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5 Millions battle Southeast Asia floods as death toll passes 250



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Domestic-to-private transfer ends

MoI revokes citizenship of 90 Kuwaitis • MoH suspends Afya insurance • MEW warns of power cuts

Egypt President receives Kuwait FM



CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi received visiting Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya and his accompanying delegation on Thursday. The foreign minister discussed with Sisi the deep-rooted brotherly relations between the two nations, and ways to enhance and further expand cooperation. Yahya conveyed the warmest greetings of HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Sisi, who reciprocated the greetings and wished HH the Amir good health and further development and prosperity for Kuwait and its people.— KUNA (See Page 3)

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The Public Authority of Manpower announced that a two-month period allowing the transfer of domestic helpers to the private sector ended as of Thursday. The special period was granted from July 14 to allow employers to move domestic helpers under their sponsorship to jobs in the private sector under certain preconditions.

At the start of the grace period, the authority said it aimed at reducing the number of expats recruited from outside to help rebalance the demographic structure, which is grossly tilted in favor of foreigners. The authority did not disclose how many people benefited from the grace period.

Meanwhile, the higher nationality committee headed by Interior and Defense

Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah recommended during a meeting on Thursday to withdraw citizenship from 90 Kuwaitis. The final decision will be made by the Council of Ministers. The committee said citizenship was withdrawn from six people because they were found to have obtained the citizenship of a second country, banned under Kuwaiti law.

Citizenship was withdrawn from one person for using illegal means to obtain it, while the citizenships of 83 people were withdrawn because they obtained it through illegal means or they were the children of people who obtained it through cheating.

The ministry of health on Thursday announced the cancellation of the Afya health insurance scheme offered to retired Kuwaitis, because the insurance company

refused to extend the scheme for a few months. The ministry said it will take the company to court to demand compensation for damages caused by the company's refusal. The scheme offers premium health care to thousands of retired citizens. The ministry assured the citizens covered by Afya health insurance services of its commitment to providing all primary, secondary and specialized healthcare services.

Separately, power cuts may affect some residential areas as technical teams are conducting emergency maintenance at some power generators, the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy said on Thursday. The areas that might be affected include Sabah Al-Ahmad, West Abdullah Al-Mubarak, Rumaithiya, Salwa, Bidaa and Farwaniya.

KFA suspends top officials over Iraq match chaos

KUWAIT: Kuwait's football federation has suspended one of its top officials and its PR chief over failings that left fans in sweltering temperatures for hours during a World Cup qualifier against Iraq. In a statement late Wednesday,

the Kuwait Football Association expressed its "deep regret" for ticketing and other logistical problems that marred the game at the 60,000-capacity Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium on Tuesday.

It also said it would launch a probe into the shortcomings, which resulted in fans fainting in temperatures of over 40 degrees Celsius as they pleaded with staff for water, with videos of the incidents shared on social media. Ticketing problems also meant some fans without tickets were allowed in, while others who had purchased tickets were refused entry.

The federation said it had suspended its Sec-

retary-General Salah Al-Qanai and Public Relations Director Mohamed Bou Abbas over the "unacceptable events". "The KFA board will adopt all necessary legal measures against those responsible for the regrettable chaotic incidents. It will remain in session until the committee finalizes its probe and reports back to the board in the coming 48 hours," the statement said.

Vowing to make public the results of the probe when complete, KFA thanked the fans for turning out for the game to support the national team and apologized for the inconvenience they encountered. The game, hosted by Kuwait, ended in a goalless draw.— Agencies

High doses of Adderall linked with heightened risk of psychosis, mania

WASHINGTON: Adderall is an effective treatment for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), but a sharp rise in US prescriptions over the past two decades has sparked concerns among researchers about rare but serious side effects. In a striking new study published in the American Journal of Psychiatry on Thursday, a team led by psychiatrist Lauren Moran of Mass General Brigham in Boston found that individuals taking high doses of the stimulant face more than a fivefold increased risk of developing psychosis or mania.

Key factors include the lack of upper dosing guidelines and the notable increase in young adults using the medicine since the COVID-19 pandemic, driven in large part by the rise of telemedicine providers. Moran told AFP her interest grew from her time at a hospital inpatient unit treating college students in the greater Boston area. "We were just seeing a lot of people coming in without much of a psychiatric history, developing the first episode of psychosis or mania in the context of using prescription stimulants," she said.

When the Food and Drug Administration became aware of such cases in the 2000s, it added a warning to the drug's label — but relatively little research had been done to quantify the rates of side effects or how they related to the dosage level. For their investigation, Moran and colleagues reviewed the electronic health records of people aged 16 to 35 admitted at Mass General Brigham hospitals between 2005 and 2019.

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Outrage over Zionist strike on Gaza school

GAZA: The Zionist entity faced international condemnation Thursday after a strike killed 18 people at a school-turned-shelter for displaced Palestinians in war-torn Gaza, where the Zionist military said it targeted Hamas militants. The attack flattened part of the UN-run Al-Jawani school in Nu-seirat on Wednesday, leaving only a charred heap of rebar and concrete.

"For the fifth time, Zionist forces bombed the UNRWA-run Al-Jawani School, killing 18 citizens," Gaza civil

defense spokesperson Mahmud Basal wrote on Telegram, referring to the UN agency for Palestinian refugees. UNRWA later said six of its staff had been killed in two Zionist strikes on the school and its surroundings, calling it the highest death toll among its team in a single incident.

"Among those killed was the manager of the UNRWA shelter and other team members providing assistance to displaced people," it said on X. "Schools and other civilian infrastructure must be protected at all times, they are not a target." UN chief Antonio Guterres branded the strike "totally unacceptable". His condemnation was echoed by Zionist ally Germany, which said "humanitarian aid workers must never be victims of rockets".

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GAZA: Palestinians search in the rubble for survivors at the site of a Zionist strike in the Shejaiya suburb east of Gaza City on Sept 12, 2024.— AFP

SpaceX makes history with first civil spacewalks

WASHINGTON: A pioneering private crew made history Thursday by performing the first commercial spacewalk, with NASA hailing it as "a giant leap forward" for the space industry. The SpaceX Polaris Dawn mission, led by fintech billionaire Jared Isaacman, launched Tuesday from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, journeying deeper into the cosmos than any humans in half a century, since the Apollo era.

With the four-member crew's Dragon spacecraft adjusted to an orbit with a high of 700 km, pure oxygen began flowing into their suits Thursday, marking the official start of their extravehicular activity (EVA) at 1012 GMT. A short time later, Isaacman swung open the hatch and climbed through, gripping the hand and footholds of a



This still image taken from a broadcast on Sept 12, 2024 shows US fintech billionaire Jared Isaacman peeking out to space from a hatch during the first private spacewalk performed by the crew of the SpaceX Polaris Dawn mission.— AFP

structure known as "Skywalker", as a breathtaking view of Earth unfolded below him.

"SpaceX, back at home we all have a lot of work to do, but from here, Earth sure looks like a perfect world," he told mission control in Hawthorne, California, where teams erupted in applause. It was yet another

major milestone for SpaceX, the company founded by Elon Musk in 2002. Since then, SpaceX has grown into a powerhouse that in 2020 beat aerospace giant Boeing in delivering a spaceship to provide rides for NASA astronauts to the International Space Station.

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Iran president in 'historic' visit to Iraqi Kurdistan



ARBIL: President of Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan Region Nechirvan Barzani greets Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian on Sept 12, 2024.— AFP

ARBIL, Iraq: Masoud Pezeshkian arrived in Iraqi Kurdistan Thursday on a visit hailed by the regional president as the first by an Iranian president to the autonomous region. Pezeshkian's visit to Iraq is his first trip abroad since he took office in July.

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NBK urges customers to enable transaction alerts

Part of bank's ongoing efforts to Support the 'Let's Be Aware' campaign

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continues to strongly support the "Let's Be Aware" banking awareness campaign, initiated by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) in collaboration with Kuwait Banking Association (KBA). This effort underscores NBK's dedication to promoting financial literacy and raising awareness across all segments of society. NBK is consistently focused on offering innovative approaches to enhance financial literacy across the community. The bank is dedicated to educating customers about their rights and safeguarding their data and bank accounts.

Despite the extensive content NBK shares daily on social media platforms, including photos and videos, it is crucial to remember that certain sensitive information should never be shared online. Amidst the rising incidence of fraud and the increasing sophistication of fraudsters' tactics, NBK remains steadfast in its commitment to protecting its customers' rights and following all directives from the

Central Bank of Kuwait. The bank is also dedicated to disseminating educational materials that not only inform customers about their rights but also offer practical tips and guidelines to help them prevent falling victim to fraud.

One of the key recommendations for users is to enable transaction alerts through the NBK Mobile Banking App. This feature provides immediate notifications of any unauthorized or unusual activity on their accounts. NBK also advises customers to contact the bank through its official channels if they suspect any irregularities or suspicious transactions.

NBK advises against sharing sensitive information, such as Social Security numbers, bank account details, or password-protected data. Customers should also refrain from sending any banking information through social media messages. Moreover, NBK emphasizes the importance of using security programs to protect mobile devices and computers, which can help prevent unauthorized access to per-

sonal and banking information.

NBK is committed to promoting financial literacy to the broadest possible audience to maximize the reach of the campaign's message. The bank leverages its extensive communication capabilities, including its highly followed digital channels, to engage with customers effectively. NBK's commitment to customer education is a cornerstone of its strategy. The bank utilizes all available communication channels to advise customers on safeguarding their passwords and sensitive financial and personal data. It emphasizes the importance of not sharing this information with anyone claiming to be from the bank, including one-time passwords (OTP).

NBK is a prominent supporter and partner of all Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) campaigns and initiatives designed to enhance financial awareness across different groups in the community. As the leading financial institution in Kuwait and the region, NBK actively organizes events and train-



ing programs focused on educating the community about critical banking issues, including combating fraud and financial crimes. NBK is deeply committed to its social responsibility within the communities it serves. The bank consistently takes proactive steps to support key and strategic initiatives, such as the 'Let's Be Aware' campaign, which aligns with its dedication to advancing Kuwait's national economy and societal well-being.

KUFPEC acquires 2 main oil, gas blocks in Indonesia

KUWAIT: Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUFPEC) announced on Thursday that its subsidiary, KUFPEC Indonesia, has acquired two major blocks in the first bidding round of 2024 in Indonesia. In a statement to KUNA, it mentioned that the acquisition which was made in cooperation with PT Pertamina Hulu Energi and Sinopec on the Melati Block, is considered the largest block in the first bidding round. Melati Block is located in the border region of Sulawesi and is expected to contain large reserves of oil and gas.

KUFPEC stressed the importance of this strategic success in strengthening the company's leading position in the field of hydrocarbon exploration and increasing the chances of successful exploratory efforts and their impact on the development of hydrocarbon industries. Furthermore, in cooperation with PT Medco Energi Linggau and PT Sele Raya, KUFPEC acquired the Amanah Block in South Sumatra, noting that this is another important achievement as it promotes KUFPEC's current portfolio in the region and its presence in the Indonesian energy sector.

The statement quoted KUFPEC CEO Mohammad Al-Haimer as saying that these new acquisitions confirm the company's commitment to expanding its exploration and production in Indonesia in line with its strategic growth plans for Southeast Asia. KUFPEC is a subsidiary of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and is engaged in oil and natural gas exploration and production operations outside of Kuwait. — KUNA



KUFPEC CEO Mohammad Al-Haimer

Non-oil exports hit KD 19.1m

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Ministry of Commerce and Industry announced on Thursday that the total local non-oil exports of Kuwaiti origin to the world in August amounted to KD 19.1 million (\$62.5 million) compared to KD 24 million (\$78 million) in July. Undersecretary of the Ministry for International Organizations and Foreign Trade Sector, Saleh Al-Azmi, stated to KUNA that the total certificates of Kuwaiti origin exports issued by the Ministry to the GCC in August reached 1,577 certificates valued at KD 11.4 million (about \$37.3 million), compared to 1,597 certificates valued at KD 15.7 million (about \$51.4 million) in July.

Al-Azmi added that the number of certificates is-

sued to Arab countries in August amounted to 502 certificates exported to 10 countries with a value of KD 7.3 million (about \$23.9 million), compared to 366 certificates to 10 countries valued at KD 7.1 million (\$23.2 million). He also added that certificates issued to Europe in August reached six certificates (to four countries) valued at KD 70,491 (\$230,000) compared to 22 certificates for nine countries worth KD one million (\$3.2 million) in July.

The number of certificates issued to African countries reached seven (to four countries) — valued at KD 186,840 (\$611,000), compared to eight certificates (to four countries) — worth KD 224,626 (\$735,000) in July, he added. Al-Azmi also said the number of certificates issued to the countries in the Americas in August reached four (two countries) valued at KD 108,592 (\$355,000), compared to 12 certificates for seven countries valued at KD 227,443 (\$745,000) in July.

Certificates issued to Asian countries in Au-



gust reached nine certificates valued at KD 18,653 (\$61,000), compared to one certificate issued to one country worth KD 27,881 (\$91,000) last July. The numbers include Kuwaiti origin exports by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, as some importing entities do not require a certificate of origin for products. — KUNA

Official stresses the importance of GCC judicial cooperation

DOHA: Boosting cooperation amongst GCC judicial officials and entities is important to move legal affairs in the region forward, said a Kuwaiti justice official on Thursday. Speaking to KUNA and Kuwait television on the sidelines of the 26th meeting of the GCC Justice Undersecretaries

in Doha, Qatar, Justice Ministry undersecretary Tareq Al-Asfour said that recommendations on unified legal matters and agreements were discussed during the session.

One of the matters discussed was a draft project to facilitate the exchange of suspects and those sentenced within the region to different courts in the GCC countries for trial, he indicated, pointing out that recommendations would be sent to upcoming meetings for GCC Justice Ministers. The 26th meeting of the GCC Justice Undersecretaries had discussed a variety of issues, including a proposal by Oman to enhance legal and judicial cooperation as well as reports from the heads of the judicial training committee, amongst other matters. — KUNA



Justice Ministry undersecretary Tareq Al-Asfour

KISR participates in 'belt and road initiative' summit

KUWAIT: Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research has taken part in the 9th summit of the "belt and road initiative," organized by the Hong Kong Government, for pondering plans to attain sustainable development at the global level. KISR said in a statement today that some 6,000 prominent figures have taken part in the summit that kicked off on Wednesday. It will conclude tomorrow, Friday. The "initiative" aims at encouraging states to cooperate and create more opportunities for common trade and development, in addition to expanding cultural cooperation world-wide. Dr. Sheikha Al-Sanad, KISR's senior scientist, addressed conferees with a lecture about means of enhancing flexibility and endurance of infrastructure. — KUNA



GCC Central Bank governors discuss future initiatives

DOHA: The 83rd meeting of the Central Bank Governors Committee of the GCC was held on Thursday in the Qatari capital, Doha. The Governor of the Qatar Central Bank, Sheikh Bandar bin Mohammed, said in his speech that the wise policies and rational directives of Their Majesties and Highnesses, the leaders of the GCC, contributed to supporting the stability of the region, adding that these directives were reflected in the path of growth and sent the foundations for the spirit of innovation and initiative among our peoples.

Until it led development in order to achieve the advancement and prosperity of the GCC countries. He also praised the fruitful efforts made by the members of the Preparatory Committee for the GCC Central Bank Governors Committee during their first meeting held in Doha last August to discuss a number of issues, most notably the current and future initiatives in the plan to activate joint Gulf action in the field of work of the GCC Central Bank Governors Committee.

The Cooperation Council for the period 2023-2027, in addition to submitting a set of recommendations to take appropriate decisions regarding them. For his part, Secretary-General of the GCC, Jaseem Al-Budaiwi, said in his speech that the results and recommendations of the 83rd meeting of the Central Bank Governors Committee will contribute to enhancing financial and economic integration among the countries in the GCC.

Al-Budaiwi concluded by stressing that the decisions and recommendations reached by the committee on the topics on the meeting's agenda will enhance the economic relationship between the GCC countries in all monetary fields and push the GCC countries' progress forward in this field. The Governor of the Qatar Central Bank, Sheikh Bandar bin Mohammed, chaired the 83rd meeting of the Gulf Central Bank Governors Committee. During the meeting, a number of topics on the agenda related to the work of the Gulf central banks and ways to enhance cooperation in the banking field were discussed. — KUNA



'Akh' shakes up Kuwaiti cinema with fresh twist

KUWAIT: This week, Kuwaiti cinema is turning heads with the release of "Akh" (Brother), a fresh addition to the local film scene that kicked off in 1965 with the short film "Al-Asifa" (The Storm) which gained traction in 1972 with the feature film "Bas Culture & Art Ya Bahar" (The Cruel Sea). "Akh" is not just a typical movie — it is a unique blend of horror, drama, and science fiction — produced and written by the imaginative mind of Dr Ahmad Hamada and brought to life by director Hatem Hossam Al-Deen.

Over four intense years, the cast and crew pushed

the limits, overcoming countless obstacles to ensure the movie hits the big screen. Dr Hamada, a media scholar and faculty member at the Department of Mass Communication at Kuwait University, shared his excitement during the film's premiere at the 360 Mall cinema Thursday, as covered by KUNA. He discussed how the team's passion and belief turned challenges into stepping stones while also acknowledging the support of the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters (NCCAL) and Kuwait National Cinema Company (KNCC).

The film takes viewers on an intense journey with a seemingly simple yet deeply layered story, following two brothers as they navigate life's harsh realities: Shihab, who works tirelessly to support his disabled brother Suhail, an astronomy enthusiast. As they face tough social and economic conditions, their story dives into a mix of hate, love, and unexpected twists that keep viewers guessing, pulling them deeper into its mystery and leaving questions that linger long after the credits roll. — KUNA



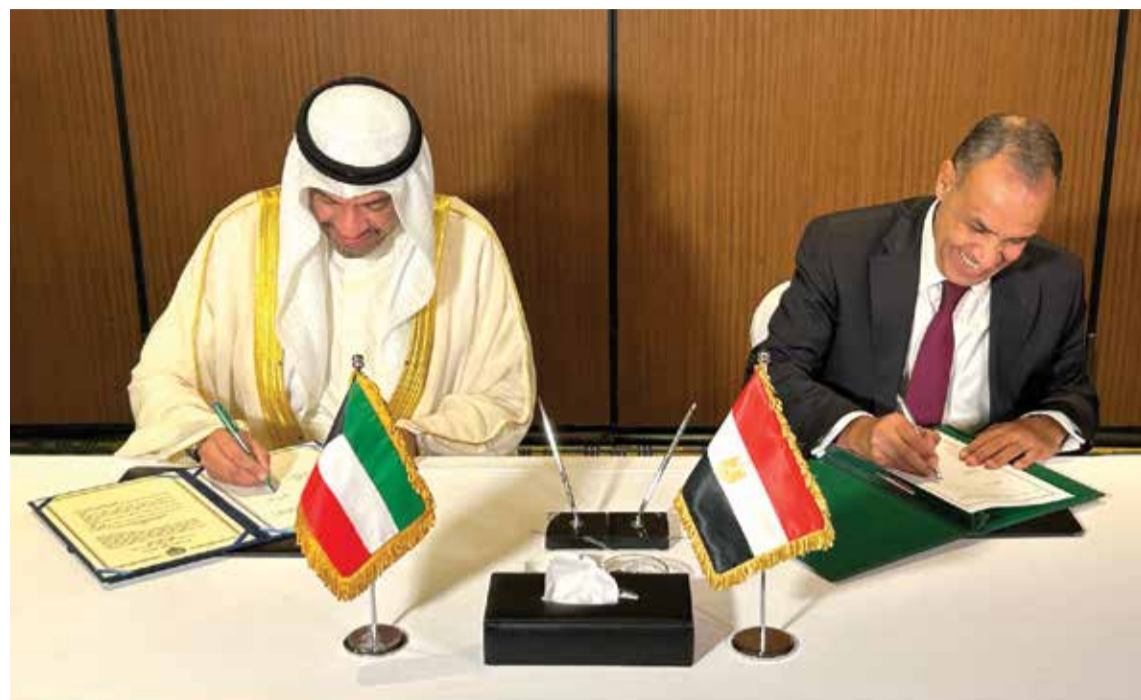
Film's writer and producer, Dr Ahmed Hamada, and the actor Hussein Al-Haddad, who plays the role of 'Shihab' in the film, with a number of attendees. — KUNA photos



Local

Kuwait-Egypt relations evolving

Kuwaiti investments in Egypt hit \$4.5 billion; 10 MoUs signed



CAIRO: Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya and Egyptian counterparts signed 10 memoranda of understanding (MoUs) and executive programs to enhance cooperation in the fields of planning, environment, youth and sports, media, tourism, diplomatic training and housing. — KUNA photos

CAIRO: The visiting Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya on Thursday affirmed that the Kuwaiti-Egyptian relations have been developing in the shadow of the two countries leadership's keenness on elevating the bonds at various levels. These relations will be enhanced further, simultaneously with the holding of the next session of the joint supreme commission, the 14th edition of which would be hosted by Kuwait, the minister said in a statement in the aftermath of a meeting that grouped him with Egyptian President AbdelFattah El-Sisi.

As to his session with the president shortly earlier upon inauguration of the 13th session of the joint commission, the Kuwaiti minister said President El-Sisi had given instructions to Egyptian officials to put all resources at the disposal of facilitating the mission of the Kuwaiti delegation participating in the session. He affirmed that the meeting with the Egyptian president was fruitful and warm, hailing Al-Sisi's keenness on maintaining distinctive relations in various fields between the two countries. He also alluded to another meeting with the Egyptian Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouli that dealt with preparations for the commission meetings. He added that the meeting concluded with signing a number of agreements.

Kuwaiti Foreign Minister stressed the importance of holding regular meetings with Egypt, saying that the 13th Egyptian-Kuwaiti high joint committee in Cairo was important to expand cooperation in different fields. He said that the meeting was held according to guidelines set by the leadership of both

countries. The challenges facing the region and the world required close coordination, especially amongst Arab countries, he affirmed, noting that unifying the Arab world's vision and boosting coordination were key to overcome any obstacles.

Kuwaiti Foreign Minister touched on the situation in the Gaza Strip and Palestine, saying that it was a major challenge that needed to be addressed and finding solutions would save lives and prevent further destruction. Minister Al-Yahya indicated that the current meeting would witness the signing of several accords that would reflect both countries' desire to boost cooperation. Any obstacles in the face of the success of cooperation must be addressed, he affirmed, stressing that Kuwait was in full support on the public and private sector level to bolster ties.

He revealed that the investment and commerce sector cooperation saw a rapid increase in recent years, noting that Kuwaiti investments in Egypt reached around \$4.5 billion, making it to the fifth country in investment volume in Egypt. The number of Kuwaiti companies working in Egypt had reached 1,650, said Al-Yahya, indicating that the volume of commercial exchange had reached three billion dollars last year. He affirmed that Kuwait was looking forward to the upcoming 14th high committee meeting in Kuwait, which would be held soon.

On his part, Egyptian Foreign Minister Abdulattay affirmed that the leadership of both countries shared a unified vision concerning matters of cooperation as well as issues pertaining to developments in the

region and the world. Meanwhile, the official affirmed that Egypt respected Kuwait's sovereignty on its land and sea borders, especially when it came to UNSC resolution 833/1993 concerning the demarcation of the Iraq-Kuwait boundary, adding that his country also supported the Kuwaiti-Saudi exclusive right over the Durra field in the Gulf waters.

He also reflected Egypt's willingness to contribute to Kuwait's Vision 2035, adding that on another level, his country saw the GCC region's security as a top priority issue. Egypt is keen on the organization of the Egypt-Kuwait investment forum in the last quarter of this year, he said. Kuwait and Egypt signed 10 memoranda of understanding (MoUs) and executive programs to enhance cooperation in the fields of planning, environment, youth and sports, media, tourism, diplomatic training and housing.

Minister Al-Yahya and Egyptian Minister of Planning, Economic Development and International Cooperation Dr Rania Al-Mashat signed the executive program for the scientific and technical cooperation agreement in the field of planning between the Kuwaiti government represented by the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development and Egypt represented by the National Planning Institute.

Minister Al-Yahya also signed with Egyptian Minister of Youth and Sports Dr Ashraf Sobhi the executive program in the fields of youth, children and sports and signed with Egyptian Minister of Environment Yasmine Fouad a MoU in the field of

environmental protection. The Kuwaiti Foreign Minister and his Egyptian counterpart signed executive programs for cooperation in the fields of housing, construction, enhancing competition, tourism, media.

Media cooperation

Meanwhile, a Kuwaiti official on Thursday affirmed the significance of the existing media cooperation between Kuwait and Egypt, particularly in the audio-visual and backup tech realms. The affirmation was made by Adel Al-Meshaan, the assistant undersecretary at the Ministry of Information and the acting external media undersecretary, in a statement to KUNA as he chaired the ministry's delegation at the inauguration of the 13th session of the joint supreme commission.

The Kuwait-Egypt cooperation at the media level dates to many decades ago, distinguished with record achievements that depicted the solidity of the brotherly relations in diverse fields. He said he affirmed the keenness of Kuwaiti and Egyptian information officials on beefing up the cooperation in this sector in line with the desire of the two countries' supreme leaderships. He alluded to the framework agreement that had been signed by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Information with the Egyptian media authority on cooperation in television, radio, and media tech engineering. The cooperation in this framework came in response to decisions issued by the Arab ministers of information for boosting swap expertise and cooperation in the sector. — KUNA

Kuwait calls on nations to support Palestine statehood

CAIRO: Kuwait expressed hope for South American and Caribbean countries' continued backing to international efforts in support of Palestine's right to full UN membership. Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the Arab League Ambassador Talal Al-Mutairi made the statement to KUNA on Wednesday after partaking in the League's representative-level meeting with ambassadors of South American and Caribbean countries to Egypt. Such a right would contribute to the Arab region's stability, which has been witnessing instability for decades due to Zionist occupation policies despite Arab initiatives made for achieving peace for all, Al-Mutairi said.

He said Kuwait appreciates South America and the Caribbean states' positions in backing humanitarian rights of Palestinian people who have been facing a crime of genocide for years. "We are very worried, as the Zionist occupation does not respect international law and international humanitarian law," he said. Kuwait also commended Libya's proposal on holding this meeting as the conferees have common values and principles, he noted.

At the end of the meeting, a joint statement was issued to stress the need to support the inalienable rights of Palestinian people, including self-determination, the return, and the establishment of a full sovereign Palestinian state on June 4 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, in line with international law, the relevant UN General Assembly, and the Security Council resolutions.

Meanwhile, GCC Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi has condemned and denounced occupation forces' bombing of a school of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) in the Al Nuseirat camp, which killed dozens of innocents, including six UNRWA employees, and injured many others. According to a GCC statement, the Secretary General said that the international community must take a strong position against the occupa-



GAZA: Children stand behind the rail of a hallway balcony outside classrooms sheltering people displaced by conflict at a school run by the UNRWA in Deir El-Balah in the central Gaza Strip. — AFP



Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the Arab League Ambassador Talal Al-Mutairi

tion forces to stop the ongoing systematic violations against the Palestinian people, which have claimed the lives of tens of thousands of innocent civilians.

He emphasized that the targeting of relief and UN staff by occupation forces is a new crime added to the many repeated war crimes committed by the occupation forces in Gaza, which have resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of innocents. Al-Budaiwi also reaffirmed the statement made in the 161st ministerial

meeting held on Monday, September 9, 2024, rejecting any justifications for describing the aggression on the Gaza Strip as self-defense. He called on the international community to take necessary actions, within international law, to respond to the illegal practices of the Zionist government and the policy of collective punishment it pursues against the besieged residents of Gaza and the entire Palestinian people.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) announced Thursday that the number of its employees killed in the Gaza Strip since the start of the occupation war has increased to 220 employees. This came after the occupation forces targeted a UN-run school on Wednesday housing displaced people at Nuseirat refugee camp, which resulted in the killing of 15 Palestinians, including six UNRWA employees, while 40 other displaced persons were injured.

In a statement, UNRWA reaffirmed that the occupation forces have continuously ignored humanitarian workers, buildings, and operations since the beginning of the war, calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. Occupation forces have been launching aggressions on the Gaza Strip for 343 days, resulting in the martyrdom of 41,084 and the injury of 95,029, according to Gaza health authorities. — KUNA

Kuwait urges Iran to cooperate with IAEA

VIENNA: Kuwait called on the Islamic Republic of Iran to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), provide it with the information it requires, and implement all the provisions of their joint statement. This came in a statement delivered by Kuwait's Ambassador to Austria and Permanent Delegate to UN Organizations in Vienna, Talal Al-Fassam, at the regular session of the IAEA Board of Governors on Wednesday.

The Kuwaiti envoy commended the important IAEA roles, especially in implementing the comprehensive safeguards system under the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Ambassador Al-Fassam highlighted the IAEA Director General's statement in his report to the Agency about Iran, where he stressed that Iran must resolve the outstanding issues to help the IAEA assure the peaceful nature of its nuclear program. The Kuwaiti Ambassador delivered another statement before the IAEA Board of Governors regarding the issue of verification and monitoring nuclear activities in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

In his statement, he said that the report issued by the IAEA Director General on August 29, 2024, indicated that the Agency has lost continuity of knowledge in relation to the production and inventory of centrifuges, rotors, and bellows, heavy water, and uranium ore concentrate since Iran stopped implementing its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA, including provisionally applying its Additional Protocol on February 23, 2021.

Ambassador Al-Fassam reiterated the State of Kuwait's firm stance that every country has the right to produce, develop, and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes within the framework of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. He, however, called on Iran to continue working with the agency and fully adhere to the issued Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. He voiced Kuwait's hope that Iran would ratify and implement the Additional Protocol so that the Agency would be able to provide credible assurances regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear materials and activities in Iran and ensure its status as a non-nuclear-weapon state. — KUNA



Kuwait's Ambassador to Austria and Permanent Delegate to UN Organizations in Vienna Talal Al-Fassam

ICCR, GUST ink MoU to establish Hindi language Chair

KUWAIT: Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST), Kuwait on Thursday to establish ICCR's Chair of Indian Studies at GUST to teach the Hindi language. The MoU was signed by India's Ambassador to Kuwait Dr Adarsh Swaika and President of GUST Prof Bassam Alameddine.

Under the MoU, ICCR will appoint an Indian academic expert to teach Hindi at GUST for a period of

up to three years. Hindi is spoken by over 600 million people worldwide, making it the third most spoken language globally. Beyond India, Hindi is widely spoken in countries with significant Indian diasporas, including Mauritius, Fiji, Nepal and Trinidad & Tobago. The United Nations acknowledged Hindi's international importance by launching Hindi social media platforms and a Hindi website in 2018.

This is ICCR's first-ever Chair of Indian Studies in Kuwait, marking a major milestone in the promotion of Indian culture and language in the country. A similar Hindi language Chair was established in Oman in December 2023, the first of its kind in the Gulf region. Earlier this year, in April 2024, a weekly Hindi radio broadcast was also launched on Kuwait Radio. These initiatives underline the importance of Hindi in Kuwait and the pivotal contributions of the large and vibrant Indian diaspora in Kuwait.



IICO launches Kuwait Artesian Well in Niger

KUWAIT: The International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO) opened on Thursday Kuwait Artesian Well in Niger, which operates on a solar energy system to serve more than 2,500 beneficiaries in a village in Dosso Region, in cooperation with the Co-operation Society for Human Services. IICO said in a press statement that the project contributes to addressing the problem of thirst that the population of Niger suffers from due to the dryness of most of its lands, in addition to serving the people of the village and helping the state in combating drought and developing agriculture and trade.



People fetch water from the well. — KUNA

It pointed out that the well was drilled at a depth ranging from 60 to 100 meters and was provided with a water tank 8 meters high and with a capacity of 5,000 liters, along with a pump capable of withdrawing about 2,500 liters per hour. The organization explained that the well is equipped with solar panels, pointing out that the life span of the well is 15 years and represents an urgent need for the residents of Niger.

During the past five years, the Charitable Organization opened model villages with integrated facilities and services in the Nigerian capital, Abuja, which provided an advanced state of security, stability, and a decent life for about 2,500 people. Niger is one of the poorest countries in the world, with more than 63 percent of the population living below the poverty line, according to a UNESCO report, and it is ranked last in the world on the Human Progress Index, according to a report by the United Nations Development Program. — KUNA

Kuwaiti Air Bridge delivers vital aid to Sudan amid war, floods

Sudan hails Kuwait's leading role in humanitarian work



Red Crescent volunteers distribute relief materials to victims. — KUNA photos



KHARTOUM: The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) air bridge successfully delivered tons of medical, food, and shelter supplies to Sudan, along with five ambulances, through 12 flights in response to the growing humanitarian crisis caused by war and floods. These efforts were met with gratitude from both the Sudanese government and the people, who praised Kuwait's leading role in humanitarian work, and the Transitional Sovereignty Council of Sudan expressed its deep appreciation to the Kuwaiti government and people for the humanitarian assistance.

General Ibrahim Jaber, member of the Sovereignty Council, highlighted that Kuwait's aid has significantly eased the hardships faced by citizens affected by the ongoing conflict and floods in several states. He added that these efforts reflect Kuwait's humanitarian efforts and wise leadership, noting that Kuwait was among the first countries to establish an air bridge shortly after the war began and continues to provide aid and support.

In a statement to KUNA, the Secretary General of the Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS), Aida Al-Sayed Abdullah, praised the Kuwaiti air bridge, describing it as the first to meet the needs of those affected. She emphasized that the aid arrived at a critical time when both the SRCS and the Sudanese people were in dire need, particularly after the depletion of the SRCS humanitarian supplies due to the crisis the country was facing.

The aid was distributed across the ten states, including Arb'at village in the Sudanese Red Sea State, where over 100 families received tents after their homes were destroyed. The head of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) mission, Khaled Al-Mutairi, said that the conflict in Sudan has displaced millions of people and explained that the floods had dramatically increased the number of displaced people, straining essential services.



Kuwaiti Air Bridge delivers vital aid to Sudan.



Secretary General of the Sudanese Red Crescent Aida Al-Sayed Abdullah



Member of the Sovereignty Council Ibrahim Jaber

A field assessment by the KRCS found outbreaks of disease and pests in shelter areas lacking adequate infrastructure, which prompted the organization to sign an agreement with the SRCS to improve these facilities. The KRCS signed several cooperation agreements to bolster Sudan's healthcare and shelter sectors. Al-Mutairi also noted that the KRCS sent seven aircraft loaded with food, shelter, medical, and other aid supplies; two aid ships were dispatched — the first in September 2023 in collaboration with the Egyptian Red Crescent, carrying food distributed by the SRCS, and the second in May 2024 with the King Salman Center, loaded with cancer medications.

Al-Mutairi said that the KRCS would continue to send aid to Sudan and emphasized that the KRCS was working on projects with the SRCS, including providing medical and shelter supplies, as well as pumps to drain floodwaters from northern and eastern Sudan following the August floods. Inflatable boats were also being supplied for use in rescue operations. Several Sudanese journalists and activists launched a hashtag on social media to thank Kuwait



for the humanitarian efforts, expressing their gratitude for Kuwait's support during the crisis in Sudan.

Sudanese journalist Mohammad Jomaa told KUNA that Kuwait demonstrated to the world its commitment to humanitarian responsibility by uniting its government and people to provide immediate aid to Sudan through air and sea bridges without hesitation. Jomaa noted that Kuwait's aid, which remains the largest of its kind, has been consistently provided without political fanfare, addressing urgent needs on the ground with quiet efficiency. — KUNA



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Kyrgyzstan children read 'KUNA Junior'

BISHKEK: Many Arabic-speaking students in Kyrgyzstan enjoyed reading the 19th edition of "KUNA Junior" in their school in the capital, Bishkek. Kyrgyz students became acquainted

with this cultural magazine, which aims to promote reading in Arabic by covering a variety of stories, topics, interviews and activities for children aged 8-13. — KUNA photos





Peru's polarising ex-president Alberto Fujimori dies at 86

'Staggering' destruction piling more misery after deadly flooding in Yemen

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HANOI: People wade through floodwaters on a boat in Hanoi on September 12, 2024, as heavy rains in the aftermath of Typhoon Yagi brought flooding to northern Vietnam. — AFP

Millions in SE Asia battle floods, death toll passes 250

Worst floods in 80 years • More than 50,000 forced from their homes

HANOI: Millions of people across Southeast Asia struggled Thursday with flooded homes, power cuts and wrecked infrastructure after Typhoon Yagi swept through the region, as the death toll passed 250. In worst-hit Vietnam, the fatalities rose to 226, with nine confirmed dead in northern Thailand—where one district is suffering its worst floods in 80 years.

Myanmar's national fire service confirmed the country's first Yagi-related deaths after 17 bodies were recovered from flooded villages in the Mandalay region, while more than 50,000 people have been forced from their homes. Yagi brought a colossal deluge of rain that has inundated a swathe of northern Vietnam, Laos, Thailand and Myanmar, triggering deadly landslides and widespread river flooding.

One farmer on the edge of Hanoi told AFP his entire 1,800 square metre peach blossom plantation was submerged, destroying all 400 of his trees. "It will be so hard for me to recover from this loss—I think I will lose up to \$40,000 this season," said the farmer, who gave his name only as Tu.

"I really don't know what to do now,

I'm just waiting for the water to recede." The United Nations children's agency (UNICEF) said the typhoon had damaged more than 140,000 homes across 26 provinces in Vietnam. Floodwaters in Vietnam are receding, draining through the Red River—the main watercourse in the area—into the sea. Authorities in several districts in the Red River delta ordered more than 50,000 people to evacuate their homes as a precaution while the runoff passes through.

Communications cut off

The floods have devastated more than 250,000 hectares of crops and huge numbers of livestock, Vietnam's agriculture ministry said, with farmland around Hanoi hit hard. In the deadliest single incident, a landslide in Lao Cai province annihilated an entire village of 37 houses, killing at least 42 people with 53 still unaccounted for.

Rescue teams pulled victims from the mud on Thursday, carrying them on stretchers to makeshift shelters where neighbours and relatives carefully washed the bodies in readiness for burial. Survivors picked through the mud and wreckage to retrieve

what family heirlooms and possessions they could find. Fifteen bodies have been recovered in Cao Bang province after a landslide on Monday pushed a bus, along with several cars and motorbikes, into a stream, state media said Thursday.

Myanmar camps

Myanmar's junta government has set up around 50 camps to help people affected by the floods, Lay Shwe Zin Oo, director of the social welfare, relief and resettlement ministry told AFP. The Global New Light of Myanmar, the state-run newspaper, said train services on the main line between Yangon and Mandalay were suspended because some sections were flooded.

The Mekong River Commission, the international body overseeing the crucial waterway, issued a flood warning on Thursday for the historic Laotian city of Luang Prabang, a UNESCO world heritage site, the commission said in a bulletin.

In Thailand the death toll has risen to nine, the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation said, including six

killed in landslides in Chiang Mai province. All flights were suspended in and out of the airport in Chiang Rai, some 145 kilometres (90 miles) northeast of Chiang Mai, aviation authorities said.

Further north, Mae Sai district on the border with Myanmar is suffering its worst floods in 80 years, Suttipong Juljaree, a senior interior ministry official said in a statement. The Jet Ski Association of Thailand has sent 16 jet skis to help with relief efforts, Dechnarong Suticharnbancha, the body's president told AFP.

Some of the currents in the floodwaters are too strong for normal boats but jet skis are able to navigate them because of their powerful engines. A video showing champion jet skier Kasidit Teeraprateep rescuing an old woman from a torrent of murky water circulated on Thai social media.

Heavy monsoon rains lash Southeast Asia every year, but human-made climate change is causing more intense weather patterns that can make destructive floods more likely. Climate change is causing typhoons to form closer to the coast, intensify faster and stay longer over land, according to a study published in July. — AFP

WHO announces largest medical evacuation from Gaza

GENEVA: The WHO announced Thursday the largest medical evacuation from Gaza since October 7 and said at least a quarter of those hurt in the war had "life-changing injuries". The World Health Organization said that it along with partners on Wednesday evacuated 97 sick and severely injured patients from the war-ravaged Palestinian territory to Abu Dhabi for specialised care.

"This was the largest evacuation yet from Gaza since October 2023," Rik Peepkorn, the WHO's representative for the Palestinian territories, told reporters. The patients, including 45 children, were suffering from a wide range of diseases like cancer, as well as serious trauma and other injuries.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus hailed the success of a "highly complex operation... despite severe operational challenges and insecurity". The patients and 155 companions had first been transferred from four locations across Gaza to a hospital in the centre of the territory before being flown to Abu Dhabi.

WHO said it was especially complicated to extract the patients who had been in hard-to-reach northern Gaza. "We had a very small window," Peepkorn explained. The patients were among the more than 10,000 people that the WHO has estimated require urgent medical evacuation.

Life-changing injuries

According to the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza, at least 41,118 people have been killed in the Zionist retaliatory offensive following the October 7 attack by Hamas militants, while over 95,000 have been wounded.

The WHO on Thursday said it had determined that at least a quarter of all those wounded in the war up to July 23 — at least 22,500 people—had suffered "life-changing injuries", many requiring amputations and other "huge" rehabilitation needed for years to come. And by Thursday, a quarter of all those wounded is "more like 24,000", Peepkorn said. WHO said "many thousands of women and children" figured among those badly injured and that many had suffered more than one injury.

Thousands of amputations

It estimated there had overall been between 13,455 and 17,550 "severe limb injuries", which it said were the main driver of the need for rehabilitation. The report showed that between 3,105 and 4,050 limb amputations had occurred.

Other life-altering injuries including spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury and major burn injuries, it said. "The huge surge in rehabilitation needs occurs in parallel with the ongoing decimation of the health system," Peepkorn warned.

Only 17 of Gaza's 36 hospitals are currently even partially functional, while primary health care services are frequently suspended or inaccessible due to insecurity, attacks and repeated evacuation orders. Gaza's only limb reconstruction and rehabilitation centre, located in Nasser Medical Complex and supported by WHO ceased functioning last December due to lack of supplies and specialised health workers. — AFP

Russia recaptures part of Kursk region

KYIV: Russia on Thursday claimed to have recaptured a swath of territory in its western Kursk region, where Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky conceded Moscow's troops were mounting a counter-offensive.

Kyiv launched a shock incursion into Russia's Kursk border region on August 6, advancing kilometres into Russian territory and seizing dozens of settlements. The attack—the biggest by a foreign army on Russian territory since World War II—caught Moscow off-guard as its invasion drags through its third year.

Russia has insisted from the very start it would expel Ukrainian troops from the region. But it had until now appeared to be on the back foot, marshalling a humanitarian response and evacuating some 150,000 people. "Units of the 'North' group of troops liberated 10 settlements within two days," Russia's defence ministry said in a statement posted on its Telegram channel.

Speaking at a press conference in Kyiv, Zelensky said "Russians have launched counter-offensive actions." He did not provide details on the extent of Russian operations, but said the incursion was still "going in line with our Ukrainian plan".

Ukraine's commander-in-chief Oleksandr Syrsky said in late August that Kyiv had seized 100 settlements and almost 1,300 square kilometres (500 square miles) of Russian territory. Kyiv says it does not want to annex parts of Russia—as Moscow has done in eastern Ukraine—but hopes it could force its enemy to divert troops and could be a powerful bargaining chip in any negotiations.

'Adjust'

The Russian counter-attack comes as US Secretary of State Antony Blinken promised Washington would quickly review Kyiv's long-standing request to give it more leeway to use Western-supplied weapons to strike targets inside Russia.

"As we go forward, we will do exactly what we have already done, which is, we will adjust, we'll adapt as necessary, including with regard to the means that are at



UKRAINE: This handout photograph shows a burning truck of the International Committee of the Red Cross, following artillery shelling in the Donetsk region, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine. — AFP

Ukraine's disposal to effectively defend against the Russian aggression," Blinken said Thursday in a press conference in Warsaw. Washington currently only allows Ukraine to hit Russian targets in the occupied parts of Ukraine and some in Russian border regions directly related to Moscow's combat operations. Kyiv wants more flexibility to hit Russian airfields and other military targets further from the front lines that it says are crucial to Moscow's invasion.

"The delay in this process leads to Russia moving these military targets deeper into Russia," Zelensky said Thursday. President Joe Biden was also set to discuss an appeal by Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga for neighbouring countries to help shoot down missiles over its western region.

The Kremlin said Wednesday it would respond "appropriately" if the restrictions are lifted. Speaking in Poland after a trip to Kyiv, Blinken was also set to discuss an appeal by Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga for neighbouring countries to help shoot down missiles over its western region.

Russia has upped its air attacks on Ukraine in recent weeks amid the Kursk offensive, including targeting the country's energy infrastructure ahead of what is set to be another tough winter for Ukraine.

'Another war crime'

The International Committee of the Red Cross and Zelensky said Thursday three aid workers were killed by shelling in eastern Ukraine. Zelensky said ICRC vehicles were hit in the Donetsk region, calling it "another Russian war crime." "I condemn attacks on Red Cross personnel in the strongest terms. It's unconscionable that shelling would hit an aid distribution site," ICRC President Mirjana Spoljaric said in a statement, adding that "our hearts are broken today as we mourn the loss of our colleagues and care for the injured".

All three were Ukrainian citizens, the country's human rights ombudsman Dmytro Lubinets said. Moscow's forces are also ramping up the pressure on the battlefield in the eastern Donetsk region, where the most intense fighting is taking place. — AFP

International

'Staggering' destruction piling more misery after deadly flooding in Yemen

40 dead or are missing since the disaster in Al-Mahwit

YEMEN: Sitting by their ruined home, Abu Ibrahim wept for his son and seven grandchildren killed by flash floods in Yemen, where increasingly severe downpours are piling more misery on the impoverished, war-torn country.

The greying, bearded villager gestured at the fallen stone walls, all that remains of their home after raging torrents and landslides cut great scars across the mountainside. Abu Ibrahim, who lives nearby, fought back tears as he recalled the terrible sound of his son's dwelling collapsing in the deluge.

"Shortly afterwards, my wife saw that Ibrahim's house was no longer there," he said. "She screamed loudly, saying, 'Ibrahim and his children have been swept away by the floods!'" They were not the only ones killed, injured or uprooted by this year's seasonal rains, which experts say are growing in intensity and frequency because of climate change.

According to OCHA, the United Nations humanitarian agency, about 40 people died or are missing since the disaster in Al-Mahwit province's Melhan district, part of the vast swathe of Yemen held by Iran-backed Huthi rebels.

Fifteen houses were destroyed and 50 were badly damaged, forcing 215 families to shelter in nearby schools, OCHA said. Across Yemen in recent weeks, nearly 100 people have died in floods, an AFP tally compiled from UN data shows.

And more than 560,000 people across the country have been affected since late July, according to the UN's International Organization for Migration (IOM). "The scale of the destruction is staggering," said Matt Huber, acting Yemen mission chief of the IOM, which appealed last week for \$13.3 million in emergency funds.

The mountains of western Yemen are prone

to heavy seasonal rainfall, but this year's extreme weather conditions are "unprecedented", said Huber. In the Melhan tragedy, landslides crashed through homes and buried some of their occupants.

"We heard the mountain shake," said Abdullah al-Malhani, another neighbour of Ibrahim and his family. Access for aid workers has been "almost impossible" because of "destroyed and flooded roads", the UN Population Fund posted on X.

It published pictures of camels carrying aid to stricken villagers through winding, hilly terrain. The flooding in Yemen has destroyed homes, displaced thousands of families and seriously damaged critical infrastructure such as health centres, schools and roads. The Arabian peninsula's poorest country, engulfed in civil war since 2015, was already struggling with rising malnutrition and has suffered a spike in cholera cases linked to the heavy rains and floods.

The situation could worsen in the coming months, the UN's World Health Organization (WHO) warned last month. Yemen's central highlands, Red Sea coastal areas and parts of the southern uplands are expected to receive "unprecedented levels" of rainfall in excess of 300 millimetres (12 inches), the WHO said. "Climate change is not only making floods more frequent but also more severe," said Maha Al-Salehi, a researcher at Holm Akhdar, a Yemeni environmental group.

'Exceptionally vulnerable'

Mohammed Hamid, assistant under-secretary of the meteorology department in the Huthi-held capital, Sanaa, said recurring extreme weather events in Yemen clearly indicated the impacts of climate change. Since May 2015, there have been around nine tropical cyclones, or one every year—an un-

usually high number—Hamid told AFP. "We need to get ready for new cyclones" in October, Hamid said. As the planet heats, the warmer air can hold more moisture, creating heavier and more frequent storms, weather experts say. Weakened by years of conflict, Yemen's creaking infrastructure and disaster response capabilities add to the threat from cli-

mate change, said Karim Elgendy, a climate consultant and associate fellow at the Chatham House think tank. "The combination of more extreme precipitation events and a country destabilised by war has left Yemen exceptionally vulnerable to the unprecedented rainfall, resulting in catastrophic flooding across multiple governorates," he told AFP. — AFP

Three trapped

Los Angeles County Sheriff Robert Luna said three people—including one of his deputies—were trapped by the fire in a remote area near Mt. Baldy.

right in there, and you couldn't take anything out of there," local resident Jenny Alaniz emotionally told broadcaster KTLA. "I got the dogs out. Our house is gonna burn," she sobbed.

An AFP journalist in Wrightwood witnessed the aftermath of the fire, where the charred shells of buildings and vehicles stood shrouded in smoke. The fire broke out early Sunday afternoon in Angeles National Forest north of Los Angeles, and initially remained fairly small. But by Wednesday afternoon it had roared to 49,000 acres (20,000 hectares), fuelled by thick brush that carried the flames into the San Bernardino County community of Wrightwood and the Mountain High ski resort.

He said thick smoke and blocked roads were hampering the rescue effort. "Our air rescue crew is working to hoist them out once the smoke clears, and LA County Fire is also trying to get a four-by-four vehicle to get them out," Luna told reporters. He said all three were understood to be in good health.

Southwest of Los Angeles, the Airport Fire continued to grow Wednesday, racing through vegetation and damaging several homes. Cal Fire, the statewide fire agency, said seven people had been hurt in the blaze, which has now charred more than 22,000 acres (8,900 hectares).

The blaze erupted on Monday and began racing up canyons and hillsides, including Santiago Peak, which is home to radio and television broadcast towers, though the fire appeared to have left them undamaged. The flames were also hurtling downslope toward Lake Elsinore, with video from the area showing some structures and vehicles consumed by

fire. Dramatic photographs taken by an AFP journalist show towering walls of flame. Northeast of Los Angeles, the Line Fire has now burned nearly 35,000 acres. A number of mountain communities were ordered to evacuate, in an area popular with tourists, and several major access roads were blocked.

"Herculean effort"

Police in San Bernardino County have arrested a man in connection with the fire. Justin Wayne Halstenberg, 34, from Norco was detained late Tuesday on suspicion of starting the blaze. California Governor Gavin Newsom, who has declared a state of emergency in response to the fires, visited the command post at the Line Fire on Wednesday.

"California is deploying every available resource to combat these devastating fires, and we'll continue to work in lockstep with federal and local partners in this herculean effort," he said. — AFP

LA wildfire explodes, engulfing homes

WRIGHTWOOD: A wildfire ravaging the hills near Los Angeles had swelled in size by over 1,000 percent by Wednesday, torching dozens of homes and prompting a state of emergency.

The Bridge Fire is one of three out-of-control blazes that have erupted around the United States' second-biggest city, fueled by a punishing heat wave and fanned by gusting winds. Authorities issued widespread evacuation orders as the fire tore through the towns of Wrightwood and Mt Baldy, destroying at least 33 homes, several cabins, and racing through a ski resort.

"We live in the canyon so that fire was coming

Outrage over Zionist strike on...

Continued from Page 1

Jordan and the European Union also criticized the attack, while the Zionist entity's main backer the United States called on it to protect humanitarian sites. EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said he was "outraged" by the deaths and that the strikes showed a "disregard of the basic principles" of international humanitarian law. US Secretary of State Blinken said: "We need to see humanitarian sites protected, and that's something that we continue to raise with (the Zionist entity)".

Zionist military spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Nadav Shoshani said UNRWA had not provided the names of its killed workers, "despite repeated requests". In response, UNRWA spokeswoman Juliette Touma said the agency was "not aware of any such requests", that it provided the Zionist entity each year with a list of its staff and that it "called repeatedly" on the Zionist entity and Palestinian fighters "to never use civilian facilities for military or fighting purposes".

She said the agency was "not in a position to determine" if the school had been used by Hamas for military purposes, but UNRWA had "repeatedly called for independent investigations" into "these very serious claims". Survivors of the strike scrambled to recover bodies and belongings from the rubble, saying they had to step over "shredded limbs". "I can hardly stand up," a man holding a plastic bag of human remains told AFP. "We've been going through hell for 340 days now, what we've seen over these days, we haven't even seen it in Hollywood movies, now we're seeing it in Gaza."

UNRWA head Philippe Lazzarini said after the school strike that at least 220 members of the agency's staff had been killed in the war. "Endless & senseless

killing, day after day," he posted on X. "Humanitarian staff, premises & operations have been blatantly & unabatedly disregarded since the beginning of the war."

Across Gaza, many school buildings have been repurposed to shelter displaced families, with the vast majority of the territory's 2.4 million people repeatedly uprooted by the war. In Gaza City, civil defense spokesman Bassal said two strikes in the Zeitun neighborhood killed seven people — including two children. Later, he said two people were killed in the Jabalia camp. Medical sources said five people were killed in strikes on the Khan Yunis area.

The bloodshed shows no signs of abating despite months of ceasefire negotiations mediated by Qatar, Egypt and the United States. A Hamas delegation met Qatari and Egyptian mediators in Doha on Wednesday, the Palestinian Islamists said, though there was no indication of a breakthrough. The Zionist offensive has killed at least 41,118 people in Gaza, mostly women and children.

The WHO announced Thursday the largest medical evacuation from Gaza since Oct 7 and said at least a quarter of those hurt in the war had "life-changing injuries". The World Health Organization said that it along with partners on Wednesday evacuated 97 sick and severely injured patients from the war-ravaged Palestinian territory to Abu Dhabi for specialized care. "This was the largest evacuation yet from Gaza since October 2023," Rik Peepker, the WHO's representative for the Palestinian territories, told reporters.

The patients, including 45 children, were suffering from a wide range of diseases like cancer, as well as serious trauma and other injuries. WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus hailed the success of a "highly complex operation... despite severe operational challenges and insecurity". The patients and 155 companions had first been transferred from four locations across Gaza to a hospital in the center of the territory before being flown to Abu Dhabi. — Agencies

High doses of Adderall linked with...

Continued from Page 1

That is the typical onset age range for psychosis, or losing touch with reality.

The researchers identified 1,374 individuals experiencing their first episode of psychosis or mania — a disruptive state characterized by high energy, erratic behavior — and compared them to 2,748 control patients who were hospitalized for other psychiatric conditions. By analyzing Adderall use during the previous month and adjusting for other variables like substance use, they were able to specifically determine the impact of stimulants.

They found those who had taken Adderall were 2.68 times more likely to have been hospitalized with psychosis or mania compared to those who were not — and this increased to 5.28 times more likely at higher doses of 40 milligrams and above. Put another way, 81 percent of psychosis or mania cases may have been prevented if they were not on the high dose, the paper said. A separate analysis found no increased risk with Ritalin, another stimulant pre-

scribed for ADHD. Moran suggested this could be due to key differences in how the two drugs work.

Both medications raise dopamine levels, a chemical messenger involved in the brain's reward system, motivation and learning. However, while Adderall, an amphetamine, increases dopamine release, Ritalin works by blocking its reabsorption. For Moran, a critical takeaway was the need for clear upper dose limits on labels. The current label recommends treating patients with 20 milligrams, but in practice, doctors vary widely in their prescriptions.

This variability partly stems from severe impairment from ADHD symptoms that require higher doses, but Moran has occasionally observed "carelessness in dose prescribing," while at other times, patients may "shop" for a doctor willing to prescribe what they want. "People, including clinicians, might think they can eliminate all ADHD symptoms, but that's not a realistic expectation," she added.

Telemedicine companies, in particular, have come under scrutiny for allegedly overprescribing Adderall, contributing to shortages for those who genuinely need the medication. The Drug Enforcement Administration, which had proposed revoking telehealth prescriptions for Adderall, extended them through the end of 2024 in response to significant public feedback. — AFP



HAYS: Displaced Yemenis affected by floods receive humanitarian aid in the Hays region. — AFP

usually high number—Hamid told AFP. "We need to get ready for new cyclones" in October, Hamid said.

As the planet heats, the warmer air can hold more moisture, creating heavier and more frequent storms, weather experts say. Weakened by years of conflict, Yemen's creaking infrastructure and disaster response capabilities add to the threat from cli-

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Iran president in 'historic' visit to...

Continued from Page 1

The Kurdistan leg is the latest sign of warming relations between Iran and the Kurds after years of tensions, most recently culminating in Iranian air strikes against Iranian-Kurdish rebels in the region two years ago.

Stepping off the plane in regional capital Arbil, Pezeshkian was welcomed by regional president Nechirvan Barzani on a red carpet lined with Kurdish peshmerga forces standing at attention with rifles at their sides. Barzani hailed the first visit by an Iranian president to the region, describing it as a "historic day". Pezeshkian also held talks with Kurdistan's prime minister, Masrour Barzani, as well as veteran Kurdish leader Masoud Barzani, who presides over the ruling Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP).

"We hope to expand economic and commercial cooperation with the Iraqi Kurdistan region," Pezeshkian said, according to a statement from his office. Pezeshkian later headed to Sulaimaniyah, a city where the KDP's historical rival, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), wields influence including in the security services.

On Wednesday in Baghdad, the first leg of his three-day visit, Pezeshkian announced the signing of more than a dozen agreements to strengthen ties between Iran and Iraq. His trip comes at a time of heightened tensions in the Middle East due to the war in Gaza, which has drawn

SpaceX makes history with first...

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"Today's success represents a giant leap forward for the commercial space industry and NASA's long-term goal to build a vibrant US space economy," NASA chief Bill Nelson wrote on X.

Prior to the hatch opening, the crew underwent a "prebreathe" procedure to remove nitrogen from their bloodstream, preventing decompression sickness. Cabin pressure was then gradually lowered to align with the vacuum of space. Isaacman and crewmate Sarah Gillis, a SpaceX engineer, took turns outside the vehicle, spending a few minutes performing mobility tests on SpaceX's next-generation suits that boast heads-up displays, helmet cameras and enhanced joint mobility systems — before returning inside.

Extravehicular activity officially ended after an hour and 46 minutes, following cabin re-pressurization. While it marked a first for the commercial sector, the spacewalk fell short of the daring feats from the early space era. Early spacewalkers, including the first, Soviet cosmonaut Alexei Leonov in 1965, floated tethered to their spacecraft, while a select few Space Shuttle astronauts used jetpacks to fly completely untethered.

Since Dragon doesn't have an airlock, the entire crew was exposed to the vacuum of space. Mission

in Iran-backed armed groups and complicated Iraq's relations with the United States.

Iran's ties with Iraqi Kurdistan have improved in recent months, aided by efforts to neutralize Iranian Kurdish opposition groups, which have long operated in the region. During a meeting with Pezeshkian also attended by Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein, the Kurdish president pointed to "Kurdistan's desire to develop relations and expand cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran in all areas".

"The Kurdistan region will never pose a threat to Iran and neighboring countries," a statement from Barzani's office said, adding that Arbil "respects the security deal signed between Iraq and Iran". Tehran carried out repeated strikes on rebel groups in Kurdistan in 2022, before Iraq signed a security agreement with Iran the following year. Baghdad committed to disarm the groups and relocate them from border areas to camps.

"We have succeeded... in regulating the security situation in the border areas," Iraqi Prime Minister Mohamed Shia Al-Sudani said on Wednesday, reiterating Iraq's refusal to allow any acts of aggression to be launched against Iran from its territory. Iran had accused the rebel groups of smuggling weapons from Iraq to carry out attacks on its security forces. It also accused Kurdish opposition movements of fueling protests that shook Iran after the Sept 2022 death of Mahsa Amini, an Iranian Kurd arrested by the morality police. The Iranian president left the Kurdistan region in the afternoon, landing in the Shiite holy city of Najaf. Iraq's state news agency INA reported. He is scheduled to visit Shiite shrines in both Najaf and nearby Karbala. — AFP

pilot Scott Poteet and SpaceX engineer Anna Menon remained strapped in throughout as they monitored vital support systems. "The risk is greater than zero, that's for sure, and it's certainly higher than anything that has been accomplished on a commercial basis," former NASA administrator Sean O'Keefe told AFP.

The spacewalk followed an audacious first phase of the mission, during which the Dragon spacecraft reached a peak altitude of 870 miles — three times higher than the International Space Station, in a region teeming with dangerous, high-energy particles. All four underwent more than two years of training in preparation for the landmark mission, logging hundreds of hours on simulators as well as skydiving, scuba diving and summiting an Ecuadorian volcano.

Upcoming tasks include testing laser-based satellite communications between the spacecraft and the vast Starlink satellite constellation, and completing dozens of experiments, including tests on contact lenses with embedded microelectronics to monitor changes in eye pressure and shape in space. Polaris Dawn is the first of three missions under the Polaris program, a collaboration between Isaacman and SpaceX.

Financial terms of the partnership remain under wraps, but Isaacman, the 41-year-old founder and CEO of Shift4Payments, reportedly poured \$200 million of his fortune into leading the 2021 all-civilian SpaceX Inspiration4 orbital mission. The final Polaris mission aims to be the first crewed flight of SpaceX's Starship, a prototype next-generation rocket that is key to founder Musk's ambitions of colonizing Mars. — AFP

International

Peru's polarizing ex-president Alberto Fujimori dies at 86

Government declares 3 days of national mourning, full honors that correspond to a president in office

LIMA: Peru's former president Alberto Fujimori, who ruled his country with an iron fist and then spent 16 years in prison for crimes against humanity, died on Wednesday at age 86 in the capital Lima.

"After a long battle with cancer, our father, Alberto Fujimori, has just departed to meet the Lord," his children Keiko, Hiro, Sachie and Kenji Fujimori wrote on social media platform X. Fujimori, who led Peru from 1990 to 2000, was released from prison on humanitarian grounds in December, two-thirds of the way through a 25-year sentence for crimes against humanity during his rule.

He was a key part of Peru's so-called war on terrorism, with government forces fighting against Shining Path and Tupac Amaru leftist rebels. It left more than 69,000 people dead and 21,000 missing from 1980 to 2000, most of them civilians, according to a government truth commission.

Keiko Fujimori said her father's wake would begin on Thursday at the National Museum and his burial would take place on Saturday. "We are waiting for all those who want to say goodbye to him in person," she wrote on X. The government declared three days of national mourning for Fujimori beginning on Thursday and said he would have "the funeral honors that correspond to a president in office," according to a decree published in the official gazette.

Sources close to his family told AFP earlier Wednesday that Fujimori's health had deteriorated rapidly after completing treatment for tongue cancer in August. He was last seen in public on Thursday as he was leaving a Lima clinic, where he said he had undergone a CT scan.

Jailed over army massacres

As news of his death spread quickly on social media, supporters and detractors quarreled over his legacy. Many Peruvians called Fujimori, who was of

Japanese descent, "el chino," or the Chinese man.

After his death on Wednesday, supporters of the rightwinger gathered outside his house chanting "El chino did not die! El chino is present!"

His daughter Keiko — who has made three failed bids for the presidency — announced in July that her father would run for president again in 2026. Prime Minister Gustavo Adrianzen expressed his condolences to the Fujimori family. "We want his children and relatives to know we feel sorrow," he said.

Fujimori was convicted and sent to prison in 2009 over massacres committed by army death squads in 1991 and 1992 in which 25 people, including a child, were killed in what he presented as anti-terrorist operations. In December 2017, then-president Pedro Pablo Kuczynski pardoned Fujimori due to his ill health. But the Supreme Court later annulled the pardon and, in January 2019, he was returned to jail from hospital.

Hostage crisis

He was released again in December 2023 after a court reinstated his pardon. He was adored and reviled in equal measures in Peru. As he turned 80 in 2018, Fujimori told AFP: "Let history judge what I got right and what I got wrong." He also expressed the conviction that he had paved the way for Peru to become one of the leading countries of Latin America.

Supporters credited him with saving the nation from left-wing Shining Path and Tupac Amaru guerrillas and shoring up the economy. Opponents saw him as a power-thirsty autocrat. Sociologist Eduardo Toche expressed scathing criticism of Fujimori when he was convicted of crimes against humanity in 2009, saying the Fujimori government represented the lowest, worst point in the history of Peru as he made up his own rules and ignored the country's institutions.

joke," he said, arguing of the need to build an organization like NATO in East Asia.

Prominent women

Also in the running are two prominent women — still a rarity in Japanese politics and business. Hard-right Sanae Takaichi, 63, is a regular visitor to the Yasukuni shrine to Japan's war dead — including those convicted for war crimes committed during Japan's brutal occupation of China and Korea.

Japan's economic security minister, Takaichi promised to "make the LDP a party that the Japanese people can believe in". And although her support within the party is limited, Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa, 71, is seen as a deft leader who aspires to mentor younger female politicians.

Outspoken reformist Taro Kono, 61, is also a candidate, as is Toshimitsu Motegi, dubbed the "Trump whisperer" for his handling of the former US president in tough trade talks. Others include chief cabinet secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi and former economic security minister Takayuki Kobayashi, the only other candidate under 50 along with Koizumi. In his emotional speech on Thursday, Koizumi also described meeting his birth mother for the first time this year.

Displayed outside its party headquarters on Thursday was a large poster reading "The Match" with black-and-white photos of previous leaders. Speculation is rife in local media that the winner will call a snap election for as soon as late October or early November. The main opposition Constitutional Democratic Party is also in the midst of its own leadership contest. The LDP race is seen as the most open in years, with Kishida having pushed many of the party's powerful factions to disband following a damaging slush fund scandal. — AFP



LIMA: (FILES) Picture released by the Fujimori family taken at a clinic in Lima shows former Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori, accompanied by his son Kenji (L) and daughter Keiko, hospitalized on April 30, 2024. — AFP

"For him there was no legal framework. The legal framework was that of his will and that of his friends, nothing more," Toche told AFP at the time. One of the most dramatic episodes of his presidency was a four-month hostage ordeal at the Japanese embassy in Lima in late 1996 and early 1997.

The standoff ended with Fujimori sending in commandos who rescued nearly all 72 hostages and killed 14 rebels. Japan's top government spokesman, Yoshimasa Hayashi, said Thursday that Japan "will never forget the efforts made by former President

Fujimori" in helping to get the hostages released.

But he also acknowledged that there were "a variety of evaluations" of Fujimori, including "the fact that he was convicted of human rights violations during his term in office and served in prison." The later Fujimori years were dominated by a bribery scandal involving his intelligence chief Vladimiro Montesinos. Fujimori went into self-imposed exile in Japan and memorably faxed in his resignation but was arrested years later in Chile and sent back to Peru for trial. — AFP

Race to become Japan's next premier kicks off

TOKYO: Japan's leadership race kicked off Thursday with a record nine candidates including the surfing son of a former prime minister and an arch-nationalist vying to be the first woman premier. Whoever wins the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) leadership vote on September 27 will succeed unpopular Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, whose three-year term was tarnished by scandals and unease over rising prices.

The contest comes as Japan beefs up defence spending and cooperation with fellow US allies to counter China and as the world's fourth largest economy struggles with a slow-burn demographic crisis.

The conservative LDP has governed almost uninterrupted for decades and holds a majority in parliament, meaning the winner is essentially guaranteed to become premier. Leading the polls are Shinjiro Koizumi, 43, a former environment minister and the son of ex-premier Junichiro Koizumi, and veteran former defence minister Shigeru Ishiba, 67.

"I want to change the politics of Japan, left behind by the changing times," Koizumi said as the candidates each made a campaign speech at the LDP headquarters. His pledges include labour market deregulation, making political funds more transparent, and to "settle issues that have been debated for years" such as allowing married couples to have separate surnames.

Meanwhile Ishiba, highlighting regional tensions, referred to North Korea's ballistic missile test on Thursday morning. "They are not doing this as a

joke," he said, arguing of the need to build an organization like NATO in East Asia.

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TOKYO: (COMBO) This combination of undated photo compiled by Jiji Press shows nine candidates for the leadership election of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party, (top, L-R) Sanae Takaichi, Takayuki Kobayashi, Yoshimasa Hayashi, (2nd row, L-R) Shinjiro Koizumi, Yoko Kamikawa, Katsunobu Kato and (3rd row, L-R) Taro Kono, Shigeru Ishiba, and Toshimitsu Motegi. — AFP

N Korea fires salvo of short-range ballistic missiles

SEOUL: North Korea fired multiple short range ballistic missiles into waters east of the Korean peninsula Thursday, Seoul's military said, the nuclear-armed country's first major weapons test since early July.

Leader Kim Jong Un's regime has staged dozens of launches this year, part of a testing spree that experts say could be linked to North Korea's alleged illicit supplying of weapons to ally Russia for use in Ukraine. Pyongyang has denied any sanctions-busting weapons trade with Russia, but with diplomacy long stalled, it declared South Korea its "principal enemy" this year and recently moved nuclear-capable weapons to border areas.

Seoul's Joint Chief of Staff said it had detected multiple "short-range ballistic missiles" fired early Thursday morning from Pyongyang into the East Sea, or Sea of Japan. The missiles splashed down after flying around 360 kilometres (220 miles), the JCS said, adding it had "immediately detected, tracked, and monitored" the launch and was sharing information with allies Tokyo and Washington.

It said the test was "a clear provocation that seriously threatens peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula". Japan's defence ministry also confirmed the missile test, with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida saying the country had "already lodged a protest with North Korea".

It is Pyongyang's first ballistic missile test since July 1, and comes days after the isolated country marked a key anniversary celebrating the founding of the ruling regime. North Korea has regularly launched missiles around September 9, its foundation day, including conducting its fifth nuclear test on the same day in 2016.

A JCS spokesperson told reporters it was possible the Thursday ballistic missile launch could mean the North "tested it for export to Russia". North Korea has recently bolstered military ties with Moscow, with President Vladimir Putin making a rare visit to Pyongyang in June, where he signed a mutual defence agreement with Kim.

Experts have long said North Korean missiles are being deployed in Ukraine, and a new Conflict Armament Research report this week employed debris analysis to show "that missiles produced this year in North Korea are being used in Ukraine".

The lack of missile launches in recent months was likely due to widespread flooding that has devastated parts of North Korea. Park Won-gon, a professor at Ewha Womans University, told AFP. Even in August, when the United States and South Korea staged large-scale joint military drills that typically infuriate Pyongyang, Kim did not fire off any missiles, Park said. — AFP



SEOUL: People watch a television screen showing a news broadcast with file footage of a North Korean missile test, at a train station in Seoul on September 12, 2024. — AFP



IMPHAL: Security personnel fire tear gas shells to disperse protesters during a curfew in Imphal on September 10, 2024. India's strife-torn northeastern state of Manipur ordered an internet blackout on September 10, after imposing a curfew. — AFP

Indian police arrest 33 after riots in Manipur

NEW DELHI: Indian police have arrested 33 people after a surge in ethnic violence in Manipur state, where a curfew and an Internet blackout have been imposed, officers said Thursday. Fighting broke out in Manipur in May 2023, between the predominantly Hindu Meitei majority and the mainly Christian Kuki community, an ethnic conflict that has since killed at least 200 people.

Since then, communities have splintered into rival groups across swaths of the northeastern state, which borders war-torn Myanmar. After months of relative calm, fresh fighting erupted this month. At least 11 people have been killed, including in what police called a "significant escalation" of violence, with insurgents firing rockets and dropping bombs with drones.

"In the follow up to the violent protests in the past few days, Manipur Police has arrested 33 people and apprehended seven juveniles," a police statement read. It urged people "to cooperate with law enforcing agencies in the maintenance of peace and normalcy". Authorities have imposed an Internet shutdown in several areas, repeating a blackout that last year lasted for months. Police have also ordered a curfew, but hundreds in the state capital Imphal defied the order.

Meitei protesters marched through Imphal on Tuesday to demand security forces take action against Kuki insurgent groups, whom they blame for the latest spate of attacks. Long-standing tensions between the Meitei and Kuki communities revolve around competition for land and public jobs.

Rights activists have accused local leaders of exacerbating ethnic divisions for political gain. Manipur is ruled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party. Fighting last year forced around 60,000 people from their homes, according to government figures. Many have been unable to return home. — AFP

Philippine ex-governor accused of activist's killing surrenders

MANILA: A former Philippine provincial governor accused of masterminding the 2011 murder of an environmental activist and radio show host has surrendered after more than a year in hiding, a government official said Thursday.

In the 13 years since Gerry Ortega was shot dead on the tropical island of Palawan, the region's former governor Joel Reyes, accused of ordering the hit, has remained mostly free due to legal twists and a three-year escape to Thailand.

State prosecutors allege 72-year-old Reyes ordered Ortega's shooting, which stands out for its brazenness in a country where hundreds of Filipino journalists and environmental defenders have been murdered. After a court ordered his arrest last year, Reyes again went into hiding but resurfaced, unknown to authorities, after checking into a Manila hospital, the head of the president's media security task force told AFP.

Reyes later had his lawyers write to the National Bureau of Investigation "that he really wants to surrender", task force chief Paul Gutierrez said. "Based on his medical certificate, it appears that he is suffering from many... health complications," he said without giving details. Ortega had just finished his morning radio show where he frequently criticized politicians, including Reyes, when he was shot in the back of the head at a second-hand clothes shop in the provincial capital Puerto Princesa.

Police arrested Ortega's killer and the gun used was traced to a close aide of Reyes, while a bodyguard who hired the assassin later implicated his boss. Reyes, who has always denied involvement in the murder, was charged in 2012 along with a younger brother. The siblings soon fled to Thailand, but were deported back to the Philippines in 2015. The brothers were freed in 2018 after a court voided the case against them, but the charges were reinstated nearly two years later. — AFP

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2024

Saudi firms urged to deepen presence in Chinese market

Chinese PM meets representatives of Saudi business community

RIYADH: Chinese Premier Li Qiang on Wednesday encouraged Saudi companies to deepen their involvement in the Chinese market in a meeting with representatives of the Saudi business community in Riyadh of Saudi Arabia. The Saudi Minister of Investment Khalid Al-Falih, along with more than 10 leaders of the government, chambers of commerce, and enterprises, attended the meeting.

After hearing statements by the representatives, Premier Li said that under the strategic guidance of President Xi Jinping and Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud in recent years, China and Saudi Arabia have witnessed the steady development of political ties, and enjoyed shared focuses in their development strategies, with fruitful results in pragmatic cooperation, especially their economic and trade cooperation that boasts strong momentum.

China is now advancing its modernization on all fronts through high-quality development, he noted, adding that China has a super-sized market of over 1.4 billion people with continuously unlocked demand. The country is promoting digital, intelligent and green transformation of industries, as well as scientific and technological innovation in such fields as artificial intelligence and cloud computing, which will give rise to more new drivers for economic growth, Li said.

He welcomes more Saudi enterprises to invest in China to better share the country's development dividends. Stressing that there are numerous favorable conditions for the two countries to further deepen economic and trade cooperation, Li encouraged Saudi companies to expand and strengthen cooperation with China in traditional sectors such as oil and gas, petrochemicals, infrastructure, and trade, while enhancing cooperation in emerging industries like the digital and green economies.

The Chinese government is committed to creating a top-tier business environment that is market-driven, law-based and internationally oriented, and will further relax market access, the Chinese



RIYADH: A handout picture provided by the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) shows Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman welcoming Chinese Prime Minister Li Qiang in Riyadh, on September 11, 2024. — AFP

premier said. China will provide robust support and services for foreign enterprises, helping them establish a stronger presence in the country and achieve success in China, he stressed. Representatives of the Saudi business community said that President Xi's successful state visit to Saudi Arabia

in 2022 has injected strong momentum for the development of bilateral ties.

Noting that China's Belt and Road Initiative dovetails with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 reform plan, they expressed optimism about the prospects of China's development, and full confidence in their

development in China, adding that they are willing to continue the investment in China, and deepen cooperation in new energy, finance, digital economy and other fields. Saudi Arabia is the first leg of Li's four-day visit to the Middle East, which will also take him to the United Arab Emirates. — Reuters



RALEIGH: US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper eat lunch at Sam Jones BBQ in Raleigh, North Carolina. — AFP

Businesses warn Yellen on 'political pressure' over US Steel sale

TOKYO: Major Japanese and American business groups have urged US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen not to succumb to political pressure when reviewing Nippon Steel's proposed acquisition of United States Steel. The \$14.9 billion takeover, agreed by the firms in December, has met opposition from both presidential candidates Kamala Harris and Donald Trump. US Steel warned last week it could shut its Pennsylvania headquarters and factories if the deal is blocked, after reports said incumbent Joe Biden plans to stop the sale.

Yellen is chair of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), which is reviewing the transaction. The Japan Business Federation - the country's largest business group - wrote to Yellen along with the United States Council for International Business, the Washington-based Global Business Alliance and others. "There have been persistent attempts recently to politicize the committee's work from across the political spectrum, allowing politics to undermine the clear and narrow statutory mandate of national security," they said.

"We fear this political pressure may be unduly influencing the outcome of the CFIUS review" which is "putting the US economy and workers at risk", warned the letter dated Wednesday and released to journalists on Thursday. "America's investment climate will be severely tarnished if such political interference prevails." Nippon Steel's vice president met CFIUS members in Washington on Wednesday in an apparent attempt to win support for the acquisition, Japan's Nikkei business daily and other media outlets said.

The takeover has been condemned by the United Steelworkers (USW) union, even as Nippon promised investments to keep Pennsylvania factories competitive and newer "mini mills" in the American South. Wednesday's letter noted that the United States is the world's largest recipient of foreign direct investment. Foreign-headquartered companies employ 7.9 million US workers, it said. The letter also warned that American firms seeking to make investments abroad may face "reciprocal action as a result of politicizing the US review process". — AFP

Russia faces stagflation threat as growth slows

MOSCOW: Prices for bread have jumped so much over the last few years that Russian pensioner Oleg Ivanovich sometimes has to go without. But the 67-year-old says he doesn't mind having to make sacrifices for the sake of Russia's military offensive on Ukraine. "We'll bear with it. When the special military operation ends, prices will return to normal," he told AFP in Moscow, using the official Russian term for the offensive.

Surging prices - annual inflation came in at a little over nine percent in August - is just one of the economic headaches Russia is grappling with as it has increasingly militarized its economy since ordering troops into Ukraine in February 2022. Moscow has funneled billions of dollars to its army, soldiers, their families and weapons makers to sustain its military campaign - a spending splurge that helped it defy Western hopes that sanctions would push it into economic collapse.

But after warning for months that the economy was overheating, the country's Central Bank has lately started mentioning the possibility of another, possibly more challenging development: stagflation. "The shortage of (labor) resources may lead to a situation where economic growth slows down, despite all the efforts to stimulate demand, with all that stimulus accelerating inflation," Central Bank Governor Elvira Nabiullina said over the summer. "In essence, this is a stagflation scenario, which can only be stopped at the cost of a deep recession," she warned.

'De-modernizing'

Stagflation - a period of low or stagnant growth accompanied by high inflation - would present a fresh headache for the Kremlin, which has until now

First time, over half of world population have social benefits

GENEVA: For the first time, over half of people globally enjoy some form of social benefits, the UN said Thursday, but said more was needed, including to soften the impact of climate change. In a fresh report, the United Nations' International Labor Organization said that 52.4 percent of the global population currently receives some element of what it calls social protection. That marks a jump of nearly 10 percentage points since 2015 and the first time that over half of people in the world have at least some coverage, it said.

"While this is welcome progress, the unvarnished reality is that 3.8 billion people are still entirely unprotected," ILO said, highlighting that more than three-quarters of children globally still have no coverage. For the ILO, social protection includes access to health care and income security

navigated the economic fallout from the conflict in Ukraine better than most believed possible. Moscow has increased government spending by almost 50 percent since sending troops into Ukraine, pushing up growth and wages.

Unemployment is at a record low and consumer confidence is its highest in 15 years. But an exodus of both skilled and unskilled workers - who fled mobilization or joined the army - has created millions of unfilled vacancies. Sanctions on Western technology have also hit productivity and damaged supply chains. "In the long-term these demographic factors and technological issues will result in very low economic growth," Ruben Enikolopov, a Russian professor at the Barcelona School of Economics, told AFP.

"There is a high probability of a stagflation sce-

nario in 2025 and the years after. It's not a certainty, but high likelihood," he added. That could leave the central bank - which said last week it saw "signs of slowing economic activity," and that inflation had "reached its peak" - with few options. It has already raised interest rates to 18 percent. Some analysts expect they could reach 20 percent before the end of the year - the same as at the start of the conflict, when rates were hiked rates in an emergency session to avert a financial crisis and bank run after the West imposed sanctions. That cost of borrowing hamstrings many private businesses, further thwarting growth in parts of the economy not connected to the army. A rate-setting meeting on Friday will be closely watched for signs of whether the regulator thinks further tightening is needed. — AFP



MOSCOW: A billboard promoting contract army service and reading "5,200,000 rubles for the first year of the contract" (about \$57,000) is seen in western Moscow on September 11, 2024. Russia's militarized economy is set to enter a new phase of slower growth, posing fresh challenges for the Kremlin. — AFP

measures related especially to old age, unemployment, sickness, disability, work injury, maternity or the loss of the main breadwinner in a family, as well as extra support for families with children.

'Too slow'

ILO warned that "the pace to close the protection gaps is too slow". "If progress were to continue at this rate at the global level, it would take another 49 years - until 2073 - for everyone to be covered by at least one social protection benefit," the report cautioned. ILO chief Gilbert Houngbo voiced particular concern over poor coverage rates in many of the world's countries hardest-hit by climate change, which he said "represents the single, gravest threat to social justice today". "Many of the countries experiencing the most brutal consequences of this crisis are particularly ill-equipped to handle its environmental and livelihood consequences," he said in a statement.

In the 20 countries most vulnerable to the climate crisis, a full 91.3 percent of the population (364 million people) still lack any form of social protection, Thursday's report found. Even when casting a broader net, it said that in the 50 most

climate-vulnerable countries, 75 percent, or 2.1 billion people, have no social protection coverage. "These gaps are especially significant, given the potential role of social protection in softening the impact of climate change, helping people and societies adapt to a new climate-volatile reality, and facilitating a just transition to a sustainable future," ILO said.

'Cushion'

It pointed to how social benefits can help people adapt and cope with climate-related shocks by ensuring things like income security and access to healthcare. Social protections can also "cushion families, workers, and enterprises during the green transition and enable more sustainable economic practices", it added. The ILO warned that the world currently was "on two very different and divergent social protection trajectories". High-income countries are edging closer to universal coverage, with nearly 86 percent of people covered, and upper-middle-income countries (at 71.2-percent coverage) and lower-middle-income countries (at 32.4-percent coverage) "are making large strides in closing protection gaps", the report said. — AFP

Business

Factories in Vietnam's export hubs face disruption after typhoon Yagi

Yagi disrupts infrastructure, power supply

HANOI: Typhoon Yagi caused severe damage to many factories and flooded warehouses in northern Vietnam's export-oriented industrial hubs, with some shuttered plants expected to need weeks to return to full operation, executives said. Asia's strongest typhoon this year was still causing deadly floods and landslides on Wednesday, killing dozens and ravaging infrastructure such as power networks and roads, after it hit the coast on the weekend.

The disruptions could affect global supply chains as Vietnam hosts large operations of multinationals that mostly export their products to the United States, Europe and other developed countries. "Many of them are gone with the wind," said Calvin Nguyen, head of Vietnamese logistics firm WeDo Forwarding Co., referring to products that were to have been delivered to the United States and the European Union, but without saying which. The company's three warehouses in the coastal city of Haiphong had their roofs blown off and were still flooded on Wednesday, he said. The industry ministry did not reply to a request for comment.

In Haiphong, one of the areas worst hit by the typhoon, 95 percent of businesses had been expected to resume some activity by Tuesday, the body managing its industrial zones said. "Many businesses had their roofs blown off, some walls collapsed, gates, fences, signs, camera systems, garages and sliding metal doors were overturned, water flooded into

factories," it said on its website. In industrial zones hosting factories in Haiphong and the neighboring province of Quang Ninh, 20 of 150 investors' plants will be out of service for at least a few weeks, said Bruno Jaspaert, head of the zones.

He expected power consumption there to stay a third below normal for weeks or months, as many companies were busy rebuilding damaged factories, he said, citing a damage survey. Among those hit was Jupiter Logistics, part of a group co-owned by Japan Airlines Co Ltd 9201.T, said one official familiar with the survey. Damage to Jupiter's warehouse was minor, a spokesperson for JAL said on Thursday, noting the cargo stored there had to be moved to a different location. In another industrial park in Haiphong, South Korea's LG Electronics 066570.KS said it had partly resumed work on Tuesday after a factory's walls were crushed on Saturday and a warehouse of refrigerators and washing machines was flooded.

Power cuts

As state-owned power distributor EVN works to restore dozens of damaged electricity lines, power outages are still crippling several areas in the north. In Quang Ninh, north of Haiphong, many factories still lacked electricity or water, Jaspaert said. Chinese solar panel maker Jinko Solar's factory there was severely damaged, one of its workers said, as windows had been smashed and the



HANOI: This aerial view shows a man removing trash from a submerged peach field in Hanoi on September 12, 2024, as heavy rains in the aftermath of Typhoon Yagi brought flooding to northern Vietnam. — AFP

roof blown away, keeping work from being resumed on Tuesday.

Jinko officials were not immediately available to comment. Far from the coast, the industrial hubs of Thai Nguyen and Bac Giang, home to large factories of multinationals, such as Samsung Electron-

ics and Apple supplier Foxconn, also faced the risk of floods. However, a Reuters witness said there were no signs of flooding on Wednesday at Samsung's large facilities in Thai Nguyen, about 60 km (37 miles) north of Hanoi, as water was receding, though more rain was expected. — Reuters

China, EU to hold talks on electric car tariffs

BRUSSELS: China's commerce minister Wang Wentao will head to Brussels for talks with the EU's trade chief next week as Beijing makes a last-ditch effort to stop tariffs on Chinese electric cars, officials said Thursday. The European Commission, which leads the EU's trade policy, announced last month it would slap import duties of up to 36 percent on electric vehicles imported from China. The tariffs will become definitive and last for five years after a vote by the European Union's 27 member states, expected before the end of October.

Wang will discuss the issue with the EU's trade commissioner, Valdis Dombrovskis, on September 19, commission spokesperson, Olof Gill, said. His visit

will come as divisions over duties widen in the bloc. Spanish premier Pedro Sanchez surprised many on Wednesday when he urged the EU to "reconsider" tariffs. Germany, home to some of the world's biggest car manufacturers, has been vocal in its opposition to tariffs and welcomed Sanchez's intervention. German government spokesman Steffen Hebestreit said "the direction of travel is one that we share".

The EU decided in July to levy extra tariffs after an anti-subsidy probe concluded car manufacturers in China benefitted unfairly from state subsidies. China last month filed an appeal against the EU's duties with the World Trade Organization (WTO) and also targeted the bloc's dairy imports with an anti-subsidy probe. That came after China launched an anti-dumping investigation in June into pork imports from the bloc. Spain is the EU's largest exporter of pork products to China. Although both sides have stressed that they want to resolve the issue through dialogue, Gill said offers made so far to address the bloc's concerns were not enough. — AFP

Global oil demand growth slows as China slumps: IEA

PARIS: Global oil demand grew at its slowest pace since 2020 in the first half of 2024 due to China's economic slump, the International Energy Agency said Thursday, prompting the IEA to lower its full-year forecast. Demand increased by 800,000 barrels per day (bpd) in the first six months of 2024, compared to 2.3 million bpd over the same period in 2023, the IEA said in its monthly oil market report. "The chief driver of this downturn is a rapidly slowing China, where consumption contracted y-o-y (year-on-year) for a fourth straight month in July," the Paris-based agency said.

China is among the world's top consumers and im-

porters of oil, but the world's second biggest economy has struggled amid weak consumer spending, a property sector crisis and high unemployment. The IEA also cited the country's shift away from oil in favor of alternative energy. Rising sales of electric vehicles are reducing demand for road fuel while the development of its vast high-speed rail network is restricting growth in domestic air travel, the IEA said. Outside of China, it added, "oil demand is tepid at best".

For the full year, global oil demand is forecast to grow on average by 900,000 bpd, some 70,000 bpd below the IEA's previous estimate. This will take total demand to almost 103 million bpd. Oil prices have weakened this year over concerns about the global economic outlook. This week, Brent North Sea crude, the international benchmark, fell below \$70 per barrel for the first time since December 2021. The fall in prices has prompted leading members of the OPEC+ oil cartel, including Saudi Arabia and Russia, to postpone a planned output increase and instead extend voluntary supply cuts until the end of November. — AFP

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Business

UN decries 'staggering' economic devastation in Gaza, West Bank

Labor market conditions have also worsened dramatically

GENEVA: The Zionist entity's war against Hamas has decimated Gaza's economy, shrinking it to less than one-sixth of its 2022 level, amid an "alarming decline" in the West Bank, the UN said Thursday. Since the war erupted in the Gaza Strip more than 11 months ago, the United Nations said economic devastation has taken place at a "staggering scale".

The Zionist retaliatory military offensive has killed at least 41,118 people in Gaza, mostly women and children. In addition to the devastating human toll, the UN Trade and Development agency (UNCTAD) pointed in a new report to the dramatic impact on the economies in both Gaza and the occupied West Bank.

By early 2024, it said, up to 96 percent of Gaza's agricultural assets, including farms, orchards, irrigation systems, machinery and storage facilities, had been "decimated". This, it pointed out, had crippled food production capacity and worsened the already towering levels of food insecurity in the besieged Palestinian territory. A full 82 percent of businesses in Gaza had also been damaged or destroyed.

'Alarming'

In the last quarter of 2023 alone, Gaza's gross domestic product (GDP) plummeted 81 percent, leading to a 22-percent contraction for the entire year, the report found. "By mid-2024, Gaza's economy had shrunk to less than one-sixth of its 2022 level," UNCTAD said. Spiraling violence in the West Bank has meanwhile sparked a "rapid and alarming economic decline" there as well, the agency warned. Since Oct 7, Zionist troops or settlers have killed at least 662 Palestinians in

the West Bank, according to the Palestinian health ministry. Thursday's report said factors like settlement expansions, land confiscation, demolition of Palestinian structures, increased settler violence and a growing number of checkpoints had displaced West Bank communities and severely impacted economic activities. A full 80 percent of businesses in East Jerusalem Old City have either partially or completely ceased operations, UNCTAD said.

The report pointed out that there had initially been optimism for the West Bank economy in 2023, with 4-percent GDP growth registered in the first three quarters. But that was abruptly reversed after October 7, with a 19-percent contraction in the final quarter, resulting in an annual GDP drop of 1.9 percent, while per capita GDP plunged 4.5 percent.

'Immense pressure'

At the same time, the Palestinian government's fiscal stability is under "immense pressure", it said, pointing among other things to escalating revenue deductions by the Zionist entity, which controls two-thirds of Palestinian fiscal income. The report highlighted that the Zionist entity had withheld more than \$1.4 billion in Palestinian tax revenues in the past five years — over eight percent of Palestinian GDP last year. Labor market conditions across the Palestinian territories have also worsened dramatically since Oct 7. In the West Bank, the report showed that 96 percent of businesses decreased activity, and over 42 percent reduced their workforce. In all, 306,000 jobs have been lost, pushing the West Bank's unemployment rates from nearly 13 percent before the war to 32 percent.



TULKAREM: People inspect damage to buildings along a street after a Zionist army raid at the Nur Shams camp in the north of the occupied West Bank on Sept 12, 2024. — AFP

In Gaza, meanwhile, a full two-thirds of pre-war jobs — around 201,000 positions — had been lost by January this year, the report showed. Unemployment in the besieged territory reached 79 percent in the final quarter of 2023, up from

46 percent in the previous quarter, it said. Even before the war, poverty was already widespread. And now "poverty affects nearly the entire population of Gaza and is rising rapidly in the West Bank", UNCTAD said. — AFP

UniCredit mulls Commerzbank takeover

MILAN: UniCredit is studying a takeover of Commerzbank, Chief Executive Andrea Orcel said Thursday, a day after Italy's second-largest bank surprised markets by revealing a nine-percent stake in its German rival. "Conversations about an M&A (merger and acquisition) or a further combination are on top" of ongoing discussions, Orcel told Bloomberg Television in an interview. "We may go up, we may go down, and we may combine," Orcel added. In announcing its stake Wednesday, UniCredit said it intended to request authorization to exceed 9.9 percent of Commerzbank's capital "if and when necessary".

UniCredit's 4.49 percent stake was bought in an accelerated procedure on behalf of the German state for 702 million euros, bringing the total acquisition amount to around 1.4 billion euros (\$1.54 billion). The remainder was bought on the market, UniCredit said Wednesday. Berlin on Tuesday had announced its intention to sell a 4.5 percent stake in Commerzbank, the first step in its withdrawal from Germany's second-largest bank after saving it from bankruptcy in 2009. "We think there is space given fragmentation of the market to add further value by consolidating," Orcel said in the interview.

"If there is the basis to do that constructively and strengthen what we can provide to the German economy and Europe then that is a great move for UniCredit," he added. UniCredit's next step is to enter into discussions with Commerzbank's stakeholders to see "whether there is a basis for a combination", Orcel said. The services sector union Verdi, which is represented on Commerzbank's supervisory board, called on the German government on Wednesday to "oppose" a possible takeover and not to sell further shares to UniCredit.

"We have always entertained a dialog with regulators, institutions and counterparts in Germany," Orcel said. "I would have thought all the relevant stakeholders were well aware of what we were doing and we would not have moved otherwise." UniCredit's interest in Commerzbank comes after a failed attempt in October 2021 to take over Monte dei Paschi di Siena bank, which was itself saved from bankruptcy by the Italian state. Shares of UniCredit rose 2.6 percent at midday to 37.10 euros. — AFP

With inflation slowing, ECB to cut rates again

FRANKFURT: With inflation slowing and the economic outlook darkening, the European Central Bank is expected to cut interest rates again Thursday but is unlikely to give much away about its next moves. After raising rates at a record pace from mid-2022 to tackle surging consumer prices, the ECB has begun to ease the pressure as inflation rates have fallen. The Frankfurt-based central bank made its first cut in June, reducing the key deposit rate to 3.75 percent from a record high of four percent.

The ECB's governing council kept borrowing costs on hold in July but is expected to make another quarter-point cut on Thursday, providing further relief to businesses and households. It will be only the second rate reduction since 2019 from the ECB, which sets monetary policy for the 20 countries that use the euro. "Virtually all recent ECB speakers have confirmed that they would like to lower rates," said Berenberg bank economist Holger Schmieding.

Policy makers' confidence in moving ahead with cuts has been bolstered by signs that inflation, which has been bumpy over the past year, is now on a more sustained downward trajectory. Euro-zone inflation fell to its lowest level in more than three years in August, according to official

Boeing faces potential strike as workers vote

NEW YORK: Boeing faces a potentially crippling strike in the Seattle region, depending on how 33,000 workers vote Thursday on a new contract that has angered many employees despite solid wage gains. Led by new CEO Kelly Ortberg, the embattled aviation giant had hoped a 25 percent wage hike over four years and a commitment to invest in the Puget Sound region would avert a strike at a time when Boeing remains financially weak after myriad crises.

But while the preliminary contract won an endorsement from leaders of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) District 751, the response from much of the rank-and-file has been harsh. Broadcast reports in the Seattle region have featured footage of line workers who hold daily rallies on the factory floor and call the wage hikes inadequate in light of inflation.

A Sunday posting on the IAM's Facebook page announcing the deal was removed after drawing hundreds of comments, with many condemning the deal or calling for a strike. A strike would shutter Boeing production assembly plants for the 737 MAX and 777, further delaying the company's turnaround efforts. Among the major points of contention, the wage hike falls short of the 40 percent IAM had sought, and the new deal fails to reinstate pensions.

IAM President Jon Holden told members what happens next is up to union members. "We have achieved everything we could in bargaining, short of a strike," Holden said in a message to workers. "We recommended acceptance because we can't guarantee we can achieve more in a strike," Holden said. "But that is your decision to make and is a decision that we will protect and support, no matter what." Stephanie Pope, president of Boeing's commercial plane division, said the contract delivers the largest-ever wage hike despite the company's \$60 billion in debt. The pledge to the Puget Sound region is an "unprecedented commitment" to the area.

In a statement Wednesday evening Ortberg warned against a strike, saying it would "put our shared recovery in jeopardy, further eroding trust with our customers and hurting our ability to determine our future together." The new contract is a "hard sell," said aviation website Leeham News.

data. Consumer price rises slowed to 2.2 percent compared to the same month last year, down from 2.6 percent in July, leaving the figure just a whisker off the ECB's target. Inflation rates had peaked at 10.6 percent in October 2022 after Russia's invasion of Ukraine and post-pandemic supply chain woes sent food and energy costs soaring.

A lacklustre performance in some parts of the euro-zone has also fuelled calls for more cuts to take pressure off the single currency area. While signs in the first half of the year were positive, recent indicators have pointed to a deteriorating outlook. The euro-zone's largest economy, Germany, shrank unexpectedly in the second quarter, adding to indications that a hoped-for rebound will fail to materialize this year.

Meanwhile, wage growth, a key area of concern for the ECB, slowed markedly in the second quarter, easing fears that high labour costs could spark a resurgence in inflation. Rate-setters will also be armed with updates to the central bank's own inflation and growth forecasts to help guide their decision. The US Federal Reserve looks poised to start cutting rates at its meeting next week, following recent weak data and market turmoil. This will boost confidence among ECB policy makers about forging ahead with their own cuts.

What's next?

Investors will be closely watching ECB chief Christine Lagarde's post-meeting press conference for clues about the path ahead. But analysts say the ECB is unlikely to let much slip about its



Airline pilot in command and head of Boeing 737 pilots at Transavia Simon Leblanc (left) and airline pilot Zoe Castellata fly a Boeing 737-800 aircraft during a flight from Paris to Seville. — AFP

"The deal makes progress in the areas IAM members identified as priorities, but falls short of the union's stated goals in most of them."

Leeham predicted the contract would fail to win a majority vote, but said it was unclear whether critics of the deal would win a two-thirds majority on a second question of whether to strike. If the contract fails to win a majority but a strike vote also falls short, the contract offer is accepted by default, according to IAM rules. In an interview with the Seattle Times published Monday, Holden said, "Right now, I think it will be voted down, and our members will vote to strike."

Advantage: labor?

Boeing has been under renewed scrutiny since a January incident in which a fuselage panel blew out of an Alaska Airlines Boeing 737 MAX plane mid-flight, necessitating an emergency landing. That revived questions about safety and quality control after the company had seemingly made progress following deadly MAX crashes in 2018 and 2019. The aerospace giant in March announced a management shakeup that included the exit of Dave

Calhoun as CEO. It has also slowed production on the MAX as it beefs up quality control.

Ortberg, who took the helm on August 8, has pledged a "reset" on labor relations as part of a turnaround. The IAM talks come on the heels of a more assertive labor movement as embodied by strikes at Detroit's "Big Three" and John Deere, and a near-strike at UPS that was resolved with a last-minute deal with the Teamsters. "The power balance has shifted in favor of workers," said Cornell University labor relations expert Harry Katz, who noted that Boeing's position has been weakened by "turmoil and management problems."

Andrew Hedden, associate director of the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies at the University of Washington, said strikes have become common at Boeing since 1970s. Hedden said the company's pledge for new investment, while encouraging, did not completely settle concerns about Boeing's long-term footprint in Seattle because the contract is only four years long. "There's still work to do for the union and for the people in Washington state to make sure the company holds to that," Hedden said. — AFP



FRANKFURT: The European Central Bank (ECB) building is pictured prior to a news conference following the meeting of the governing council of the ECB in Frankfurt/Main, Germany, on September 12, 2024. — AFP

next move, as the central bank has in recent times insisted it will not foreshadow future decisions, and will rely solely on incoming data.

Policy makers have reason to be cautious, with signs that inflation in some areas remains stubborn. Closely watched core inflation, which strips out volatile energy and food prices, remained elevated at 2.8 percent in August, while services sector inflation accelerated. The muddled picture means that rate cut decisions beyond September could be "more complicated and controversial than currently priced in by financial markets," said economist Carsten Brzeski from ING bank. "As a result, we don't expect any new forward guidance" at Thursday's meeting, he added. — AFP

Ghana raises cocoa price by 45% to deter smuggling

ACCRA: Ghana's government on Wednesday announced a 45-percent increase in the producer price of cocoa for the 2024/2025 crop season, in a bid to curb smuggling. The policy is also designed to improve the welfare of cocoa farmers as the new season begins, said Agriculture Minister Bryan Acheampong. The new price, effective from Wednesday, raises the payment for a 64-kilogramme bag of cocoa beans to \$192, up from \$132. That brings the farm gate price to \$3,063 per ton, a 129-percent increase from the opening price of \$1,335 per ton for the 2023/2024 season.

"This is an unprecedented increase of 129.36 percent," Acheampong said as he announced the increase Wednesday. "This appreciable increment in the producer price of cocoa signifies the government's commitment to improve the sector and the livelihoods of the Ghanaian cocoa farmer." The price rise follows a mid-season adjustment last year when the government raised prices from \$1,335 per ton to \$2,113 per ton in response to soaring international cocoa prices. New York cocoa futures have recently surged above \$7,000 per ton due to poor harvests in Ghana and Ivory Coast, the world's top producers. Farmers in these countries however often receive much lower prices, set by their governments. Experts suggest that increasing the farm gate price could lower the incentive for illegal cross-border sales, allowing farmers to reinvest in their cocoa farms, thus potentially easing the global supply shortfall. Ghana's cocoa harvest has declined in recent years due to weather challenges, disease, inadequate inputs, and smuggling. — AFP

Weekender

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2024



Wooden dhow



Timber tales

Crafting Kuwait's legacy from wood



Souq Mubarakiya



Kuwait National Museum



By Ghadeer Ghloum

Wood played a significant role in traditional Kuwaiti craftsmanship, especially in shipbuilding, door-making and other trades. Its use provided not only functionality, but also contributed to the aesthetic appeal of these products, enriching Kuwaiti heritage.

Wood in Shipbuilding

Wood was crucial in shipbuilding. Old Kuwaitis used local trees such as tamarisk, sidr and mangrove, valued for their strength and durability, making them ideal for enduring harsh sea conditions. Wood's natural properties suited Kuwait's hot and dry climate, offering resilience that other materials lacked. Beyond practicality, wood enhanced the ships' visual appeal. Local artisans added intricate carvings and decorative elements, re-



Kuwaiti diwaniya door. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

flecting their high level of craftsmanship. Additionally, wood's flexibility when worked with traditional tools allowed for detailed customization, merging functionality with beauty.

Wooden Doors

In ancient Kuwaiti architecture, wooden doors were iconic. Made from durable and beautiful woods like teak and cedar, these doors combined strength with aesthetic elegance. The natural finishes highlighted their beauty, adding a refined touch to both the interiors and exteriors of buildings. A notable example is the "Bab Abu Khawka", a traditional door with a small opening for practical access. Crafted by local artisans, it was used in mosques, diwanias and upscale homes, showcasing both functionality and decorative artistry.

Other Uses of Wood

Beyond shipbuilding and door-making, wood was used in various other traditional crafts, proving its versatility. It was essential in crafting furniture, such as seating areas and storage boxes, which were designed with artistic details reflecting local tastes. Wooden toys, like swings and small playthings, were also handcrafted by local artisans, featuring simple yet aesthetically pleasing designs. This demonstrat-



Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry

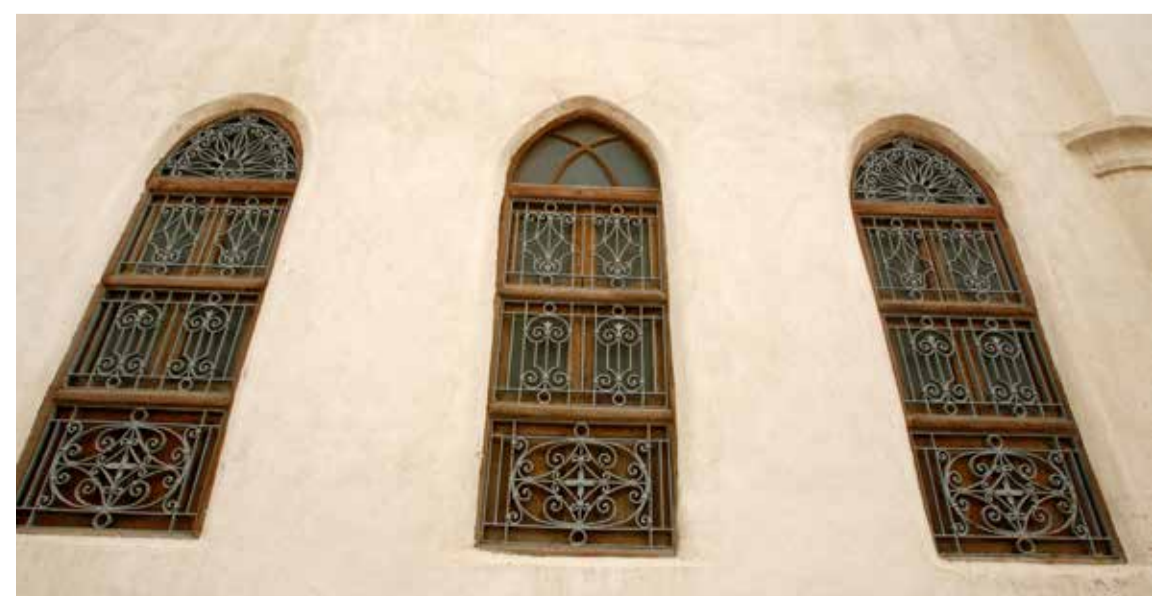
ed wood's role in enhancing the aesthetic of both large and small traditional Kuwaiti items.



Sadu House



Door of a Kuwaiti house.





THRIFTING: SAVE MONEY AND THE PLANET — ONE OUTFIT AT A TIME!



Young people in Kuwait break the second-hand clothing stigma



By Nebal Snan

A strong sense of style and a shopping list are all Abdullah Aljanah needs when he goes shopping for second-hand clothing. Although he admits buying second-hand, or thrifting, is not widely acceptable in Kuwait, the 21-year-old Kuwaiti is among a growing number of young people who have found ways to shop preloved items for affordable prices.

"We live in an age where fast fashion is consuming all of the world and a lot of clothes go to waste," said Aljanah, referring to the fashion industry's shift towards quickly produced trends usually made in large volumes from cheap materials. "Having the option to buy clothes for cheaper and they're not going to go to landfills is really good for the climate."



Saja Jassem, owner of Thrf

Kuwaitis are well known for being fashion-forward trendsetters but second-hand clothing, said Aljanah, has always been "something of a taboo". A love for luxury and convenience combined with high purchasing power means locals don't shy away from splurging on brand new clothing. A lot of expat communities in the country have adopted the same mindset. Adam Cruz, an expat in Kuwait in his early 20s, said his family would thrift home décor, but were iffy about him buying used clothing.

"Older people in general, they don't really



understand the point of thrifting. They would be like, 'why would you buy things that are cheap and used?' 'It's unclean' or 'You should just go buy new pieces instead,'" said Hussein Hosny, another Gen-Z expat who loves thrifting. The generational divide is not unique to Kuwait. A 2024 Ipsos survey has found that 64 percent of Americans aged 18-34 are interested in buying more second-hand or thrifted items. That's 1.7 times those 65 years and older — only 38 percent of people in that age group are interested in thrifting.

Although thrifting was never mainstream in Kuwait, Saja Jassem, another expat who was born and raised in the country, said she grew up with a different perspective. Jassem fondly remembers gathering with her cousins to lend each other's clothes or pass down some of the items they outgrew. "The stigma around second-hand is rooted in the insecurities of other people," she said.

She later went on to create Thrf, a popup thrift and consignment store first launched in 2021. Starting out as an online catalogue with Jassem selling items from her and her mother's closet to friends, Thrf has now grown to attract tens of people who come to the popup events for thrifting and socializing. "I want to keep spreading the idea (of thrifting) until it's really normalized," said Jassem.

The concept is simple — Jassem and her friend Kawthar source pre-loved and vintage items then set up shop, usually over a weekend, to sell them. The location is different every time, and includes cafes, shops and a roller-skating rink. Prices can start as low as 500 fils for some pieces and go up depending on several factors, including the item's brand, condition and how versatile it is.

A growing market

Worldwide, buying used clothing has never been more popular — the global second-hand market is projected to be worth \$350 billion by 2027, according to a report by ThredUp, a used clothing online marketplace. The rise in popularity is likely thanks to TikTok, where a lot of people in the west have been sharing videos of their thrifting finds since the pandemic. That's how Cruz first got interested in thrifting. "I actually have customers of all ages ... and I've

had younger customers bring their mom with them," said Jassem. "Parents would learn from their kids, or they actually are teaching their kids (about thrifting)."

Thrifters interviewed by Kuwait Times said the appeal is threefold: It allows them to buy unique pieces that maintain their individuality at more affordable prices, all while preventing more clothes from ending up at landfills, thereby protecting the environment. The repeating trend cycles, for example the return of Y2K fashion over the past couple of years, means used clothes from different eras can still be relevant years from its manufacture date.

Lack of accessibility

The biggest barrier for those looking to thrift in Kuwait has been the lack of accessible places to shop. Jassem has tried scouring the Internet for second-hand pieces, but having to pay taxes and shipping fees at the checkout raised the price tag. Cruz said local online thrift stores charged ridiculous prices.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Jassem frequented Odette's closet, the only second-hand shop she knew of in Kuwait. The shop, once located in 8 Mall in Salmiya, never reopened after the lockdown. The only place open for year-round thrifting is the Friday Market. But wading through the market's numerous stalls for a good piece and bargaining with sellers can be overwhelming for many. The sprawling open-air shopping area can also get unbearably hot in the summer.

By offering a well-curated and unique collection in a comfortable atmosphere, Jassem hoped Thrf would fill the gap left by the lack of shops like Odette's. "What Saja is doing is bringing thrifting to the mainstream," said Hosny. "She has gotten it more accessible by posting about it online and hosting all these popups where a lot of younger people would go."

The popups are well-attended by Kuwaitis and expats alike — many had thrifted abroad, but a good number got their first taste through Thrf. Customers rave about the events, not only for making thrifting more accessible, but also for giving them a space to find like-minded people. Cruz, Aljanah and

Hosny became best friends after meeting at Thrf.

Buying sustainably

Sustainability is key in Thrf's operations, said Jassem. To start, she gets most clothing for Thrf events through donations from customers. Her friend, Kawthar, uses her expertise to curate vintage items from the UK and Italy. Most of the pieces are timeless and fit most people's tastes, said Jassem. The items go on the racks for two popups and if they're not sold, Jassem collaborates with friends to upcycle some of them before they go back on the racks for another round. Her mother is tasked with donating the rest to families in need, whom she knows personally.

While buying second-hand is essentially a sustainable practice, the low prices can easily fuel overconsumption. Jassem has watched with concern people on TikTok turn trips to the Friday Market into a trend. She says shopping at the market without the bargaining knowhow could backfire, driving prices up and making it inaccessible for those who need it the most.

The market can also become a haven for people looking to buy more than what they need. The rise of fast fashion over the past 30 years, coupled with social media serving as a platform to amplify trends quickly and widely, has shifted consumer mindsets to buying for short-term use and then donating or tossing to keep up with the trends.

Preethi Gopinath, an associate Professor at New York's Parsons School of Design, said in an interview with Vogue that this mindset is not sustainable. Instead, people should be mindful about what they buy and choose items that are made to last, even if it means they were buying fewer pieces for the same price.

But some can still fall into the trend trap despite their best intentions, admits Hosny, who says 60 percent of his wardrobe is from the Friday Market. As his style evolved, Hosny has given away a lot of the items he doesn't wear anymore to close friends. "When you're thrifting, just go with the flow. Don't overthink your purchases. If you regret buying something, just give it to a friend, literally."



Kuwait's golden legacy

Tradition and history woven into gold ornaments

By Tala Bin Hussain

Trends in gold styles in Kuwait have emerged through historical events and inspirations from nature, holding a significant place in the country's history. Kuwait's relationship with gold is deeply intertwined with its social and economic development, serving as an integral part of its traditions — from jewelry to bridal dowries to financial assets.

During the 1990s, following the Iraqi invasion, a popular gold piece called Damaat Jaber, which translates to "Tears of Jaber", became widely recognized. This piece featured teardrop-shaped gems and was named in honor of Sheikh Jaber Al-Sabah, who shed tears during his UN speech following Kuwait's liberation in 1991.

An essential part of any Kuwaiti bride's wedding is her Yelwah day, where she is adorned in gold from head to toe, including a green necklace. The highlight of her ensemble is a large necklace called Kursi Jaber, featuring several large connected moon-shaped discs. This necklace is a symbol of prestige and represents a long-standing tradition that continues to this day.

Pearl diving has played a significant role in Kuwait's culture and history. Divers searched for pearls to sell to merchants, who then intricately wove these pearls into gold bracelets called Mgamash. The name derives from the Arabic word Gmasha, referring to a specific type and size of pearl.

There is also a special etiquette for wearing rings in Kuwait. For instance, the Al Shahid ring is traditionally worn on the pointer finger, linked to the custom of raising the pointer finger during prayer to testify to Allah's Oneness.

According to Abo Hassan, a gold salesman, the Ottoman Empire had a considerable impact on Kuwait's gold culture. The Turkish lira, once used as currency, now features prominently in gold jewelry. This versatile element appears in earrings, bracelets, rings and necklaces. The coin is inscribed with "Azz Nasroh, Struck in Constantinople 1327" and is



Gold coins are displayed at a shop in Kuwait City. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

adorned with olive tree branches. Abo Hassan also mentioned Dagat Bajala, a coin the size of a fava bean — a staple in Kuwaiti cuisine — that is stamped with the Ottoman flag. Historically, this flag was hung on every fishing boat in Kuwait.

Kuwait's rich history with gold reflects a blend of cultural heritage, historical events and natural beauty. From the emotional significance behind Damaat Jaber to the timeless elegance of the Kursi Jaber, gold has symbolized prestige and woven itself into the fabric of Kuwaiti tradition. The legacy of pearl diving, the unique etiquette of ring-wearing and the Ottoman influence all highlight how gold has played a crucial role in shaping Kuwaiti identity and social practices.



Al Shahid ring



Turkish lira necklace



Kursi Jaber necklace



Gmasha bracelet



Damaat Jaber necklace



WHAT'S ON IN KUWAIT

Event: Bint Ebjad Exhibition
Location: Sadu House
Date: September 7- 21, 2024

Event: Dino Dentist for Kids
Location: Assima Mall
Date: September 12-14, 2024

Event: Fun Lab
Location: Magic School at Scientific Center
Date: September 13, 2024

Event: Creative Writing
Location: Art Space Q8
Date: September 13-14, 2024

Event: Punch Needle Workshop
Location: Artspace q8
Date: September 14, 2024

Event: Embroidery Workshop (Palestine map)
Location: Takween Library
Date: September 14, 2024

Event: Discussion of the movie "Inshallah, it's a Boy"
Location: JACC
Date: September 14, 2024

Event: How to choose the right partner workshop for women
Location: NAFAS
Date: September 16-17, 2024

Weekender



US singer Benson Boone poses in the pressroom with the Best Alternative Video award for "Beautiful Things."



Sabrina Carpenter, winner of the Song of the Year award for "Espresso," poses in the press room.



US singer Taylor Swift accepts the Video of the Year award for "Fortnight" on stage during the MTV Video Music Awards at UBS Arena in Elmont, New York, on September 11, 2024. — AFP photos

Taylor Swift wins seven VMAs, tying Beyonce for lifetime lead

Swift again urges fans to vote at MTV awards

Pop megastar Taylor Swift took home seven trophies on Wednesday at MTV's Video Music Awards, tying her with Beyonce for the most lifetime honors in the 40-year history of the video accolades. Swift snagged the top prize, video of the year, for her bleak, black-and-white video "Fortnight" featuring Post Malone.

It shows Swift inside a bare psychiatric hospital, a setting she said reflected what she was seeing in her head as she wrote the music for "The Tortured Poets Department" album. "This video seems very sad when you watch it, but it actually was the most fun video to make," Swift said as she accepted the VMAs Moon Person statuette.

Swift also thanked her fans for voting for the VMA honors and urged them to cast their ballots in the upcoming US presidential election. The singer endorsed Democrat Kamala Harris in an Instagram post on Tuesday, but she did not mention the candidate by name on Wednesday. By night's end, the 34-year-old Swift brought her career VMA total to 30, on par with hip-hop artist Beyonce. Swift's other awards on Wednesday included artist of the year and song of summer.

Her video of the year award was her third in a row - following an extended version of "All Too Well" in 2022 and "Anti-Hero" in 2023 - and fifth overall, a record for one artist. Early in the show, when "Fortnight" won best collaboration, Swift praised Malone as "ridiculously talented" and



Chappell Roan accepts the award for Best New Artist.

The VMAs began airing on MTV PARA.O in 1984 and became known for memorable moments. At Wednesday's awards, "Good Luck, Babe!" singer Chappell Roan was named best

artist Tyla claimed the Afrobeats award for "Water" and Brazilian singer Anitta snagged best Latin video for "Mil Veces". "The global impact that 'Water' had on the world just proved that African music can be pop music too," she said to wild applause. "Like this is just so special but also bittersweet, because I know there's a tendency to group all African artists under Afrobeats. African music is so diverse — it's more than just Afrobeats," Tyla said.

The vast majority of awards were doled out offstage during the evening far better known for its performances and stage antics than its prizes. Megan Thee Stallion hosted, at one point even recreating Britney Spears' iconic 2001 set when she performed with a live python. Megan's snake was real too — but she didn't have the same stamina as Brit. "Come get this snake — I don't know this snake, this snake don't know me," she shrieked as a handler took the reptile from her arms.

Fashion-wise it was an evening for the vamps, including Swift in Dior, with a yellow plaid bustier top and open skirt complete with caged leather gloves and velvet hot pants. The Reputation-coded outfit was yet another clue for the Swifties that her re-recording of that album was on its way.

And Sabrina Carpenter arrived in archival Bob Mackie — the same shimmering push-up strapless gown that Madonna wore to the 1991 Oscars. She dropped from the ceiling on a swing to perform songs including "Espresso" to wide applause. Carpenter later won the prize for "Song of the Year" for her caffeinated bop. Anitta brought her signature high-energy twerks to the stage, while Karol G recreated a Latin bar scene to deliver "Si Antes Te Hubiera Conocido".

Rapper Eminem opened the show with "Houdini" from album "The Death of Slim Shady" before country singer Jelly Roll joined him via a video feed for their hit "Somebody Save Me". Katy Perry, recipient of the Michael Jackson Video Vanguard Award, sang hits from "Teenage Dream" to "Firework" while wearing giant silver butterfly wings on a futuristic set. Perry also emerged from the air, giving a video-game-meets-Cirque-du-Soleil aerial dancing performance of her greatest hits including "Dark Horse" and "California Gurls". Her husband, actor Orlando Bloom, handed her the trophy, and she embraced him with a long kiss. "Thank you to MTV for believing in my weirdness from day one," Perry said. — Agencies



South African singer-songwriter Tyla poses in the pressroom with the Best Afrobeats award for "Water."

VMA list of winners:

VIDEO OF THE YEAR
Taylor Swift ft. Post Malone — "Fortnight"

ARTIST OF THE YEAR
Taylor Swift

SONG OF THE YEAR
Sabrina Carpenter — "Espresso"

BEST NEW ARTIST
Chappell Roan

BEST COLLABORATION
Taylor Swift ft. Post Malone — "Fortnight"

BEST POP
Taylor Swift

BEST HIP-HOP
Eminem — "Houdini"

BEST R&B
SZA — "Snooze"

BEST ALTERNATIVE
Benson Boone — "Beautiful Things"

BEST ROCK
Lenny Kravitz — "Human"

BEST LATIN
Anitta — "Mil Veces"

BEST AFROBEATS
Tyla — "Water"

BEST K-POP
Lisa — "Rockstar"

VIDEO FOR GOOD
Billie Eilish — "What Was I Made For (From the Motion Picture "Barbie")"

BEST DIRECTION
Taylor Swift ft. Post Malone — "Fortnight" — Directed by Taylor Swift

BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY
Ariana Grande — "We Can't Be Friends (Wait for Your Love)" — Cinematography by Anatol Trofimov

BEST EDITING
Taylor Swift ft. Post Malone — "Fortnight" — Editing by Chancler Haynes

BEST CHOREOGRAPHY
Dua Lipa — "Houdini" — Choreography by Charm La'Donna

BEST VISUAL EFFECTS
Eminem — "Houdini" — Visual Effects by Synapse Virtual Production, Louise Lee, Rich Lee, Metaphysic, Flawless Post

BEST ART DIRECTION
Megan Thee Stallion — "BOA" — Art Direction by Brittany Porter



Post Malone and Taylor Swift accept the Best Collaboration award for "Fortnight".

"unfailingly polite". "It has taken me forever to get him to stop calling me ma'am," she said next to Malone on stage at the UBS Arena outside New York City. Malone returned the compliments, calling Swift "absolutely one of the most kind and talented people I've ever had the honor of knowing".

new artist. She wore a full suit of armor as she took the stage with a fiery crossbow to channel Joan of Arc in her performance of "Good Luck, Babe!" set in front of a flaming castle.

Blackpink singer Lisa won best K-pop video for her solo hit, "Rockstar". South African art-



US singer-songwriter Lenny Kravitz poses with the VMA Best Rock award for "Human" in the pressroom.



Japanese singer Lisa poses in the pressroom with the Best K-Pop award for "Rockstar".



Eminem performs on stage.

Sports

NBK honors Kuwait's champions in the 2024 Paralympic Games

Executive management awards Faisal Sorour, Faisal Al-Rajhi with KD 30,000



KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK)'s executive management honored Kuwait's medalists in the 2024 Summer Paralympic Games, which recently concluded in Paris, in recognition of their spectacular achievements that adds to the track record of Kuwait's sports achievements.

The paralympic champions Faisal Sorour and Faisal Al-Rajhi were welcomed by Isam Al-Sager, the Vice Chairman and Group CEO of National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), who congratulated Faisal Sorour on winning the gold medal in the men's

shot put contest and Faisal Al-Rajhi on winning the bronze medal the men's 5,000m wheelchair race, praising the achievement of the two champions.

On this occasion, NBK awarded the two champions KD 30,000 (KD 20,000 to the gold medalist Faisal Sorour and KD 10,000 to the bronze medalist Faisal Al-Rajhi).

For their part, Sorour and Al-Rajhi expressed their deep appreciation for NBK's initiative in supporting and honoring Kuwaiti athletes, stressing that this support encourages them to go the extra

mile to continue achieving and raising the Kuwaiti flag high in the upcoming international sports forums.

This event reflects NBK's pride in national champions and their outstanding achievements in the most prestigious global sports events. NBK is committed to supporting all national athletes who strive to raise the Kuwaiti flag in international sports events that attract worldwide attention.

NBK stressed that these achievements of champions Sorour and Al-Rajhi demonstrate Kuwaiti athletes' ability

to achieve spectacular results. The bank also applauded the efforts of the athletes who participated in the 2024 Paris Olympics and Paralympic games and other international championships, wishing them continued success in the future.

NBK also appreciates the achievements of Kuwait's champions, especially para-athletes, as great role models who motivate and inspire others through their perseverance and determination to realize their dreams and add achievements to Kuwait's track record in sports.

NBK is a key supporter of all national

athletes as part of fostering sporting activities. The bank is committed to encourage and promote sports and athletes who successfully advance to a higher level of competitions and proudly step on the podium raising the Kuwaiti flag.

NBK maintains its leading role among private sector institutions in supporting national talent across various fields, including sport, by recognizing their achievements and highlighting their successes on the international arena, in addition to providing them with all necessary support to achieve their goals.

Ronaldo says Ten Hag's attitude too negative for Man Utd

LONDON: Cristiano Ronaldo says Erik ten Hag's attitude is too negative, urging the Manchester United manager to target the Premier League title even though the club need to "rebuild from the bottom". The Portugal star, who now plays for Al Nassr in Saudi Arabia, fell out with Ten Hag before his second spell at Old Trafford ended late in 2022.

Ronaldo believes his former club needs sweeping changes but that Ten Hag should not rule out winning major trophies in the meantime. The Dutchman has said he is "quite confident" of claiming more silverware this campaign after lifting the League Cup and FA Cup over the past two seasons.

But he said in July his team are a "long way away" from being ready to win the Premier League, which they have not won since Alex Ferguson's final season in charge in 2013. "Manchester, they need to rebuild everything, in my opinion," Ronaldo said in an episode of the Rio Ferdinand Presents podcast, due to be released on Thursday.

"The coach, they say they cannot compete to win the league and Champions League. Manchester United coach, you cannot say that you're not going to fight to win the league or Champions League. "You have to be, to mentally say, listen, maybe we don't have that potential, but I cannot say that. We're going to try. You have to try."

United upset Manchester City in the FA Cup final in May but they endured their worst Premier League campaign last term, finishing eighth, and the 20-time



LISBON: Portugal's forward #7 Cristiano Ronaldo (C) vies with Scotland's defender #6 Scott McKenna (L) during the UEFA Nations League football match, group A, between Portugal and Scotland. — AFP

English champions have lost two of their opening three matches this season.

"This club needs time to rebuild because it's still one of the best clubs in the world, but they need to change," Ronaldo said. "They understand that. This is the only way. This is why they show, they start to change again, the structure of the club, the president, the infrastructures and everything. The owners of the club."

British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe completed his purchase of a minority stake in the club in February and has since overseen major changes in the club hierarchy after taking control of football operations. "I believe that the future will be bright," said Ronaldo. "I believe, but they don't depend only on the talents. It's more than that. It's all club, all, not only players, club, everything as a unit, united. — AFP

Power struggle, trading: What's going at Chelsea?

LONDON: No sooner had another turbulent transfer window for Chelsea shut than reports emerged of a power struggle between chairman Todd Boehly and majority shareholder Berhad Eghbali. In just over two years since the pair joined forces to buy the Blues, the Premier League club have spent more than £1 billion (\$1.3 billion) on a bloated squad will little to show for it.

AFP Sport looks at the current state of the two-time European champions, who were serial winners during the Roman Abramovich era.

LA Dodgers co-owner Boehly was the face of a 2022 takeover after sanctions imposed on Russian billionaire Abramovich forced a quick sale of the club. However, the vast majority of the world-record £2.5 billion price for a football club came from Eghbali's private equity group Clearlake Capital. After Boehly's brief stint as the club's sporting director during the first six months of the new regime in west London, Eghbali has become the most hands-on figure within the ownership group.

The relationship between the pair is said to have deteriorated in recent months, with differing opinions over the club's recruitment policy, poor results and the failure to make progress on the building of a new stadium. One of the key disagreements came over the position of now-departed manager Mauricio Pochettino. — AFP



Special Olympics motor activity training concludes

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The regional training course to prepare trainers of the Special Olympics Motor Activity Training Program (MATP) that was held in Kuwait over three days concluded Monday night, and was

held under the supervision of the International Special Olympics, and MENA Special Olympics, with 50 trainers participating from GCC, Arab countries and Kuwait, that in addition to several leader players.

Special Olympics Motor Activities Program Director Dr Niamh Morton and technical advisor for Motor Activities Eleni Rossidis, Emad Mohyeddin from the MENA Special Olympics and Dr Shareef Al-Fouly, and Nuha Jaballah lectured during the course.

The course included classes and practical parts. The practical parts was carried out at Al-Shabab Club swimming pool in Al-Ahmadi with students from the Al-Resala School, and the Disabled Care Society, which included entertaining activities in which trainers and students participated.



Director of Kuwait Special Olympics Rihab Boursly was very pleased with the course success in adding to the trainers abilities, as was clear in the practical applications. She urged participants to benefit from the valued subjects that were discussed, adding that Kuwait hosting of the course was within the keenness of Kuwait Special Olympics to keep up with the most recent theories and practical applications related to the motor activities of the disabled.

She said the practical applications showed positive results that can be built on for more serious work to improve the quality of life of the disabled, specially the severe ones.

Head of Kuwait Special Olympics Hanna Al-Zawawi thanked lecturers and trainers from Arab and

GCC countries, who worked hard to bring out the course in a distinguished fashion, adding that his time course had the medical checkup on the severely disabled persons and thanked the health ministry, Royal initiative, disabled care society and Al-Sabah sports club.

She also thanked Kuwait youth volunteers, as well as the technical and administrative departments of Al-Tomoooh Club and state authorities that contributed to the success of the course.

Shareef Al-Fouly lauded the organization, adding that the course was rich in subjects specially those related to how to implement and apply the items of the motor activities related to skills and how to carry out evaluations of the players.

Classifieds

Clinics

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804

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

Change of Name

I, Hakimuddin Yusufali Chacha do hereby change my name which is mentioned in my Passport, from Hakimuddin S/o Yusuf Ali to Hakimuddin Yusuf Chacha S/o Yusuf Ali Haji Dawood Bhai Chacha with immediate effect. From: Hakimuddin Yusufali Chacha S/o Yusuf Ali Haji Dawood Bhai Chacha R/O 109, Saifee Nagar, Indore (M.P.)
(#5019 13/09/2024)

I, Amina holder of Passport No.

U3670267, do hereby change my name to Amina (given name) Tapiya (surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name Amina Tapiya and I also undertake to carry out this name change in my all documents.
(#5920 13/09/2024)

I, Akula Karimulla S/o Akula Mabu (old name) R/o 14/256, Police line Kamalapuram (M) YSR district, AP. Now

I changed my surname Shaik Karimulla (new name) (#6165 13/09/2024)

I, Aliakbar (current name in passport) Aliakbar holder of Indian Passport No. M5454723 having permanent address Sagwara - 314025, Rajasthan, India, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as Aliakbar (given name) and Popat (surname). (#6164 12/09/2024)

Alcaraz grinds through to help Spain to Davis Cup win

United States win Davis Cup opener against Chile



Carlos Alcaraz

PARIS: Carlos Alcaraz returned to action after his shock US Open loss to help Spain get off to a winning start in the Davis Cup on Wednesday. The 21-year-old French Open and Wimbledon winner was knocked out of the Flushing Meadows Grand Slam in the second round last month.

With time on his hands he made an impromptu trip to Monza to watch the Formula One Italian Grand Prix then was back on court in Valencia as Spain opened their group stage finals campaign against the Czech Republic.

Roberto Bautista Agut bagged Spain's first point with a 7-6 (7/1), 6-4 win over Jiri Lehecka. Alcaraz then entered the fray, recovering from a 6-7 (3/7) first-set loss to Tomas Machac to wipe the floor in the second 6-1 before Machac retired.

Alcaraz followed that up by partnering Marcel Granollers to a tense 6-7 (2/7), 6-3, 7-6 (7/2) doubles win over Jakub Mensik and Adam Pavlasek to claim the Group B tie 3-0. Earlier in China, the United States began their hunt for a record-ex-

tending 33rd Davis Cup title by sweeping aside Chile. Bob Bryan's side belied their underdog status in terms of rankings to down the more fancied South Americans 3-0 in their group stage opener in Zhuhai. They may have won the first of their record haul in the inaugural edition of the annual men's team competition in 1900.

But the last time they picked up the famous 'salad bowl' trophy was back in 2007. At the Hengqin international tennis centre, world number 309 Reilly Opelka, no. 40 Brandon Nakashima and doubles duo Austin Krajicek and Rajeev Ram proved too strong for Nicolas Massu's men.

Opelka got the first point on the board for the Americans, beating Cristian Garin 6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (7/3). Next up was Nakashima, who enjoyed a dream Davis Cup debut, downing world number 22 Alejandro Tabilo 7-6 (7/5), 2-6, 7-6 (7/3).

Then it was the turn of Paris Olympic silver medallists Krajicek and Ram to carry on the good work, dispatching Tomas Barrios Vera and Matias

Soto 4-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7/3). Given the closeness of the three matches which all went down to deciding set tie-breaks it was little wonder Bryan described it as "an epic day of tennis".

Bryan, who with his twin brother Mike won 16 Grand Slam doubles titles and was part of the 2007 Davis Cup title-winning team, added: "Everyone showed a lot of heart, a lot of guts. Hats off to the Chileans. Hats off to our guys who were really digging deep, especially in the big moments."

"I don't think it's ever happened in Davis Cup that all matches went to the third set breaker — historic day. Just feeling very, very proud of the players."

'Amazing'

Opelka, who underwent wrist surgery in July, reflected: "Being the underdog in the tie, it's great to start with a win." Despite his recent operation he fired 27 aces en route to victory, saying: "My serve's the shot that had been taking me the longest to get back since my injury."

"I didn't serve well at the US Open, but every week it's been getting better and better." Nakashima meanwhile was basking in banking his first Davis Cup point at the first attempt. "It feels amazing. It was my first Davis Cup win and to do it like that was super special."

The Americans have a day off now before Friday's next Group C clash with Slovakia, hurting after Tuesday's 3-0 loss to Germany, who take on Chile on Thursday. The USA are aiming to make it out of the group stage to progress to the finals for the first time since 2022.

Over in Manchester, Britain beat Finland 2-1 thanks to singles wins from Dan Evans and Billy Harris. And in Bologna, defending champions Italy, without newly minted US champion Jannik Sinner, secured a win over Brazil thanks to singles victories for Matteo Berrettini and Matteo Arnaldi.

The top two nations in each of the four groups in the round robin phase will qualify for the eight-team final in Malaga, Spain from November 19-24. — AFP

Arteta agrees Arsenal deal

LONDON: Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta has signed a new long-term contract at the Emirates Stadium, the Premier League title chasers announced on Thursday. The Gunners said in a statement that the 42-year-old Spaniard, who has reportedly agreed a three-year deal, "has been a key figure in re-establishing us as a force back at the top of English and European football".

Arteta, who became Arsenal boss in late 2019, said he felt "extremely proud". "I feel extremely lucky to work every single day with good people and the ambition we have here," he said. "I feel very inspired, I feel challenged, I feel supported and I want to do much more than what we've already done together."

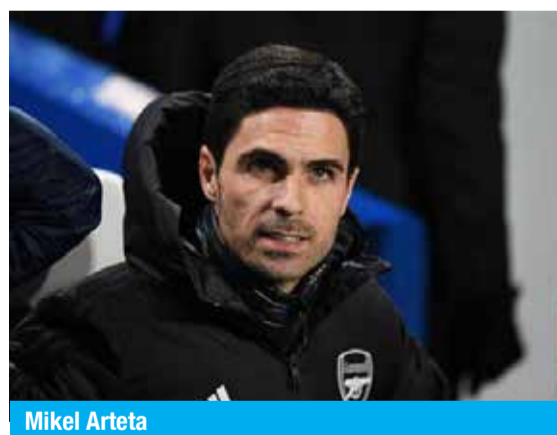
Arsenal co-chairman Josh Kroenke said he was delighted with the new deal. "Mikel is a dynamic and passionate manager, who is relentless in the pursuit of excellence," he said. "He has a deep understanding of Arsenal's values, and since joining us as head coach, he has taken the team to another level in an Arsenal way."

Arteta, who had been working as an assistant coach under Pep Guardiola at Manchester City, replaced compatriot Unai Emery as Arsenal boss in December 2019. He won the FA Cup in his first season in charge — his first silverware as a manager.

Arsenal have finished as runners-up to City in the Premier League for the past two seasons. Last term, they went agonizingly close to lifting the trophy for the first time since 2004 before being pipped by City on the last day of the season.

Arteta's men, who face north London rivals Tottenham on Sunday, are currently fourth in the table after two wins and a draw. They begin their Champions League campaign next week against Atalanta.

Arteta, who played 150 times for Arsenal and captained the side, called for calm last month regarding his contract situation, insisting his focus had been on the



Mikel Arteta

transfer window. "We are on it and we will take care of that in the right moment," said Arteta, who had previously been linked with Paris Saint-Germain and Barcelona.

"I don't think anybody has to panic. I am in the place where I want to be and am really happy. Hopefully the club thinks the same thing and the players I work with, who in my opinion are the most important ones." Arsenal strengthened in the summer transfer window, bringing in a clutch of players including Raheem Sterling, Mikel Merino and Riccardo Calafiori.

There are still questions over whether they have enough firepower to overhaul champions City after their failure to sign a striker to compete with inconsistent Germany forward Kai Havertz. But Arsenal sporting director Edu has no doubts about Arteta's ability to keep the club on course for sustained success.

"It's a very positive and proud moment for everyone at the club and an important part of what we're all working towards," Edu said. "Mikel has shown his qualities since the very first day he joined us, not only as a football manager, but as a person with wonderful values."

"We have a strong belief in what we are doing and what we want to achieve together. Mikel's new contract gives us stability and clear direction as we aim for new heights." — AFP

Verstappen, Red Bull seek to bounce back in Azerbaijan

BAKU: Max Verstappen will look for an improved personal and team performance this weekend when Red Bull seek to stop the rot and stay on top in the Formula One title race at this weekend's Azerbaijan Grand Prix.

After a run of six races without a win that has coincided with the revival of his rivals, the Dutchman arrives in Baku with a 62-point lead in the drivers' championship ahead of Lando Norris. His team's advantage ahead of McLaren has also been trimmed to only eight points.

Verstappen's and Red Bull's last victory, his 61st, came at the Spanish Grand Prix in June while team-mate Sergio Perez last won on the streets of Baku, claiming his sixth career triumph and second in Azerbaijan in last year's race.

Red Bull's supreme domination that has seen them leading the constructors' championship for more than two years, since the 2022 Spanish Grand Prix, will end if McLaren outscore them by nine points on Sunday. In the aftermath of Aston Martin's glossy unveiling of Red Bull's star designer Adrian Newey as future managing technical partner on Tuesday, another defeat to knock them off the top could be seen as significant.

Both Verstappen and Mexican Perez have been busy working on finding solutions to their slump in form since Charles Leclerc claimed victory for Ferrari at Monza on September 1. "Monza was a tough race for us and it is our priority to get our form back to where it needs to be," said Verstappen.

"We always want to be more competitive and the team has been working hard on the issues

we've had." "We've had a good period of reflection and work since the last race," said Perez. "Both Max and I have been in the factory working to ensure we are finding a fix for the problems. To get back to where we should be on the grid, it will take a team effort and you can see that every day in Milton Keynes. This has pulled us all together."

Perez leaning on memories

Perez finished eighth at Monza, two places behind three-time world champion Verstappen, while both Ferraris, both McLarens and Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton filled the top five. After a season of much speculation about his future at Red Bull following a string of poor results, he welcomes the return to a venue he likes.

He is the only two-time winner in Baku and has scored more points there than any other driver. "Personally, I love to race there," he said. "Street circuits suit my style and Baku is a fun track." Ferrari will also be filled with hope in Baku after their success with an upgraded car at Monza where revisions to the floor and other areas proved successful.

But team chief Fred Vasseur stressed that the team will be focused on consistency and not checking the championship standings this weekend as they chase down Red Bull and McLaren. "We have to focus on doing a good job every weekend and if something has to come to us, it will come. It's no good to focus on the championship and be conservative... everything can change so much from one week to the next."

With McLaren and Mercedes both claiming wins in recent races, a close scrap on the fast and challenging street track is in prospect, with Ferrari's reserve driver Oliver Bearman replacing Kevin Magnussen alongside Nico Hulkenberg at Haas. Dane Magnussen has been banned after accumulating 12 penalty points. — AFP