brussels plant for making electric vehicles, which employs around 3,000 people. In Germany, a slew of auto suppliers, including ZF, Bosch and Webasto, have announced job cuts as they struggle to adapt to the new generation of electric vehicles and face rising Chinese competition. — AFP

Toyota, Maruti launch marketing drive for hybrids in Indian state

LUCKNOW: From Instagram ads to telesales, Japanese automakers Toyota and Maruti Suzuki are going all out to market their hybrid cars in the most populous Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, aiming to cash in on tax waivers that upset many of their rivals. The waivers have split India's auto industry, with Tata Motors, Mahindra and Mahindra and Hyundai arguing their sales of pure electric cars will suffer. Their lobbying to reverse the July decision failed last month and they now fear other states might follow suit.

At the Sunny Toyota showroom in Uttar Pradesh's capital of Lucknow, salespeople have been tasked to call customers who visited in the last six months to tell them about the benefits of hybrid tax waivers that will help them save \$15,800 on the luxury Toyota Vellfire model and \$5,200 on its Camry sedan.

"Save big Order now and get your hybrid vehicle delivered right at your doorstep," said an Instagram ad by the dealer. The campaign comes after a rare lobbying win by Toyota to get the state - which accounts for a tenth of India's car sales - to allow tax waivers on sale of hybrid cars, leading to roughly 10 percent in savings. India imposes a federal tax of 5 percent on EVs while hybrids are taxed at 43 percent, just below the 48 percent for gasoline cars, but state taxes are extra and determined by local governments.

Toyota has globally focused more on hybrids - which combine gasoline engines and batteries - than EVs. That strategy could pay off as worries about charging infrastructure and high prices curb demand for EVs globally, while sales of hybrids pick up.

In Uttar Pradesh, six salespeople for Toyota and Maruti Suzuki - which also supports the waivers - said hybrid enquires were rising and they had been asked by the companies to increase sales. "We have been asked to sell a minimum of 250 cars in a month. There is a lot of pressure. We are trying to shift all sales to hybrids," a Maruti salesperson said. Toyota did not respond to a request for comment.

Rahul Bharti, executive director for corporate affairs at Maruti, said its showroom enquiries had "nearly doubled since the benefits have been effected" for hybrids. Online and WhatsApp ads reviewed by Reuters show dealerships are using taglines including: "Enjoy the nil road tax offer" and "Say Good Bye to Diesel".

At the Sunny Toyota dealership which Reuters visited, salespeople were discussing approaching all customers who were keen to buy gasoline or diesel variants and might now be tempted to buy more expensive hybrid cars given the tax waiver. Some dealers are advising customers to move quickly.

"No one knows how long the scheme would run," said Praveen Saxena, a sales manager at a Toyota showroom in Kanpur city in the state, adding his hybrid car sales rose 50 percent after the tax waivers. KS Dhatwalia, a former Indian government official, chose to buy a new Toyota hybrid Hyryder, partly because of tax benefits. "Hybrids are less polluting and there was an additional tax saving too," he said. — Reuters

Ex-Volkswagen CEO goes on trial over 'dieseldgate'

BRAUNSCHWEIG, Germany: Former Volkswagen CEO Martin Winterkorn went on trial Tuesday for his role in the "dieseldgate" scandal, nine years after the saga first plunged the German auto titan into crisis.

VW admitted in 2015 that it had installed software to rig emissions levels in millions of vehicles worldwide, setting off one of Germany's biggest post-war industrial scandals.

Winterkorn faces charges including fraud over the use of the so-called defeat devices, which made cars appear less polluting in lab tests than they were on the road, and could be jailed for up to 10 years if convicted. He resigned as head of the VW group - whose brands range from Porsche and Audi to Skoda and Seat - shortly after the crisis began but attempts to bring him to trial had so far failed.

Now 77, he was supposed to stand trial in 2021 alongside four other VW executives but proceedings against him were split off and postponed due to his poor health. Upon arrival at the regional court in the city of Braunschweig, close to VW's historic Wolfsburg headquarters, Winterkorn told reporters he was doing "quite well". Asked how he looked back

on his life's work, Winterkorn replied: "When I see the beautiful cars, very fondly."

He briefly addressed the court at the start of the hearing to confirm his personal details, speaking slowly and leaning on a chair for support. Questions about Winterkorn's health hang over the proceedings, with reports saying he had to undergo an operation in mid-June. Some 89 hearings have been scheduled through September 2025.

Winterkorn faces several charges. He has been accused of conspiracy to commit fraud, with the allegation based on the claim that buyers of some of the group's vehicles were "deceived about their characteristics" due to the use of defeat devices, according to the court.

The alleged fraud relates to about nine million vehicles sold in Europe and United States, with the buyers facing financial losses running into hundreds of millions of euros, it said. However, Winterkorn has not been accused of involvement in the offence for its entire period, which was from 2006 to 2015. He was VW chief executive from 2007 until 2015.

He has also been accused of giving false testimony to a German parliamentary committee in 2017 when it was investigating the scandal. He said that he knew of the existence of the defeat devices only in September 2015 but prosecutors claim it was earlier.

Winterkorn further faces a charge of market manipulation. He is alleged to have "deliberately failed to inform the capital market in good time" after finding out about the emissions-rigging software, in violation of German stock market regulations. Winterkorn



BRAUNSCHWEIG, Germany: Former Volkswagen CEO Martin Winterkorn (second right) is seen next to his lawyers as he arrives for his trial at court in Braunschweig, northern Germany, on Sept 3, 2024. — AFP

had already agreed a settlement with Volkswagen in 2021, under which he would pay the company 11 million euros (\$12 million) in relation to the controversy.

Ahead of the trial, Volkswagen noted it was not party to the proceedings although it said that it would be monitoring them. The highest-ranking former executive to have been convicted so far in the scandal is ex-Audi CEO Rupert Stadler.

In June last year, he received a suspended sentence and a fine as part of a deal in exchange for admitting to fraud by negligence. The fraud has already cost VW more than 30 billion euros in fines, legal costs and compensation to car owners, mainly in the United States. — AFP

India's palm oil imports dive as demand drops

MUMBAI: India's palm oil imports in August fell more than a quarter from a month ago on ample stocks and as negative margins prompted refiners to curtail purchases of the tropical oil, five dealers said on Tuesday. Lower purchases by the world's biggest importer of vegetable oils could lead to higher stocks of palm oil in key producers

Indonesia and Malaysia, weighing on benchmark futures. Palm oil imports fell 27 percent in August from the previous month to 791,000 metric tons, according to estimates from dealers. "In July, imports were substantially higher than local requirements, so refiners curtailed imports this month," said Sandeep Bajoria, CEO of Sunvin Group, a vegetable oil brokerage.

"Furthermore, after the recent price rise in palm oil, it became as expensive as soybean, providing no incentive to purchase palm oil." Palm oil typically trades at a discount to soft oils, but it is currently being offered at the same price as competing soft oils for September shipments.

The refining margin flipped to negative territory for palm oil in August, which prompted buyers to curtail purchases, said Rajesh Patel, managing partner at edible oil trader and broker GGN Research.

Soybean imports in the month jumped 16 percent to 456,000 metric tons, the highest in more than two years, dealers said. Over the past month, local rapeseed oil prices have increased by more than 8 percent, which is prompting some refiners to blend rapeseed oil with comparatively cheaper soybean, said a Jaipur-based edible oil trader. Sunflower oil imports fell 21 percent in August to 288,000 metric tons, dealers said. The drop in imports of palm

oil and sunflower oil brought down the country's total edible oil imports by 17 percent to 1.53 million tons, as per dealers' estimates.

India is considering an increase in import taxes on vegetable oils to help protect farmers reeling from lower oilseed prices, two government sources said on Wednesday. India buys palm oil mainly from Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, while it imports soybean and sunflower oil from Argentina, Brazil, Russia and Ukraine. Industry body the Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) is likely to publish its data on August imports by mid-September. — Reuters

Holiday disruption at US hotels as 10,000 workers strike

BOSTON: Dozens of US hotels faced disruptions during Monday's busy Labor Day public holiday as over 10,000 workers went on strike after contract talks stalled, employees and the Unite Here union said. Wearing red shirts and banging buckets, Unite Here members picketed outside Hilton Worldwide, Hyatt Hotels and Marriott International locations from Honolulu, Hawaii to Boston, Massachusetts, to demand higher pay. The strike is occurring as the industry sees a 9 percent increase in Labor Day weekend domestic travel from last year, according to American Automobile Association booking data.

In calls to hotels in Hawaii, Boston and San Jose, California, front-desk staff said services such as restaurants and housekeeping were disrupted due to worker shortages on the strike's second day. "The hotel is open but it's very limited workers," said an employee at the Hyatt Regency Waikiki Beach in Honolulu, asking that her name not be used as she was not authorized to speak to press. Hyatt has contingency plans to minimize the impact on operations related to strike activity, Michael D'Angelo, head of labor relations at the hotel chain said in a statement. Hilton and Hyatt said they remain committed to



BOSTON, US: US hotel workers demonstrate as they strike over the Labor Day holiday weekend outside of the Boston Park Plaza Hotel in Boston, Massachusetts, on Sept 2, 2024. — AFP

negotiating a fair agreement with the union. Marriott did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Unite Here said workers were on strike at 25 hotels in nine US cities, with the stoppage set to last up to three days.

"Hotel workers across the US are celebrating Labor Day by fighting for raises, fair workloads, and the reversal of COVID-era service and staffing cuts," Unite Here International President

Gwen Mills said in a statement. Workers say wages do not cover living costs and hotels have not restored staffing levels slashed during the COVID-19 pandemic, the statement said.

Unite Here members won record contracts last year after rolling strikes in Los Angeles and a 47-day strike at Detroit casinos, according to the union which represents hotel, casino and airport workers in the United States and Canada. — Reuters

Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2024



Family keeps up Beirut dessert tradition



Samir Makari holds a handful of pine nuts as he prepares to make mufataka.

At a shop nestled in a busy, crowded Beirut district, Hasan El-Makary is weighing out containers of warm, fragrant mufataka, a traditional sweet in the Lebanese capital that is rarely found in stores. "I've been in this shop for 50 years, but we started specializing in mufataka 30 years ago," Makary said from the humble shop with its ageing decor and low ceiling. A kind of rice pudding made with turmeric, tahini sesame paste, sugar and pine nuts, mufataka is traditional in Beirut but less known even outside the city.

Makary, 73, said he used to sell other sweets but as demand grew for mufataka, he abandoned the rest and now just makes the yellow pudding, together with his cousin, who is also his business partner. "At the beginning you add turmeric, that's the main thing, then tahini, sugar and rice... we cook it slowly on fire," he said. The rice must be soaked overnight, and Makary said he comes to the shop at 5:00 am to make the dish, which takes around four hours and requires regular stirring.

He said his father started making mufataka despite initially believing people would not pay money for a dish that is normally prepared at home. Plastic containers of the pudding, which is eaten with a spoon, dotted trays and tables across the shop, waiting for customers who peered through a window to place their order from the busy street outside. Customer Iman Chehab, 55, was picking up mufataka for her mother, who used to make it herself.

"She is elderly now and she can't stir... it takes a lot of work," said Chehab, who works in human resources man-



Samir Makari stirs a pot as he makes mufataka.



Samir Makari weighs pine nuts as he prepares to make mufataka.



Samir Makari pours rice into a pot as he prepares mufataka.

agement. The dish is "something traditional for us who are from Beirut", she told AFP. Places like Makary's shop "are the old face of Beirut that we love and always want to remember", she added.

'Heritage'

A few bustling neighborhoods away, Samir Makari, 35, is carrying on the family tradition. At a gleaming shop also selling Arabic sweets like baklava, Makari attends to a huge copper pot of mufataka behind the counter, stirring it with a long, wooden-handled implement. He weighs out and mixes the sugar, tahini paste and pine nuts in a second pot, later combining it all. Mufataka used to be made just once a year on the last Wednesday in April, with families gathering by the sea at Beirut's public beach, father and son said.

The occasion was "Job's Wednesday", a reference to the biblical figure also mentioned in the Koran and who is renowned for his patience, the younger Makari said, noting the virtue is also required for making mufataka. On the wall of his shop, which he runs with his brother, were photos of his father and his grandfather at work.

He said he sometimes makes mufataka twice a day depending on demand, with some customers taking it outside Beirut to introduce it to those who do not know the dish. At the original store, the elder Makary said he was happy his children had kept up the tradition. Mufataka is part of "my heritage", he said, and the family has "taken it from generation to generation". — AFP



Samir Makari packs mufataka, a traditional Beirut sweet, into a plastic container at his shop.



Hasan Makari weighs mufataka.



Hasan Makari weighs mufataka.



Samir Makari packs mufataka, a traditional Beirut sweet, into a plastic container at his shop in the Lebanese capital. — AFP photos

Larry the Downing Street cat gets 'Russian' rival

Larry the Downing Street cat is facing a challenge to his position as the British government's chief mouser - a cute "Russian" kitten. New prime minister Keir Starmer and his family, who moved into Number 10 af-

ter the Labor leader's thumping general election win in July, brought their family cat JoJo with them. Now after "negotiations" with the Starmer children - who had wanted a German Shepherd dog - it has been agreed that JoJo will also be joined by a "Siberian kitten".

"There's been a long summer of negotiations, back and forth, different options," Starmer told BBC radio in an interview broadcast on Monday. "But now we've gone for... a kitten instead of a dog," he added. But Larry has been top cat at the British prime ministerial residence in central London for the last 13 years. The 17-year-old tabby was adopted from a cat rescue charity in

2011 to keep the Downing Street mice at bay, although then premier David Cameron revealed his performance left something to be desired.

Despite that, Larry has become a media star - particularly popular with journalists - and even has his own social media account @Number10cat. Starmer - Larry's sixth prime minister - revealed that feline rivalry was not the only issue with having pets in Downing Street. "The problem we've got, which is the same for JoJo the cat, is that the only door out of our new flat is bomb proof," he said. "Therefore, getting a cat flap is proving a little bit difficult," he added.

'Larry Bridges'

Given Larry's celebrity status as the greatest survivor of the political upheaval of recent years, officials have even drawn up a detailed plan in the event of his death. Like that for the late Queen Elizabeth II, which was code-named "London Bridge", Larry's plan has been dubbed "Larry Bridges". The arrival of the Starmer's new pet was welcomed by Sarah Elliott, central veterinary officer for the charity Cats Protection. But she added a few words of advice for the Starmer's as they try to integrate the new addition.

"As the junior member of the growing cat coalition at Downing Street, the

prime minister and his family will need to take plenty of time to slowly introduce the new addition to JoJo and Larry. And she added: "Young kittens can be exhausting for older statesmen like Larry, so he'll also need a safe, quiet area to retreat to when the energy of a younger member of the team gets a bit too much," she added. Larry himself on Tuesday made it clear he was very still very much in charge. "The kitten will REPORT to Larry the Cat," he said on X, via the human running his social media account. — AFP



Larry the Downing Street cat sits on the steps outside of Number 10, in central London on November 30, 2022.



Larry the Downing Street cat is pictured outside of 10 Downing Street, the official residence of Britain's Prime Minister in London.



Larry the Downing Street cat is pictured outside of 10 Downing Street, the official residence of Britain's Prime Minister in London. — AFP photos

Lifestyle



The remnants of a house that reappeared when the level of the Mornos artificial lake dropped following a drought, near the village of Lidoriki, about 240 km northwest of Athens. — AFP photos

Record-breaking temperatures and prolonged drought in Greece have exposed a sunken village in Athens' main reservoir for the first time in 30 years. The village of Kallio was submerged in the late 1970s when the Mornos dam was built 200 kilometers (124 miles) west of the capital, the artificial lake fed by the Mornos and Evinos rivers. With lake levels down by 30 percent in recent months according to state water operator EYDAP, the ruins of a school and houses have reappeared.



The remnants of a house that reappeared when the level of the Mornos artificial lake dropped following a drought.

"The level of Lake Mornos has dropped by 40 meters (131 feet)," said Yorgos Iosifidis, a 60-year-old pensioner who had to leave his home as a young man along with the other villagers when the area was flooded. "You see the first floor that remains of my father-in-law's two-storey house... and next to it you can see what's left of my cousins' house," Iosifidis, who now lives higher up the hill, told AFP. Drought worsened this year in the Mediterranean country

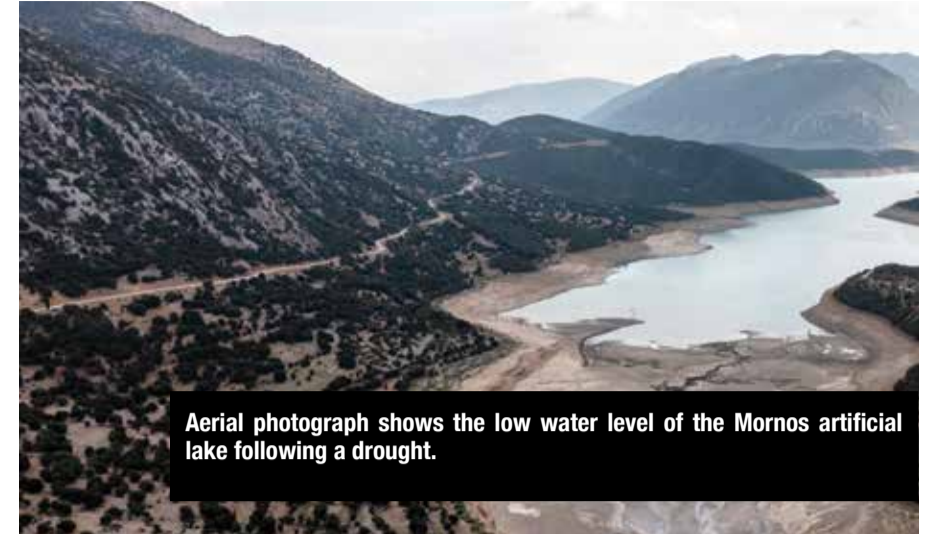


that is well accustomed to summer heat waves. After the mildest winter on record, Greece had its hottest July on record, according to preliminary weather data from the national observatory. This came after similarly record-breaking temperatures in June.

Nearly 80 houses in Kallio, in addition to the church and school, were "sacrificed" to supply Athens with water, Kallio village chairman Apostolis Gerodimos told state agency ANA.

This is the second time Kallio has reappeared, after another period of drought in the early 1990s, said Iosifidis. "If it doesn't rain soon, the level will drop further and the problem will be more acute than it was then," he said. Anastasis Papageorgiou, 26, a doctor who lives in Amygdalia, a village near Mornos, said the area has seen very little rain or snow in the last two years.

"The situation is difficult at the moment, so we have to be careful with



Aerial photograph shows the low water level of the Mornos artificial lake following a drought.



water," he said. The Greek authorities called on the 3.7 million inhabitants of Attica, the region surrounding Athens and home to a third of the Greek population, not to waste water. EYDAP has also tapped into additional reservoirs near the capital. On a visit to neighboring Thessaly on Monday to discuss reconstruction works after last year's destructive floods, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said Greece had to improve its water management.

"We don't have the luxury to waste water... at a time when we know with certainty that we will have less water, we must protect water resources more methodically than we have done so far," Mitsotakis said. Greece uses 85 percent of its water for irrigation and needs to build more dams, the prime minister said. — AFP



Residents of village of Kallio stand outside their house next to Mornos artificial lake.



The remnants of a house that reappeared when the level of the Mornos artificial lake dropped following a drought.



A cow and geese stand next to Mornos artificial lake.

Thailand nets 1.3 million kilograms of invasive fish

Thailand has netted more than 1.3 million kilograms of highly destructive blackchin tilapia fish, the government said Tuesday, as it battles to stamp out the invasive species. Shoals of blackchin tilapia, which can produce up to 500 young at a time, have been found in 19 Thai provinces, damaging ecosystems in rivers, swamps and canals by preying on small fish, shrimp and snail larvae. As well as the ecological impact, the government is worried about the effect on the kingdom's crucial fish-farming industry.

Fishing authorities caught 1,332,000 kilograms of blackchin tilapia between February and August

28, according to Nattacha Boonchai-insawat, the vice-president of a parliamentary committee set up to tackle the spread of the fish. "We talked to local residents and found out that the spread of tilapia has got worse - they found them in small canals, which was not the case before," he told AFP. The outbreak of tilapia will cost the Thai economy at least 10 billion baht (\$293 million), Nattacha said.

The fish, native to West Africa, were first discovered in Thailand's rivers in 2010 before spreading rapidly in 2018, and are now also found in the US state of Florida and in the Philippines. In July, the Thai government declared the eradication of the

species a national priority and began encouraging people to consume the fish. Promotional activities in central Phetchaburi province advertised tilapia-based fish sauces and sausages. Restaurants have also increasingly used the fish in cuisine, fried with garlic or sun-dried.

It remains unclear how the fish arrived in Thailand, but local media reports have said they could have been imported by a company from Ghana in 2010. A parliamentary investigation is under way to determine the cause of the infestation, Nattacha said. The Thai government has encouraged locals to catch the fish, offering to pay people 15 baht

(\$0.42) per kilogram. It has also designated 75 vending areas around the country where the fish can be sold.

Authorities have released predator species to hunt down the tilapia and are also developing genetically modified blackchin tilapia to produce sterile offspring. A UN science panel warned last year that the tilapia are spreading faster than ever, wrecking crops, distributing disease and upending ecosystems. More than 37,000 alien species have taken hold far from their places of origin, costing upwards of \$400 billion a year in damages and lost income, the UN panel said. — AFP



Blackchin tilapia fish in a basket after being caught in a canal in Bangkok. — AFP photos



A man catches blackchin tilapia fish in a canal in Bangkok.

Vegan Nutella to hit European shelves

Food giant Ferrero on Tuesday announced the imminent launch of a vegan version of its popular hazelnut spread Nutella in Italy, France and Belgium, saying the move was in response to changing consumer tastes. Vegan Nutella will no longer contain any dairy ingredients, which are to be replaced with chickpeas and rice syrup, Ferrero said in a statement. "No compromises" were made concerning the taste of Nutella, launched 60 years ago and marketed in around 170 countries, the Italian company said. The new product is to become available from Wednesday, it said. "More and more consumers are opting to reduce, or cut out, animal products," it said.



Lactose-intolerant people should, however, be careful about eating plant-based Nutella as it was being made in factories where dairy ingredients were used for other products, said Ferrero, which also owns the Kinder, Tic Tac and Ferrero Rocher brands. Along with other food companies, Ferrero has come under criticism for using palm oil to make Nutella, thus encouraging the clearing of tropical forests to establish palm oil monocultures. The company has since created a "segregated" chain for palm oil, which it says allows the tracing of its palm oil to the mills, "guaranteeing that it does not come from plantations subject to deforestation". — AFP

Lifestyle



Japan's Junko Hagiwara, also known as La Yunko, poses for pictures at the Instituto Andaluz de Flamenco in Seville on Aug 29, 2024. — AFP photos

'A WAY OF LIFE': THE JAPANESE DANCER CONQUERING SPAIN'S FLAMENCO SCENE

Japan's Junko Hagiwara has caused a stir in Spain's traditional flamenco world by unexpectedly winning the prize for best dancer at the country's leading flamenco festival — the first foreigner to do so. The announcement that the 48-year-old — who performs under the stage name "La Yunko" — was awarded the honor at the closing ceremony of August's "Cante de las Minas" festival in the southeastern town of La Union was met with a mixture of applause and some jeering.

"I was very surprised; I could not believe it. I believed it but I did not believe it," she told AFP by phone from the southern city of Seville, where she has lived for over two decades when asked about her reaction to getting the award. Hagiwara, who was born in Kawasaki

near Tokyo, said she did not notice the jeers because she "went blank" when her name was announced as the winner.

"When I dance, I don't think I am a foreigner, that I am Japanese. I don't think that. It doesn't occur to me. I am simply on stage, I listen to the guitar, the singing and what I feel I express in my dancing," she added. Created in 1961, the "Cante de las Minas" festival is considered to be the world's most important annual flamenco festival. It features prizes for best singing, guitar playing and musical instrument performance in addition to dance. Critics were unanimous in their support for Hagiwara.

"I liked her more than her competitors for three reasons: her classicism, the fact that she did not dance for the gallery, that is, for the public, and, fi-

nally, her good training," flamenco critic Manuel Bohorquez wrote in online newspaper Sevilla Info.

'Way of life'

Hagiwara said she became fascinated by flamenco — a centuries-old art form that combines rhythmic hand clapping, stamping feet and impassioned singing — at age 14 when she watched a gymnastics championship in which a Spanish competitor used the genre's guitar music. "I loved the flamenco guitar, the sound and the melody, the rhythm," she said. There was no internet at the time to help her explore her new interest, so she went to a shop that rented records and borrowed the only available flamenco CD. "I listened to it, but there was no guitar, it was just singing," she recalled.

"Flamenco performers often have a very hoarse voice, very deep, and it scared me," she added while laughing. Hagiwara went on to study pedagogy at Waseda University in Tokyo, where she joined a flamenco club, and started to take flamenco lessons. But she felt she needed more. In 2002 she decided to take the dramatic move across the world to Seville, capital of the southern region of Andalusia and the cradle of flamenco, to pursue her passion.

She made the move despite objections from her parents. "In Japan, you can learn technique, choreography, but, of course, flamenco is culture, it's a way of life," she said. "My father got very, very angry. He did not speak to me for three months. And my mother said 'how shameful, how shameful,'" Hagiwara said.

Culture shocks

In Spain, she dedicated herself to flamenco, learning to dance with the best teachers, became fluent in Spanish and married an Andalusian man from the coastal town of Tarifa. She gradually made a name for herself as a performer in Seville, and has also taught flamenco. As is the case with many foreigners, she was surprised at first by the lively way locals talked to each other. "I thought everyone was fighting!" Hagiwara said. There were other differences. "In Japanese culture, we place a lot of value on hiding the feeling, and in flamenco, you have to show it. In Japan it is for the inside, and in flamenco it is for the outside," she said. — AFP



French director Claude Lelouch receives the Cartier Glory to the Filmmaker Award during a ceremony at the 81st International Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido.



French director Claude Lelouch receives the Cartier Glory to the Filmmaker Award during a ceremony at the 81st International Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido, on September 2, 2024. — AFP photos



(From left) Actor Kad Merad, Valerie Perrin, French director Claude Lelouch and Julia Vignali attend the red carpet of the movie 'Finalement' (Finally) presented out of competition during the 81st International Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido, on September 2, 2024.

Italy's screen legend Mastroianni gets Venice photo show

Over 100 black and white photographs of Italy's most dashing leading man — Marcello Mastroianni — have been on display during the Venice Film Festival to celebrate 100 years since the actor's birth. Mastroianni, who was born September 28, 1924, is one of Italy's most beloved actors who became an international cinema icon after his portrayal of the pensively cool protagonist of Federico Fellini's "La Dolce Vita".

But the versatile and charismatic actor enjoyed a nearly six-decade career, playing both dramatic and comedic roles in over 150 films, where he was often paired with the most glamorous actresses of the day, including Sophia Loren, with whom he had a lifelong friendship. The show, running through January 9, is being held on the small Venice Island of San Servolo, where an art center now occupies what was once an insane asylum.

It was organized by the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia (Experimental Center of Cinematography Foundation), which tapped their cinematic archives, Italy's largest. In the show notes, curator Laura Delli Colli called Mastroianni "a protagonist who through his characters combined the charm of a graceful indolence with a charisma and an interpretative ability that touched all the chords of cinema." But more was at work to make him so cherished in Italy, Delli Colli told AFP. "He didn't behave like a star and was a bit anti-star," she said, calling Mastroianni "faithful to himself in his simplicity."

ing sunglasses and exuding Italian nonchalance or melancholy. He is also pictured on set with the top directors of the day — Federico Fellini, Vittorio De Sica, Luchino Visconti — drinking champagne, joking with co-stars, or relaxing between takes. Early photos from his career see him playing opposite Gina Lollobrigida, or Loren in 1955's "Too Bad She's Bad".

Later images see the veteran actor on the set of 1985's "Maccheroni" by Ettore Scola, he and co-star Jack Lemmon sitting in the other's chair. "Being an actor is an extraordinary job: they pay you to play and the cinema allows you to keep playing," Mastroianni once said. Mastroianni played opposite a long list of beautiful women throughout his career, earning himself the label of "Latin lover" — one he chafed at.

Ursula Andress, "La Dolce Vita" co-star Anita Ekberg, Monica Vitti and Catherine Deneuve, with whom he had a daughter, are seen in on-set photographs with the actor. "I don't like myself in the mirror," the actor said, one of many of the actor's quotes that accompany the photographs in the show.

"Short nose, fleshy mouth. The more I think about it, the more I ask myself how it's possible that such a face feeds me," he said. The show is titled "Marcello, Come Here", the order given by Ekberg — splashing about in the Trevi fountain — in "La Dolce Vita", perhaps one of cinema's most famous scenes. Mastroianni, who won countless awards during his career, was given a career achievement Golden Lion from the Venice Film Festival in 1990. He died in 1996. — AFP

'Paid to play'

Mastroianni is shown in some familiar guises: cigarette in hand, wear-

Retirement not an option for French veteran in Venice

Veteran French filmmaker Claude Lelouch has denied suggestions that his latest movie, "Finally", which premieres at the Venice Film Festival on Monday, will be his last. The 86-year-old director has been shooting pictures for almost seven decades and won Best Original Screenplay and Best Foreign Language Film at the Oscars way back in 1967 for "A Man and a Woman".

Given the title of his new movie, cinema buffs in his native France specu-

lated that it might be his swan song, but Lelouch told reporters he was eager to carry on working. "I know I'm making my last films, of course, so I'm going to call this one 'Finally,' but I'm going to make another one called 'Finally, It Never Ends,'" he told a news conference. "As long as ideas keep coming to my mind, I'm going to keep doing this job, and right now, I've never had so many ideas, so I can't wait for next year to start filming," he added.

"Finally" is a comedy drama that fol-

lows a lawyer, played by Kad Merad, on a cross-country road trip in France as he seeks to find new meaning to his life. The ensemble also includes Elsa Zylberstein, Sandrine Bonnaire and singer Barbara Pravi. The movie is being shown out of competition at the Venice Film Festival, where Lelouch is also set to receive a special Filmmaker Award. "Life is like a race. ... In the final moments of this race, you need to speed up, not slow down," Lelouch said. — Reuters



Italian actor Marcello Mastroianni and his actress daughter Chiara arrive May 19 at the Palais des Festivals in Cannes to attend the screening of "Three Lives, And Only One Death" by Chilean director Raoul Ruiz at the 49th Cannes Film Festival. - AFP

Sports

Bangladesh beat Pakistan for historic Test series victory

Pakistan faces England in a three-match home series starting next month

RAWALPINDI: Bangladesh celebrated a historic first-ever Test series win over Pakistan and a 2-0 clean sweep with a tense six-wicket victory in Rawalpindi on Tuesday. Shakib Al Hasan hit the winning boundary 25 minutes before the tea break on the fifth and final day to spark jubilation in the away dressing room.

A handful of Bangladesh supporters waving the nation's flag were also there to see their country win only a third away series in 33 attempts. Shakib remained unbeaten on 21 and Mushfiqur Rahim was on 22 as the visitors painstakingly overhauled the tricky 185-run target. Openers Zakir Hasan (40) and Shadman Islam (24), plus skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto (38) and Mominul Haque (34), all put runs on the board to help Bangladesh inch their way to a famous win.

Pakistan scored 274 and 172 in the second Test while Bangladesh recovered from 26-6 to make 262 in their first innings. Litton Das' 138 rescued Bangladesh with the bat before fast bowlers Hasan Mahmud (5-43) and Nahid Rana (4-44) wrecked Pakistan on Monday with career-best figures.

Bangladesh won the first Test by 10 wickets — also in Rawalpindi — for their first victory over Pakistan in 14 matches. Najmul described

the series win as momentous and a heroes' welcome awaits when they get home to a country which recently saw protests and the overthrow of former premier Sheikh Hasina.

"It means a lot to Bangladesh cricket and to all the players," said the captain. "I cannot express the feelings but I can say that we all are very happy and overjoyed. When we came here everybody was determined to do something special and we wanted to win. I am happy that everyone did his job to the best and we have won a historic series."

Bangladesh outplayed the home team in both Tests and were the better bowling side despite having an inexperienced pace attack. Before this, Bangladesh's only away Test series wins came in the West Indies in 2009 and Zimbabwe three years ago.

In contrast, Pakistan have now lost six of their last 10 home Tests, drawing the other four. "It is extremely disappointing to lose when you start a busy season," said skipper Shan Masood, whose team faces England in a three-match home series starting next month.

"In both the Tests we let them back in the game and in this one from 26-6, so it is something we need to address before our next series." — AFP



RAWALPINDI: Bangladesh's players pose with the trophy as they celebrate after winning the second and last Test cricket match against Pakistan, at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium in Rawalpindi. — AFP

Lord's to stage 2025 World Test Championship

LONDON: Lord's will host the World Test Championship final for the first time in 2025, the International Cricket Council announced on Tuesday. The final between the two highest-placed teams in the World Test Championship rankings will start on June 11 at the 'Home of Cricket'.

Australia are the reigning World Test champions after beating India at The Oval in 2023. New Zealand won the tournament's first edition against India in Southampton in 2021. Nine Test playing nations are ranked on their performances in the five-day, red-ball format over a two-year cycle, which started in 2023.

India sit top of the current Test rankings ahead of second placed Australia, while New Zealand are in third place and England lie fourth. The two Lord's finalists will be confirmed on January 28. Guy Lavender, Chief Executive and Secretary of the Marylebone Cricket Club — which owns the Lord's stadium in north London — said: "We're delighted to be working with the ICC to bring the World Test Championship Final to Lord's for the first time."

"It is our great privilege to be asked to host a final of any kind but to welcome the two best men's sides in Test cricket, our most cherished format, is a singular honor. "It will be an experience not to be missed, adding to the storied 140-year history of Lord's Tests." — AFP

Palestinian athlete sees himself as a voice for his people

PARIS: Nine months ago, Fadi Aldeeb missed several calls from his brother. The next day, he found out that he had been killed in an Zionist attack on his home. Aldeeb, the only Palestinian athlete at the Paris Paralympics, left the Gaza Strip a decade ago for a wheelchair basketball career that took him to Turkey and Greece before France.

"On December 6, I had a French league game and when I was finished I found my brother had called me many times... I tried to call back but there was no connection," Aldeeb, who took part in the Paralympics shot put, told Reuters.

"The 7th of December at night I received (the news) that 'Okay, your brother was killed in an attack on our building'," said Aldeeb, adding that he often wonders what his brother's last message was. In Paris, Aldeeb is feeling the pressure of being what he says is the voice of his people at the Paralympics.

"It's too many feelings, too much responsibility, because I'm not speaking about myself. I'm not playing for myself. I'm here for 11 million, for all who say I'm a Palestinian, for all who talk about humanity, and to talk about the freedom of Palestine," he said.

"When we are raising the flag here in Paris, we are (showing we are) still alive, we still need our human rights, we still need our freedom," he said. The Palestine Olympic Committee was recognized three decades ago by the International Olympic Committee. Gaza has a population of about 2.3 million people, and millions more Palestinians live elsewhere.

Other athletes' support

Aldeeb, 40, said he became paraplegic after being shot in the back by an Zionist soldier in 2001

'Monster' Inoue set for Vegas after stopping Doheny

TOKYO: Japan's undisputed super-bantamweight world champion Naoya Inoue opened the door for a fight in Las Vegas next year after retaining his titles against Ireland's TJ Doheny in Tokyo on Tuesday. The undefeated "Monster" won by technical knockout in the seventh round at Ariake Arena when Doheny started hobbling and was unable to continue after injuring his hip.

The 31-year-old Inoue, who took his record to 28-0 with 25 wins by knockout, was making his second defence since becoming the undisputed super-bantamweight world champion last December. Legendary American promoter Bob Arum said in an interview in the ring that Inoue would defend his titles once more in Tokyo in December before fighting in a "big celebration" in Las Vegas next year.

Inoue said nothing had been decided but he declined to rule out the possibility of a first bout in the United States since June 2021. "This fight is just finished so I don't have anything to say," Inoue said when asked about Arum's comments.

"We also have talks about December and I'd like to speak to my promoter about that and decide." Inoue is just the second man to become undisputed world champion at two different weights since the four-belt era began in 2004. American Terence Crawford was the first. Inoue was fighting for the first time since he beat Mexico's Luis Nery in front of 55,000 fans at the Tokyo Dome in May.

Hip injury

That bout saw the Japanese fighter knocked down for the first time in his career but he never looked in serious danger against the 37-year-old Doheny on Tuesday. Inoue had to be patient against his cautious opponent but he began to

during the second Intifada, or uprising, against Zionist entity's occupation. He raises his voice when talking about life in Gaza, where the Health Ministry says over 40,000 people have been killed since the beginning of an offensive against the militant group Hamas that led an attack on southern Zionist entity on Oct. 7 last year.

About 1,200 people were killed and around 250 were taken hostage in the attack, according to Zionist allies. Aldeeb, who will resume playing wheelchair basketball in the Paris suburb of Genevilliers after the Paralympics, sees Zionist's military as a "killing machine".

"There is no difference (for Zionist's military) between athletes, disabled or non-disabled, children or women, big or small homes, hospitals, hotels, universities or school," he said. Zionist entity says its offensive is aimed against Hamas, not civilians. It accuses Hamas fighters of using public buildings such as hospitals to hide in, putting civilians at risk, and says it takes great precautions to limit harm to civilians.

Aldeeb made clear he felt uncomfortable with the presence of Zionist athletes in Paris, which held a ceremony before the Games to pay tribute to Zionist Olympic team members killed by Palestinian gunmen at the 1972 Munich Olympics.

But welcoming support he had received from other competitors, he said: "I'm not feeling that I'm alone or feeling like I'm alone, these people really, it's amazing and incredible, they give me a feeling of humanity."

A far-left lawmaker said before the Olympics, also held in Paris this summer, that Zionist's delegation was not welcome and called for protests against its participation. France said after his remark that Israeli athletes would have 24-hour protection. The Olympic charter states that competitors at the Olympic Games should enjoy freedom of expression but that no "political propaganda" is permitted in any Olympic sites, venues or other areas. Aldeeb was speaking outside the Olympic village. — Reuters



TOKYO: Japan's Naoya Inoue (2nd R) celebrates his victory over Ireland's TJ Doheny in their IBF-WBA-WBC-WBO super-bantamweight title boxing match at Ariake Arena in Tokyo. — AFP

land some big body blows as the fight progressed.

The fight came to an abrupt halt when Doheny suddenly began limping about 20 seconds into the seventh round. He was unable to walk and had to be helped from the ring by his team.

Doheny's trainer Hector Bermudez said his fighter had injured a sciatic nerve in the sixth round and "tried his best" to carry on. "I know Inoue did a little flurry, a three-punch combination, but that wasn't what injured him," said Bermudez.

"He was already injured in the previous round." Inoue was expected to dominate from the start but Doheny kept himself in the fight and made the champion work hard to find an opening. Inoue said his plan had been to start

the match cautiously and raise the pace around the sixth and seventh rounds.

He said his aim for the fight had been to "beat him with boxing". "Maybe everyone was expecting the fight to turn out a little differently," he said. "But personally, it's not something I'm worried about." Doheny, who held the IBF super-bantamweight world title from 2018 to 2019, saw his record drop to 26-5, with 20 KOs.

On the undercard, Japan's Yoshiaki Takei retained his WBO world bantamweight title with a unanimous decision win over countryman Daigo Higa. Takei was making his first defence after taking the title from Australia's Jason Moloney in May. — AFP

Ugandan Olympian in ICU after partner set her on fire

NAIROBI: A Ugandan Olympian is in intensive care in a Kenyan hospital after being doused with petrol and set on fire allegedly by her partner, officials said Tuesday, the latest horrific incident of gender-based violence in the East African country.

Long-distance runner Rebecca Cheptegei, 33, was assaulted after her Kenyan partner Dickson Ndiema Marangach reportedly snuck into her home in Endebess in the western county of Trans-Nzoia at around 2:00 pm on Sunday while she and her children were at church, police said. "Dickson, who had procured petrol, began pouring (it) on Rebecca before he set her ablaze," a police report said late Monday, adding that he was also injured by the flames. It said that neighbours had rescued the pair and taken them to nearby Kitale County Referral Hospital where they were admitted with "multiple burns".

They were transferred to Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital (MTRH), where Cheptegei was admitted to the intensive care unit on Monday. "Her condition looks serious with facial burns and bandages," a MTRH staff member told AFP, requesting anonymity as they were not authorized to speak to the media.

The police report did not mention if Cheptegei's children were hurt in the attack. The Ugandan athlete and Marangach were a couple who "constantly had family wrangles", the police report said. Local media said the athlete had sustained burns over 75 percent of her body, and that her parents were travelling from Uganda to visit her. They said their daughter had bought land and built a house in the Trans-Nzoia area which lies on the border with Uganda, according to local media. Cheptegei placed 44th in the marathon at the Paris Olympics.

The Ugandan Athletics Federation expressed its regret over the incident, saying Cheptegei had



Uganda's Rebecca Cheptegei (right). — AFP

"suffered severe injuries". "This follows an incident involving her Kenyan boyfriend pouring petrol and setting fire on her," it said in a statement on X.

Gender-based violence

A report by the Kenyan Bureau of National Statistics published in January 2023 found that 34 percent of women in Kenya have experienced physical violence since the age of 15. It said women who had "been married are much more likely to have experienced violence", noting that 41 percent of such women reported incidents compared to 20 percent of unmarried women. The assault on Cheptegei comes two years after Kenyan-born athlete Damaris Mutua was found dead in Iten, a world-famous running hub in the Rift Valley in the west of the country.

Her death followed the murder of record-breaking runner Agnes Tirop, 25, who was found stabbed to death at her home in Iten in 2021. Tirop's estranged husband Emmanuel Ibrahim Rotich went on trial over her murder in 2023. He has denied the charges. His trial is ongoing. — AFP

Sports

World Cup within reach as Asian qualifying for 2026 ramps up

Iraq, Oman, Kuwait and Asian Cup runners-up Jordan are the other sides in the group

HONG KONG: Son Heung-min's South Korea face Palestine while Japan host old rivals China when the third round of Asian qualifying kicks off on Thursday with the 2026 World Cup tantalizingly close. The expanded 48-team World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico is looming into view.

The 18 remaining sides in Asia are divided into three groups of six and will play home and away fixtures, with the top two from each pool guaranteed a place at the World Cup. South Korea will aim to put a turbulent year on and off the pitch behind them with a fast start against the Palestinians in Seoul in Group B.

Iraq, Oman, Kuwait and Asian Cup runners-up Jordan are the other sides in the group. The Koreans are on their fourth coach of the year in the form of Hong Myung-bo, following the sacking of Jürgen Klinsmann in February and spells for two different caretaker managers.

Skipper Son will undoubtedly be the Koreans' biggest threat but Hong is also looking to the future, giving a first call-up to exciting attacker Yang Min-hyeok. The 18-year-old will join Son at Premier League Spurs in January.

"We won't have much time to practise

before these qualifying matches," said Hong, who first coached South Korea at the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, where they went out in the group phase. "For us to take the next step, we'll have to work even harder, and it's important to keep developing young talent in order to be more competitive at the World Cup."

While the Koreans will expect to reach the World Cup for the 12th time, Palestine are making their debut at this stage of qualifying, despite the conflict in Gaza. Under their Tunisian coach Makram Daboub, Palestine reached the knockout rounds of the Asian Cup for the first time at the start of this year.

Daboub's side went down to Qatar in the last 16 and the hosts went on to beat Jordan in the final to retain their continental crown. Qatar, the 2022 World Cup hosts, are in Group A and start the latest qualifying round home to the United Arab Emirates on Thursday. Qatar and Iran will be favorites to qualify from a group that also includes Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and North Korea.

Mitoma threat

Group C looks much harder to call. In the first round of matches in that group,

Japan play China while Australia host Bahrain. Ambitious Saudi Arabia, under the Italian coach Roberto Mancini, welcome Indonesia to Jeddah.

Japan and Australia both sailed through the second qualifying round with maximum points and without conceding a goal. Japan are the highest-ranked team in Asia at 18 in the world and under coach Hajime Moriyasu they beat Spain and Germany at the 2022 World Cup, before going out in the last 16 to Croatia on penalties.

In Brighton winger Kaoru Mitoma, Japan have a player who looks back to his scintillating best and returns to the squad after a frustrating few months hindered by injury. In contrast, China squeezed into the third qualifying round thanks to a superior head-to-head record over Thailand and have only reached the World Cup once, in 2002.

Their Croatian coach Branko Ivanovic warned that heavily fancied Japan will have a fight on their hands when the sides meet in Saitama. "We're not going to go into any game with our hands up," he said.

The third qualifying round wraps up in June. The sides that finish third



NEWCASTLE: Tottenham Hotspur's South Korean striker #07 Son Heung-Min reacts to a missed chance during the English Premier League football match between Newcastle United and Tottenham Hotspur. — AFP

and fourth in each group are still in the hunt for the 2026 World Cup and will go through to the fourth qualifying round. South Korea's run to the semi-fi-

nals of the 2002 World Cup, which they co-hosted with Japan, remains the best performance of an Asian team in the history of the competition. — AFP

Ten Hag has Man Utd's full backing: Omar

LONDON: Manchester United chief executive Omar Berrada says struggling manager Erik ten Hag has the full backing of the club despite a poor start to the Premier League season. United finished eighth in the league last season - their worst since 1990 - but Ten Hag led his men to an unexpected FA Cup final win against Manchester City.

The Dutchman was handed a one-year contract extension in July but only after club bosses considered alternatives. Now Ten Hag is under pressure again following Sunday's miserable 3-0 home defeat to Liverpool. United's second loss from three games this season, which left them 14th in the table.

Speaking alongside new sporting director Dan Ashworth shortly before kick-off against Liverpool, Berrada said it would take more than a couple of bad results to shake the club's belief in their manager.

"Do we still believe in Erik? Absolutely," he said. "We think Erik is the right coach for us and we're



Erik ten Hag

fully backing him." Ten Hag's contract was extended before either Berrada or Ashworth had taken up their positions but both said they were happy with the decision.

Ashworth said: "I've really enjoyed working with Erik for the last eight weeks. "I see my job is to support him in every way I possibly can and whether that's operationally, whether that's with recruitment, whether that's with medical, whether that's with psychology, whether that's training ground flow, it's just to take as much of that off him to allow him to ful-

ly focus on the training pitch and the match tactical plan to deliver success for Manchester United."

Ashworth's first few weeks in the job were dominated by the transfer window, in which United signed Matthijs De Ligt, Manuel Ugarte, Joshua Zirkzee, Leny Yoro and Noussair Mazraoui. But just as notable were the departures of players including Scott McTominay and Jadon Sancho.

After a falling-out with Ten Hag early last season Sancho returned to former club Borussia Dortmund on loan in January. The pair appeared to have made up as Sancho took part in United's pre-season and played in the Community Shield but on deadline day he joined Chelsea on loan with an obligation to buy.

Asked what had changed, Ashworth said it had been down to the player's wish to move on. "We felt we had enough depth in that particular position to be able to cover it, we've got four really good wide players — Jadon was a fifth — and it just enabled us to make that decision that if it was good for him and good for us it was something we were willing to consider," he said.

"He wanted to explore the opportunity at Chelsea, like Scott wanted to explore the opportunity at Napoli, like Aaron (Wan-Bissaka) wanted to explore the opportunity at West Ham. We're not in a position where we're kicking players out of the club." — AFP

been ruled out as he was busy finalizing a transfer from Borussia Dortmund to Leganes. "It will be a difficult match for us, but we know Zambia having played them in the last Cup of Nations qualifying competition," said coach Emere Fae, referring to a home win and away loss. Zambia, qualifiers for the last Cup of Nations after missing the previous three, must do without injured forward Patson Daka for the Group G opener.

Morocco v Gabon

Soufiane Rahimi, who scored in six consecutive matches for bronze medallists Morocco at the 2024 Paris Olympics to create a Games record, is among the forward options for coach Walid Regragui. After becoming the first World Cup semi-finalists from Africa in Qatar two years ago, Morocco crashed out of the Cup of Nations this year following a last-16 loss to South Africa. The Atlas Lions qualify automatically for the 2025 finals as hosts, but chose to compete in Group B to gain competitive match practice.

South Africa v Uganda

South Africa, who exceeded expectations by finishing third at the 2024 Cup of Nations, will lack injured captain and star goalkeeper Ronwen Williams for the Group K match in Soweto. Forward Percy Tau is another absentee amid speculation he may leave African champions Al Ahly of Egypt to join Wydad Casablanca of Morocco, whose new coach is South African Rulani Mokwena. Uganda are likely to be well briefed as their former goalkeeper, Denis Onyango, has been based in South Africa since 2006, and still plays occasionally for Pretoria outfit Mamelodi Sundowns. — AFP

Luis Suarez announces retirement

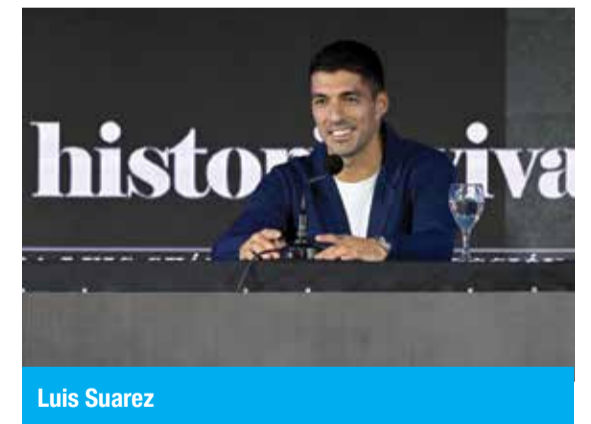
MONTEVIDEO: Uruguay icon Luis Suarez announced his retirement from international football on Monday, confirming that he will hang up his boots following Friday's 2026 World Cup qualifier against Paraguay in Montevideo. "Friday will be my last match for my country," an emotional Suarez, 37, told a press conference.

"It was not an easy decision to make, but I do it with the peace of mind that I will give my maximum until the very last game of my (Uruguay) career." The former Barcelona and Liverpool striker is widely regarded as one of the greatest players of his generation and will retire from international football as Uruguay's top scorer with 69 goals from 142 appearances.

Suarez, who was famously kicked out of the 2014 World Cup after being handed a four-month ban for biting Italy's Giorgio Chiellini, made his debut for Uruguay in 2007. The Inter Miami forward helped Uruguay capture the 2011 Copa America, where he was named player of the tournament, and would eventually represent the South American country in nine major tournaments. Suarez said Monday that inspiring Uruguay to that Copa crown had been the highlight of his career. "I wouldn't trade the Copa America title for anything," he said. "It was the best moment of my career. I wouldn't trade it for anything."

A dynamic, skilful attacker with a lethal eye for goal, Suarez was also never far from controversy. As well as the biting incident that ended his involvement in the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, he was also one of the villains of the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, when his cynical handball on the goal-line denied Ghana what would have been a late winner in the quarter-finals.

Suarez was sent off for that offence and Ghana subsequently missed the ensuing penalty, allowing Uruguay to sneak into the semi-finals after a penalty shoot-out. Controversy also dogged Suarez throughout his club career, notably in 2011 when he was handed an eight-game ban by authorities in England for allegedly racially abusing Manchester United's France star Patrice Evra. — AFP



Luis Suarez

Nigeria seek revenge against Benin, AFCON qualifying kicks off

JOHANNESBURG: Nigeria will be guided by caretaker coach Augustine Eguavoen when they seek revenge against neighbors Benin as 2025 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) qualifying kicks off on Wednesday. He was a late replacement after German Bruno Labbadia reportedly changed his mind about taking charge because the Nigeria Football Federation declined to foot his tax bill. Former Bundesliga manager Labbadia had been lined up to confront compatriot Gernot Rohr, who masterminded a 2-1 victory by Benin over Nigeria three months ago in a 2026 World Cup qualifier.

Jodel Dossou and Steve Mounie scored for the Benin Cheetahs as they came from behind to stun opponents 52 places higher in the world rankings. Victory was particularly sweet for 71-year-old Rohr as he spent five years in charge of Nigeria before being sacked amid mounting public pressure related to disappointing results.

Losing to Benin triggered the departure of former star Finidi George after just four matches as the Super Eagles coach. Nigeria were runners-up to hosts Ivory Coast in the 2024 Cup of Nations final and are blessed with abundant attacking talent. Reigning African Footballer of the Year Victor Osimhen, Victor Boniface and Ademola Lookman are some of the stars

Eguavoen can choose for the Group D showdown in southeastern city Uyo. Here, AFP Sport looks at five other high-profile opening-round fixtures to be played between Wednesday and Saturday.

Cameroon v Namibia

Ongoing disagreements between the Cameroon sports ministry and the Samuel Eto'o-led national football federation have created confusion over where the Group J match will be staged. Originally slated for Atlantic port Douala, the ministry moved the fixture to the capital, Yaounde, only for former Barcelona superstar Eto'o to insist it be played in Garoua. When the ministry chose Belgian Marc Brys as coach this year without involving Eto'o, it set in motion a meltdown in relations between government and football officials.

Egypt v Cape Verde

Record seven-time Cup of Nations winners Egypt flopped at the 2024 tournament, losing a last-16 penalty shootout against the Democratic Republic of Congo. The tournament was a huge personal disappointment for Liverpool star and national team captain Mohamed Salah, whose group-stage injury forced an unexpectedly early return to England. Egypt will be wary of Cape Verde in Group C despite enjoying home advantage after the island nation snatched a 99th-minute group draw at the Cup of Nations in the Ivory Coast this year.

Ivory Coast v Zambia

Sebastien Haller, the Ivory Coast match-winner in the 2024 Cup of Nations final against Nigeria, has

Classifieds

Clinics & Hospitals

Clinics

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

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| Qibla | 22459381 |
| Ayoum Al-Qibla | 22451082 |
| Mirqab | 22456536 |
| Sharq | 22465401 |
| Salmiya | 25746401 |

Hospitals

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

Change of Name

I, Safdar Faruq Ahmed, holder of Indian Passport No. W0778014, having permanent address at Arathi, Taluka Shriwardhan, Dist: Raigad, Maharashtra - 402110, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) Safdar Faruq Ahmed and (surname) Khamkar. **(#6162 03/09/2024)**

in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) Munira and (surname) Master. **(#5916 03/09/2024)**

I, Basha Peerzade Sayed Sameer Sayed, holder of Indian Passport No. M9914793, having permanent address Dakhni Mohalla, Manki, Karwar, Karnataka - 581348, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: (given

name) Sayed Sameer and (surname) Peerzade. **(#6161 02/09/2024)**

I, Yashoda, holder of Indian Passport No. V9394108, having permanent address # 1-81/16 Janani, Punkemar Kulur, Mangalore, Dakshina Kannada - 575013, Karnataka, India, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: (given name) Yashoda Krishna and (surname) Bangera. **(02/09/2024)**

Brazil swimmer seals golden treble

In wheelchair rugby final, Japan beat USA to claim first Paralympics title



SAINT DENIS: (From L) US' Ezra Frech, Netherlands's Joel de Jong, Germany's Leon Schaefer, South Africa's Puseletso Michael Mabote and Denmark's Daniel Wagner compete in the Men's 100m T63 athletic event during the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games. — AFP

PARIS: Brazilian swimmer Gabrielzinho won a remarkable third swimming gold at the Paris Paralympics on Monday while Italian sprinter Valentina Petrillo became the first openly transgender athlete to compete in the Games.

Sherman Guity of Costa Rica left the world's fastest amputee sprinters in his wake as he won the eagerly awaited men's T64 100m, while 19-year-old Californian sprinter-jumper Ezra Frech claimed the first of what promises to be many track and field golds.

All eyes were on the pool at La Defense Arena to see 22-year-old Gabrielzinho complete a golden treble with victory in the 200 metres freestyle S2 final. Gabrielzinho, who has no arms or hands and whose legs are atrophied, clocked 3min 58.92sec ahead of neutral athlete Vladimir Danilenko.

In another outstanding swimming feat, Belarusian Ihar Boki won the 20th Paralympic gold of his career by winning the 50m freestyle for the visually impaired. On the track at the Stade de France, trans-

gender sprinter Petrillo, 50, finished second in her heat of the T12 400 metres for the visually impaired, qualifying for the semi-finals.

But that proved a step too far and the Italian was eliminated despite running a personal best 57.58sec as she placed third and outside the places for the final. Petrillo suffers from Stargardt disease, a genetic retinal condition which leads to progressive loss of vision.

Amputee speed merchants

Guity charged to a clear victory in the men's T64 100m, clocking a Paralympic record of 10.65sec ahead of world champion Maxcel Amo Manu from Italy who timed 10.76sec. Reigning champion Felix Streng of Germany had to settle for the bronze medal one hundredth of a second further back. "I am very happy with this result. I didn't expect it. I ran against very strong athletes. It was a Paralympic final and I had to give it my all," 27-year-old Guity said.

Two-time champion Jonnie Peacock of Great Britain was fifth and US sprinter Hunter Woodhall, whose wife is newly crowned women's Olympic long jump champion Tara Davis-Woodhall, was sixth. A new sprint star was born as Frech won a closely-fought T63 100m final in a personal best 12.06sec.

The Californian, an above-the-knee amputee, roared with delight and ran into the arms of his family in the front row. Frech revealed he had only been using the 100m as preparation for his favorite event, the high jump.

"I was treating this as like a warm-up for high jump. Go out there, get the blood flowing, have a good race, and then come back tomorrow and win high jump," he said. "But at about 50 metres, I was like, whoa, I'm in this, I got a good start, I've done everything right... I felt like everybody (else in the race) was sleeping on me."

He pledged to make it double gold on Tuesday: "I'm definitely not satisfied. I'm still hungry. Tomorrow night, I'll get the gold in the high jump." The triathlon events went ahead after being postponed for 24 hours because of concerns about the water quality of the River Seine.

France's Alexis Hanquiquant started these Paralympics as a flag bearer for his country and lighting the cauldron at the opening ceremony—on Monday he finished it by retaining his triathlon title. After defending the PTS4 title he won at Tokyo 2020, Hanquiquant, whose leg was amputated below the knee after a work accident, said: "They've been the perfect Games for me."

In the wheelchair rugby final, Japan beat three-time champions the USA 48-41 to claim their first Paralympics title. Katsuya Hashimoto scored 19 tries for Japan, who had secured bronze in the past two Games. In the medals table, leaders China added another 10 golds to move onto 43 with Great Britain second on 29 golds. The USA are third with 13 golds. — AFP

Zverev, Dimitrov target US Open semi-finals

NEW YORK: Alexander Zverev and fellow Grand Slam veteran Grigor Dimitrov look to make the US Open semi-finals on Tuesday and take a step closer to maiden Grand Slam titles. US duo Taylor Fritz and Frances Tiafoe are standing in their way as they aim to end their country's 21-year wait for a male Slam champion.

In the women's draw, world number two Aryna Sabalenka, the runner-up in 2023, faces Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen while Emma Navarro takes on Paula Badosa in a clash between two women born in New York.

AFP Sport looks at Tuesday's four quarter-finals at Flushing Meadows (x denotes seeded player):

Taylor Fritz (USA x12) v Alexander Zverev (GER x4)

Head-to-head: Zverev leads 5-4

Zverev was runner-up to Dominic Thiem in the 2020 US Open final where he gave up a two sets lead. The German star also came off second-best to Carlos Alcaraz in the French Open final in June this year in another five-setter. With four-time champion Novak Djokovic knocked out in the third round, the 27-year-old Zverev is the highest-ranked man left in his half of the draw as he seeks a third appearance in the semi-finals in New York. "I'm doing everything I can to win a Slam, everything else is out of my power," he said. "I'm trying my best and hopefully it will be enough at some stage in my career." Fritz made the last-eight in 2023 and has

already reached three quarter-finals at the Slams this year. Fritz defeated Zverev in the fourth round at Wimbledon in July from two sets down with the German hampered by a knee injury which forced him to complete the match "on one leg".

Grigor Dimitrov (BUL x9) v Frances Tiafoe (USA x20)

Head-to-head: Dimitrov leads 3-1

At 33, Dimitrov is the oldest man left in the draw and is seeking a second semi-final spot in New York after making the last four in 2019. Back then, Dimitrov defeated Roger Federer in the last-eight, ending the Swiss legend's US Open career before losing to Daniil Medvedev. Widely regarded as one of the finest players never to win a Grand Slam title, Dimitrov has yet to even make a final at the majors after 15 years of trying. Tiafoe, the tournament's great entertainer, is in the quarter-finals for a third successive year. He made the semi-finals in 2022 where he lost in five sets to eventual champion Carlos Alcaraz.

Paula Badosa (ESP x26) v Emma Navarro (USA x13)

Head-to-head: Badosa leads 1-0

Badosa is in the last-eight in New York for the first time having never previously passed the second round. The Spanish star, who was born in the city, has enjoyed a dramatic reversal of fortunes after being on the brink of retirement just three months ago due to a stress fracture of the back. "I was feeling pain every day I was waking up. So for me, it didn't make sense," said Badosa of the injury which sent her world ranking plummeting out of the top 100. Badosa is the first Spanish woman to make the quarter-finals since Carla Suarez Navarro in 2018 while it has been 28 years since a Spaniard last reached the semi-finals. That honor fell



NEW YORK: Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov plays a return to Russia's Andrey Rublev during their men's singles round of 16 match on day seven of the US Open tennis tournament. — AFP

to Conchita Martinez. Navarro made her first US Open quarter-final by knocking out defending champion Coco Gauff in three sets on Sunday. Before this year, the 12th-ranked American had lost in the first round in her two previous visits.

Zheng Qinwen (CHN x7) v Aryna Sabalenka (BLR x2)

Head-to-head: Sabalenka leads 2-0

Olympic champion Zheng seeks to avenge her Australian Open final defeat to Sabalenka. The Chinese star has made the quarter-finals for a second successive year after also losing to Sabalenka in 2023. Zheng has already made history at this year's US Open by defeating Donna Vekic in the latest ever finish for a women's match of 2:15 am on Monday. She is only the second Chinese woman to have reached two quarter-finals in New York after famed compatriot Li Na in 2009 and 2013. Zheng has sent down a tournament-leading 49 aces over four rounds while the equally powerful Sabalenka has only dropped serve four times. Sabalenka is in her fourth successive US Open quarter-final. — AFP

Kuwait beat Chinese Taipei 39-31 in Asian Handball Championship

AMMAN: Kuwait national handball team defeated Chinese Taipei 39-31, in the opening round of Group D of the 10th AHF Asian Men's Youth Handball Championship held in Amman, Jordan to qualify for the World Championship in Slovenia next summer.

In a statement to KUNA, team manager Youssef Al-Shaheen praised the team's level, saying that the players achieved the de-

sired goal by winning this opening match.

He added that the team will play three consecutive matches in the next three days, affirming the squad's readiness, especially after the training camp they had gone through. Within its group, Kuwait competes with Chinese Taipei, China and Iran in the tournament running through September 14. — KUNA



AMMAN: Kuwait national handball team celebrate their win against China. — KUNA