

R RIDE SAFE
BOOK YOUR RIDE NOW
@ridesafe.app
DOWNLOAD THE APP NOW

2 CODED's 'Academy X' initiative empowers young women in tech



8 'Easy, convenient, cheap': How single-use plastic rules world



12 'Shogun' smashes Emmys record as 'Hacks' and 'Baby Reindeer' shine



16 US hold off Europe fightback to win first Solheim Cup since 2017



Amir registers biometric data

Crown Prince and Prime Minister also register biometrics at Bayan Palace



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah registered Monday his biometric data with the attendance of First Deputy Prime Minister, Interior Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Saud Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah also registered their biometrics. — KUNA photos

Trump blames Biden and Harris 'rhetoric' for assassination bids

WEST PALM BEACH, Florida: Donald Trump on Monday blamed his election rival Kamala Harris and US President Joe Biden after he was targeted in a second apparent assassination attempt, saying their "rhetoric" about him endangering democracy is to blame. Trump's rapid politicization of Sunday's incident, in which a man allegedly planned to fire on the Republican while he played golf in Florida, guaranteed that tensions ahead of the presidential election in seven weeks would continue to boil. Both Biden and Harris have denounced the apparent assassination bid. The suspect, identified by police as 58-year-old Ryan Wesley Routh, was arrested soon after being spotted while hiding with an assault-style rifle at the edge of Trump's golf course in West Palm Beach. US Secret Service agents opened fire, not hitting him, and he fled before surrendering without a struggle.



Wesley Routh

On Monday, Routh appeared in court where he was informed he was being charged with illegal firearms possession. He appeared calm and did not speak, other than to say "yes" a few times to questions from the judge. The FBI announced that it is also probing "what appears to be an attempted assassination". This follows an attempt targeting Trump two months ago at a rally in Pennsylvania. The former president was grazed by a bullet in that attack, which also saw a supporter in the crowd killed before the lone gunman was shot dead by return fire. Trump — who was not hurt in Sunday's event — told Fox News Digital that rhetoric from Biden and Harris "is causing me to be shot at, when I am the one who is going to save the country".

Continued on Page 6

Traffic smooth as first-graders return to school

KUWAIT: With excitement and determination, first graders took the first steps in their educational journey Monday morning as they returned to public schools for the new academic year. The ministry of education took all necessary measures to ensure the first graders were cared for and tended to, to guarantee a successful school year. Elementary, middle and high schools will reopen on Tuesday and kindergartens on Wednesday.

With the start of the new school year, interior ministry personnel are working diligently to ensure smooth traffic flow and safety of students and all road users. The ministry, through its campaign, aims to raise awareness on security and traffic, as well as provide students with the necessary instructions to guarantee their well-being. — KUNA (See Page 3)



KUWAIT: Teachers welcome first-graders to school on Sept 16, 2024. — KUNA

Hamas vows to resist as Zionists bombard Gaza

GAZA: Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar said on Monday the Palestinian group was prepared for a long war of attrition against the Zionist entity, in a message congratulating Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen. "We have prepared ourselves to fight a long battle of attrition," the Hamas leader said, asserting that Iran-aligned groups in Gaza, Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen would "break the will of (the Zionist entity)" after the Houthis hit the Zionist entity in a missile attack on Sunday.

Gaza medics and rescuers on Monday said Zionist strikes on several homes killed at least 18 people, as Hamas claimed it had ample resources to sustain its fight nearly a year into the war. The latest strikes came as Zionist Defense Minister Yoav Gallant warned that prospects for a halt in fighting with Hezbollah militants along the Lebanon border were dimming, yet again raising fears of a wider regional conflagration.

Senior Hamas official Osama Hamdan told AFP during an interview in Istanbul on Sunday: "The resistance has a high ability to continue. There were martyrs and there were sacrifices... but in return there was an accumulation of experiences and the recruitment of new generations into the resistance." Continued on Page 6



GAZA: A Palestinian man touches the body of a young victim of Zionist bombardment in Nuseirat in the central Gaza Strip on Sept 16, 2024. — AFP

Pezeshkian backs missile program, reassures women

TEHRAN: Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Monday that Tehran would never give up on its missile program as it needs such deterrence for its security in a region where Iran's arch-foe the Zionist entity is able to "drop missiles on Gaza every day". The Islamic Republic has for years defied Western

calls to limit its missile program.

The United States and its allies have more recently accused Iran of transferring ballistic missiles to Russia for its war in Ukraine, imposing fresh sanctions on Moscow and Tehran. Both countries have denied the claims. "If we don't have missiles, they will bomb us whenever they want, just like in Gaza," Pezeshkian said, referring to the conflict in Gaza between the Zionist entity and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas. He reiterated Tehran's official stance, calling on the international community "to first disarm (the Zionist entity) before making the same demands to Iran". Pezeshkian also vowed to ensure the morality Continued on Page 6



TEHRAN: Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian gestures as he speaks to reporters during a press conference on Sept 16, 2024. — AFP



Local

'Academy X' initiative empowers young women

Media sponsors Kuwait Times and Kuwait News inspire female tech leaders



Academy X students pose for a group photo with CODED team and sponsors. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Best student Fatma Ali is honored during the ceremony.



CODER honors Kuwait Times and Kuwait News.



Hashim Behbehani, the Co-Founder & COO at CODED, speaks during the event.



Kuwait News interviewing students at the Academy X.

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: CODED concluded its pioneering "Academy X" initiative, the first of its kind in Kuwait, designed to enhance the skills of 300 female students aged 14 to 18. The program empowered young women through technology and coding education, providing them with essential skills for future opportunities in the digital field.

During the closing ceremony, Hashim Behbehani, Co-Founder & COO at CODED, remarked, "We observed a gap and a lack of equal opportunities between males and females in recent years within the field of entrepreneurship, particularly in the technology sector. Our research indicated that the primary issue was the absence of workshops specifically designed for young women, aimed at guiding them from zero knowledge to advanced skills in entrepreneurship. To address this, we launched the 'Academy X' initiative. By God's grace, this initiative has surpassed expectations, successfully training over 340 students."

"We extend our thanks and gratitude to the parents of the students for encouraging their daughters to join this program, from which they will see great returns for their daughters' futures, God willing," he said, adding that all these positive achievements would not



The audience

have been possible without the support of our strategic partners and sponsors.

"We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Kuwait University, which provided its prestigious facility for our initiative; Zain Group, a consistent leader in supporting women; Gulf Insurance Group, which highlights the vital role of Kuwaiti youth; Talabat, an icon in the tech world and a source of inspiration; and Agility,

which exemplifies equal opportunities for men and women in the workplace. We also thank our media sponsors—Kuwait Times, Kuwait News, and M2R Group—whose efforts helped amplify the reach of this initiative to the widest possible audience in Kuwait," he added.

Media sponsors

The initiative received widespread

attention, with Kuwait Times and Kuwait News serving as the media sponsors, helping to promote the program's achievements and inspiring the next generation of female tech leaders in the region. Jana Alnaqeb, Public Relations and CSR Manager of Kuwait Times and Kuwait News, said "We are proud to be a part of the "Academy X" initiative, a groundbreaking program designed to

empower young women by helping them develop their skills in AI and business.

Kuwait Times and Kuwait News keen to highlight this first-of-its-kind initiative and its importance in providing opportunities for young people." She added that as a part of its commitment to social responsibility, Kuwait Times and Kuwait News are dedicated to supporting such impactful initiatives, ensuring that future generations of women have the tools and resources they need to thrive in an ever-evolving digital world, noting that media role is important to shed light on their projects that they innovate at the academy.

"Academy X" initiative is a free program for girls aged 14 to 18, offered by CODED Academy in collaboration with major companies and institutions as part of a strategic partnership aimed at empowering Kuwaiti youth and enhancing their capabilities in technological fields and entrepreneurship.

CODER was established in Kuwait in 2015 as the first programming academy in the Middle East. Since its inception, the academy has completed over one hundred and fifty training programs both within and outside Kuwait, graduating more than 1,500 students from various educational levels and age groups, ranging from five to fifty years old, across various professional and academic fields.



The creators of the 'Clear Mind' app are honored during the ceremony.



The creators of the 'Cure' app are honored.



The creators of the 'Drisnii' app are honored.



The creators of the 'Glee' app are honored.



The creators of the 'Healthy bite' app are honored.



The creators of the 'Mind Mates' app are honored at the ceremony



The creators of the 'Naseej' app are honored.



The creators of the 'Page Flip' app are honored.



The creators of the 'Your Taste' app are honored

School buses: Safe and reliable solution to Kuwait traffic jams

Ministry offers 1,416 school buses to transport students



KUWAIT: Students arrive at school to resume classes. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat and KUNA

KUWAIT: It is no secret that everyone dreads being stuck in traffic early in the morning on the way to school or work and having the same occur when going back home. As the summer break comes to an end in Kuwait, parents and children alike are bracing for the inevitable traffic jams and difficult commutes, but one solution could prevent being stuck on the road for a long period of time.

Enters the school bus, the solution might be obvious and come to one's surprise; however, it is a safe and reliable method that might lessen congestion and help smooth traffic. Speaking to KUNA on the issue, Director of Services Department at the Ministry of Education Abdulaziz Al-Sahou said that the ministry offered 1,416 school buses to transport students to and from schools. He revealed that plans were set to boost the number to 1,686 if the need for buses rises.

At the moment, the Department of Transportation was assessing the situation to improve school bus services, he added. The aim is to lessen the burden on students and their families, he affirmed, noting that each educational district has an allocated number of buses. The capital district has 100 vehicles, the Hawally district has 100, Farwaniya has 155, Mubarak Al-Kabeer has 86, Al-Ahmadi has 360, and Al-Jahra has 125, Al-Sahou pointed out, adding that 125 buses were allocated for the religious studies institute, 240 buses for the ministry's specialized schools, and 100 buses for schools for the special needs.

Scholarship students and employees of psychological and social services were allocated 25 buses,



Mohammad Al-Failakawi



Abdulaziz Al-Sahou

he added. On the vehicles used in transportation, the head of the private transportation department at the state-owned Kuwait Public Transport Company (KPTC), Mohammad Al-Failakawi, touted the perks of using buses during the school year, especially with the fact that there were around half a million school students in the country.

Taking the load off the road not only benefits schools but the country as a whole, he said, stressing that buses were from the latest brands and equipped with the newest technologies as well as being maintained thoroughly. He commended the cooperation with the ministries of education and interior, hoping that it would contribute to smooth and easy-flowing traffic this year. Being well-versed in road etiquette is a social responsibility that hopefully would be eager to cooperate on, Al-Failakawi affirmed. — KUNA



Buses for school students.



Kuwait-UAE committee discusses military ties

KUWAIT: The first meeting of the military cooperation committee between the Kuwaiti and Emirati sides was held on Monday at the Operations and Planning Authority and will continue for two days. The Ministry of Defense said in a press statement that the meeting will discuss the most important topics of common interest, including exercises and workshops that contribute to exchanging expertise and enhancing joint military cooperation between the two brotherly sides. Assistant Chief of Staff for the Operations and Planning Authority, Brigadier General Mubarak Al-Zaabi, received the participating Emirati delegation to discuss means of cooperation between the two sides. — KUNA



Kuwait naval commander meets UAE, Saudi peers

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Defense announced that Rear Admiral of the Naval Force Saif Al-Hamlan made two official visits to UAE and Saudi Arabia. During the visits, Al-Hamlan met with Commander of the UAE Naval Forces, Rear Admiral Pilot Sheikh Saeed bin Hamdan Al-Nahyan of the UAE, and Commander of the Eastern Fleet of the Royal Saudi Naval Forces, Rear Admiral Sajer Al-Enezi. A ministry statement said the visits, that took place last week, came within the framework of strengthening joint military cooperation, during which training and exchanging experiences were discussed, in addition to coordination among GCC naval commands to enhance joint maritime operational capabilities. —KUNA



In my view

The interconnection between work, health and productivity



By Dr Sajed Al Abdali MD

In an era where burnout and workplace stress are increasingly common, understanding the delicate balance between work, health and productivity has never been more crucial. This article explores how these elements intertwine and why prioritizing employee well-being is not simply good for individuals, but essential for business success.

As an occupational health specialist, I've seen firsthand the profound impact that health – both physical and mental – can have on productivity. This connection extends beyond individual workers to influence entire companies. It's a relationship that's gaining increased attention as businesses realize that a healthy workforce is key to long-term success. The principle is simple: Healthy employees are productive employees. But achieving this balance isn't just about adding perks like free gym memberships or healthy snacks in the office. It requires a deep understanding of how work affects health, and in turn, how health affects our ability to work effectively.

Modern workplace, pressures

Today's workplace is fast-paced, demanding and constantly evolving. Whether it's meeting tight deadlines, managing heavy workloads, or navigating competitive industries, employees often find themselves under increasing pressure. While short bursts of stress can motivate people to perform, chronic stress – the kind that builds up over time – can lead to serious problems. Take Mohammed, a marketing executive I worked with.

His high-pressure job initially drove him to excel, but over time, the constant stress led to insomnia, anxiety and eventually burnout. His productivity plummeted, affecting not just his work but his entire team's performance. From an occupational health perspective, the type of work people do and their working conditions significantly impact their health. Sedentary jobs can lead to issues like back pain, obesity, and heart problems. Conversely, physically demanding jobs bring risks of injury, particularly repetitive strain injuries and chronic pain.

Cycle of poor health

The relationship between poor health and low productivity often becomes a vicious cycle. When employees are unwell, their ability to focus and perform naturally declines. This doesn't just affect individuals – it ripples across teams and departments, causing delays, errors, and inefficiencies. Unfortunately, poor health at work often exacerbates existing conditions. Without intervention, this can spiral into further declines in both health and productivity.

Presenteeism vs absenteeism

While absenteeism has long been a concern for businesses, presenteeism – where employees are physically present but mentally checked out due to illness or burnout – has become equally problematic. Employees might come to work when they're not feeling well, thinking they're doing the right thing, but in reality, they're less productive and more prone to errors. Many businesses underestimate the impact of presenteeism, assuming that as long as employees are at their desks, they're being productive. However, presenteeism often leads to reduced efficiency and can be just as costly as absenteeism.

Why health matters to business

So, what can businesses do to improve both health and productivity? The answer lies in treating health and productivity as two sides of the same coin. When companies invest in employee well-being, the returns are clear: Increased productivity, higher employee satisfaction and better retention rates. I've seen remarkable transformations in workplaces that prioritize employee health. For instance, a tech company I advised implemented a comprehensive wellness program, including stress management workshops and flexible working hours. Within a year, they saw a 20 percent decrease in sick days and a notable increase in employee satisfaction scores.

In conclusion, understanding the interconnection between work, health and productivity is crucial for creating better, healthier workplaces. When we prioritize employee well-being, everyone benefits – individuals, businesses and society as a whole. As we navigate the evolving landscape of work, let's remember that a healthy workforce is not just a nice-to-have, but a fundamental driver of sustainable business success.

Counter drugs strategy 'vital' for protecting the youth, building future

ABU DHABI: Gulf Cooperation Council Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi affirmed on Monday that preparing the GCC's unified strategy to combat drugs (2025-28) required full commitment to protecting youth and preserving the future. This came during his speech in a workshop focused on developing the Gulf strategy to combat drugs, held in Abu Dhabi, from September 16 to 19, 2024.

The workshop was organized by the UAE Ministry of Interior in cooperation with the General Secretariat of the GCC and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Al-Budaiwi emphasized that the issues of drug smuggling and abuse extend beyond the individual to encompass the family and society as a whole, making it imperative to unify the efforts of GCC countries in combating this imminent danger that threatens our youth and the future of our nation.

He explained that the unprecedented rise in the impact of drugs on society, not only in terms of public health but also in social, economic, and political security, necessitates urgent action, especially as Gulf societies and their youth have become targets of organized gangs. He further elaborated that these groups persist in their destructive agenda, seeking to poison the youth across the globe.

Consequently, mobilizing Gulf efforts and fostering continued coordination and cooperation among GCC countries is now an essential and urgent matter, adding that this workshop represents a vital step towards enhancing Gulf cooperation in addressing this escalating issue that poses serious risks to our societies. He underscored that the responsibility was collective and that the success of any strategy hinged on the concerted efforts of all stakeholders.

He noted that the drug issue was not merely an individual challenge but a societal crisis that necessitates a united front, as it is crucial to align our visions and plans, recognizing that drug addiction affects not only the user but also undermines the very fabric of family and society. Thus, developing a unified Gulf strategy to combat drugs requires full commitment and shared responsibility to protect our youth and secure our future.

He later renewed his heartfelt gratitude to the UAE for its generous hospitality, to the United Nations for its ongoing support, and to all entities and institutions that contributed to the organization of this event, particularly the members of the GCC's General Secretariat and the staff in the Assistant Secretariat for Security Affairs for their efforts. He expressed that he looked forward to fruitful discussions and constructive recommendations that will strengthen our collective efforts to safeguard our societies. — KUNA

Burgan Bank launches Burgan Lab Academy to develop next generation of tech leaders

Part of bank's human capital development, digital transformation strategies

KUWAIT: On its mission to become an employer of choice and lead with innovation, Burgan Bank launched its forward-looking development program, Burgan Lab Academy, which aims to prepare future tech leaders of the Kuwaiti banking industry. Starting September 29, the Burgan Lab Academy, developed in collaboration with CODED, the first coding academy in the Middle East, is set to host its first batch of fresh graduate trainees and provide job opportunities at Burgan Bank.

This learning and development initiative comes as part of Burgan Bank's dedicated efforts to invest in Kuwait's human capital and raise the benchmark of professional competitiveness in the domestic labor market. Offering such a development opportunity for the Kuwaiti youth also aligns with the Bank's unwavering adherence to the global Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards in banking.

"We are very proud to announce the launch of a learning and development initiative that will have a great impact not only on Burgan's digital transformation journey but the entire domestic banking industry," said Bashar Al-Qattan, Acting Executive Manager – Learning and Talent Development at Burgan Bank. "Building on our commitment to nurturing the next generation of tech leaders, we were uncompromising in our choice of partner to develop a training experience that uplifts the digital banking landscape in Kuwait."

In collaboration with CODED, the Burgan Lab Academy program is meticulously designed to provide our fresh graduates with the essential skills and knowledge in full-stack development, ensuring they are well-equipped to excel in the rapidly evolving tech industry. "Burgan Bank's robust success rests on several pillars including our outstanding talents and innovation-driven culture," said Abdulwahab Abdulraheem, Executive Manager – Talent Acquisition at Burgan Bank.

"With the launch of the Burgan Lab Academy, we mark a new milestone in merging human capital development: fostering a culture of innovation. As the global markets continue to shift toward digitization,



Abdulwahab Abdulraheem

Bashar Al-Qattan

learning and excelling in the latest digital tools is fundamental for the success of the most aspiring talents. In partnership with CODED, we have developed a state-of-the-art program that puts fresh graduates on a track of professional growth and success in IT and digital transformation."

The 14-week Burgan Lab Academy program aims to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical experience by entwining theoretical knowledge with hands-on application. The program is designed to cover a wide range of IT essentials, such as Fluttercross-platform mobile development, backend development with Node.js and Express.js, Scrum and Agile management, cybersecurity fundamentals, as well as DevOps and UI/UX design.

The Academy employs a dynamic approach that combines individual, pair, and group projects with practical exercises, mirroring Burgan's collaborative work environments. This aims to guarantee the effective engagement and integration of the participants into the Burgan Bank culture and operations. Before the start of the program, all applicants will participate in a 2-week pre-academy phase, which focuses on programming fundamentals and identifying candidates with the best aptitude for further training.

The selected candidates will then be enrolled in the 14-week-long intensive full-stack boot camp

that follows the Scrum methodology. Throughout the program, participants will be rigorously evaluated on their readiness to learn and apply new knowledge, ability to work efficiently in groups and individually, and inclination to think and solve problems innovatively. The top nine candidates will be offered a job at Burgan Bank in the IT department, Digital Transformation department, or HR digital unit.

Burgan Lab Academy marks the latest effort in a long human capital development journey that Burgan Bank has trailblazed for years. Throughout this journey, the Bank has designed numerous learning and development programs tailored to its employees' diverse personal and professional needs, ensuring everyone has a suitable opportunity to hone their skills and expand their knowledge. These programs include but are not limited to Entelqah, designed for new hires and fresh graduates, Ro'ya, which fast-tracks the growth of Burgan's future leaders, and Burgan Cares, which paves the path for the Bank's employees to resume their academic endeavors in pursuit of earning their bachelor's or MBA degrees.

discuss issues of interest and exchange experiences and views, looking forward to discussions that seek to make the region more stable. The economic dialogue between the GCC and EU countries has been held regularly since 2003 with the aim of enhancing and raising the level of economic cooperation and exchanging experiences and expertise between the two sides.

In another development, Iranian Assistant Minister of Foreign and Political Affairs Majid Takht-Ravanchi said that his country attaches special importance to expanding its relations with its neighbors, especially the Gulf states. A statement by the Iranian Foreign Ministry on its website said that this came during Ravanchi's meeting with the heads of diplomatic missions of the Gulf states here.

Ravanchi added that Tehran will plan to further strengthen its relations with its neighbors at all levels, referring in this regard to the visit paid by Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to Iraq last week. The Iranian diplomat stressed his country's government's determination to deal and consult continuously with the countries of the region, adding that "the geographical proximity, ties, and commonalities between these countries provide a suitable ground for dialogue and consultation between us and continuous coordination on issues of common interest between them." — KUNA

GCC-EU economic dialogue explores opportunities

DOHA: The 13th economic dialogue between the Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC) and the European Union (EU) kicked off Monday in the Qatari capital, Doha. Assistant Undersecretary for Economic Affairs at the Qatari Ministry of Finance, Dr Saud Al-Attiyah, said in a speech that the dialogue allows exploring available opportunities to enhance cooperation in vital areas such as trade, investment, sustainable energy, and comprehensive development.

He added that the commitment of both sides would enhance mutual understanding and joint action to confront constantly changing global challenges, stressing working with a common vision that seeks peace and stops all types of aggression. Al-Attiyah said that the Palestinian issue is a central issue for the Middle East region and the world as a whole, stressing Qatar's firm position in support of the Palestinian people and the resolution of their cause in accordance with international legitimate resolutions within the framework of the Arab Peace Initiative.

He also reaffirmed Qatar's readiness to contrib-

ute to international efforts to resolve the Russian and Ukrainian crises peacefully, with calls to stop military operations and provide humanitarian aid. He pointed out that cooperation in these areas enhances environmental sustainability and opens new horizons for economic development and job creation, which is in line with the vision of the GCC countries towards diversifying sources of income and enhancing sustainability.

On his part, GCC Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Negotiations Dr Abdulaziz Al-Uwaisheg said in his speech that these dialogues began in 2003 and aim to exchange views on international economic developments and experiences of both sides. He reviewed the 12th dialogue in 2022, held in the European Union, which focused on discussing the most important international challenge at that time, the war in Ukraine, and other challenges such as economic diversification in the GCC countries.

He explained that the most important challenge for today's dialogue is the political challenge shaped by the war in Gaza and its economic effects, including international navigation in the Red Sea. For his part, European Union Ambassador to Qatar Dr Christian Tudor said that the first summit at the leaders' level between the EU and the GCC countries will be held in October in Brussels.

Annika Eriksgaard, Director of Economic and Financial Relations and Global Governance at the European Commission, said that this dialogue would



Scan & Subscribe KD 20 a year

For Individuals Only



Scan Now

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



Tel: 24833199 Ext: 220



KUWAIT: Officials visit the area that was exposed to fire in Mubarakia Market with a delegation from the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters (NCCAL). — KUNA photos



Officials inspect columns discovered in Mubarakia Market

KUWAIT: Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters (NCCAL), Dr Mohammad Al-Jassar, stressed on Monday the importance of studying the columns discovered in Mubarakia Market to determine their historical value, noting that specialists in antiquities will look into the matter more deeply and the results will be announced later. Al-Jassar made the statement after visiting the area that was exposed to fire in Mubarakia Market with a delegation from the National Council to follow up on the treatment works of its antiquities and the project, in addition to verifying the columns recently discovered after they were buried underground.

Al-Jassar explained that this will be investigated by specialists in the sciences of historical buildings and antiquities in order to obtain more accurate results, and that the details of these results will be announced later. For her part, the Director of the Gulf Consultants Office, Engineer Najla Al-Ghanem, explained in a similar statement that work is underway to rebuild the damaged area, indicating that the project is proceeding according to the specified timetable, as this discovery enhances the importance of the historical market.

This visit comes within the framework of the council's interest in preserving Kuwait's cultural heritage and cooperating with the relevant authorities to rebuild the market in a manner that is consistent with its historical, cultural, and economic role, which is considered one of the country's prominent historical landmarks. The delegation included representatives from Alghanim International and the consulting office, in addition to the acting assistant secretary-general for the arts, antiquities, and museums sector, Musaed Al-Zamel, and a number of specialists to study the site and the discovered columns. — KUNA





Unemployed youth cling to Kashmir elections for hope

Russia evacuates villages in Kursk

Page 6

Page 7



AMBLETEUSE: A damaged migrants' boat is seen after a failed attempt to cross the English Channel which led to the death of eight people. — AFP photos

Starmmer seeks immigration lessons from Italy's far-right

UK PM's Italy trip comes a day after eight people died while crossing Channel from France

ROME: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer praised his Italian counterpart Giorgia Meloni on Monday for her efforts in reducing illegal migration, saying his "government of pragmatism" sought new approaches to the hot-button topic. On his first visit to Italy since his center-left Labour Party's landslide victory in July, Starmer expressed interest in the immigration policies of far-right leader Meloni — including plans to operate Italian-run migrant centers in Albania — and stressed the importance of cross-border cooperation.

"You've made remarkable progress working with countries along migration routes as equals to address the drivers of migration at the source and to tackle the gangs," Starmer told Meloni during a joint press conference in Rome. "As a result, irregular arrivals to Italy by sea are down 60 percent since 2022," said Starmer, who has vowed to fight illegal migration at home.

His visit, in which he toured a national immigration coordination center with Italy's Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi, came a day after the latest migrant shipwreck in the Channel claimed eight lives. The latest incident brings to 46 the number of people who have died this year trying to reach British shores.

Starmer has rejected the previous Conservative government's plan to expel all undocumented migrants to Rwanda while their asylum claims are examined. As a former chief prosecutor, he said, he saw the value of cross-border collaboration on fighting terrorism. "And I've never accepted... that we can't do the same with smuggling gangs," he said.

"And now of course Italy has shown that we can."

In Britain, the perilous cross-Channel journeys that migrants attempt from northern France have posed a fiendishly difficult problem for successive governments. On Saturday, about 800 people crossed the Channel — the second-highest figure since the start of the year, according to the UK interior ministry.

'Pragmatism'

Starmer said he had discussed with his Italian counterpart a deal Rome signed with Albania in November to open two Italian-operated centers to house undocumented migrants while their asylum claims are processed. Asked directly whether he would consider such a plan for Britain, Starmer noted that the centers were not yet operational and "we don't yet know the outcome".

Lower migrant arrivals to Italy were currently due to Meloni's efforts, said Starmer, referring to Italy's deals with Tunisia and Libya where funding is provided in exchange for help stemming the departure of Italy-bound migrants. "I've always made the argument that preventing people leaving their country in the first place is far better than trying to deal with those that have arrived in any of our countries," he said.

"Today was a return, if you like, to British pragmatism. We are pragmatists first and foremost, when we see a challenge, we discuss with our friends and allies, the different approaches that are being taken," he said. Under Italy's migrant plan

with Albania, migrants with rejected asylum claims will be sent back to their country of origin, whereas those with accepted applications will be granted entry to Italy.

But under the former UK government's Rwanda scheme, migrants sent to the East African nation could never have settled in Britain irrespective of the outcome of their claim. The two migration centers in Albania were supposed to have opened in early August, but have been delayed, with Meloni saying Monday it was a matter of "a few weeks".

Fewer arriving migrants

Starmer's trip to Italy has already spurred criticism, even within his own party. Labour MP Kim Johnson told The Guardian it was "disturbing that Starmer is seeking to learn lessons from a neo-fascist government, particularly after the anti-refugee riots and far-right racist terrorism that swept Britain this summer".

Besides the Tunisia deal, Meloni's hard-right government has renewed a controversial deal with the UN-backed Libyan government in Tripoli dating from 2017, in which Rome provides training and funding to the Libyan coastguard for help deterring departures of migrants, or returning those already at sea back to Libya.

Human rights groups say the policy pushes thousands of migrants back to Libya to face torture and abuse under arbitrary detention. Migrant arrivals to Italy by sea have dropped



ROME: Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer walk after their meeting on Sept 16, 2024.

markedly, according to the interior ministry. Between January 1 and September 13, 44,675 people arrived in Italy compared to a figure of 125,806 for the same period in 2023.

Across all the EU borders, meanwhile, the number of migrants crossing has dropped by 39 percent, according to border agency Frontex. But multiple factors are behind these trends, experts say, with many migrants seeking entry into the EU having changed their route. Crossings are up 13 percent over the Channel this year, Frontex said. — AFP

Germany's new border controls spark debate

BERLIN: Germany reintroduced temporary border checks including at its frontiers with France and the Netherlands on Monday as part of efforts to combat irregular migration and cross-border crime. The coalition government has toughened its stance on migration following a surge in arrivals, in particular people fleeing war and poverty in the Middle East, and a rise in support for the opposition far-right and conservatives.

The measures have, however, sparked concern among migration experts, who question their long-term effectiveness, suggesting they are more symbolic than substantive. "The signal is deterrence — an attempt to demonstrate the ability to act," said Hans Vorlaender, chairperson of Germany's expert council on integration and migration. While the border controls may be a short-term deterrent, smuggling networks often find new routes, Vorlaender said, adding that a more sustainable solution would be to process migrants asylum applications at the EU's external borders.

Rigorous checks

On Germany's eastern border, at the bridge connecting the town of Frankfurt-Oder with Slubice in Poland, a German police officer stood at control points, managing the flow of traffic and ensuring rigorous border checks. "That's the right thing to do, the right way. It just should have happened much earlier," said passerby, Kerstin Rubelt.

But the measure sparked a small protest by pro-asylum activists in the town, with a dozen carrying signs reading: "Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Borders". "The question of whether someone comes here illegally or whether someone is a criminal is not the decisive question; the decisive question is racism, which is also promoted and triggered by this," Rene Pachmann, Catholic university chaplain at European University Viadrina, told Reuters.

Doubts over effectiveness

The border controls are being reintroduced at a time when Germany has seen a 21.7 percent drop in asylum applications in the first eight months of the year. Interior Minister Nancy Faeser attributed the decline to controls introduced last year, which prevented over 30,000 unauthorized entries.

However, migration experts interviewed by Reu-



FRANKFURT: Election posters of the far right party AfD hang on a lamp post as German police officers control the traffic flow from Poland across the "Bridge of Europe" in Frankfurt, eastern Germany, on Sept 16, 2024. — AFP

ters said it is difficult to prove the decrease was a direct result of those measures. The new controls primarily target asylum seekers coming from neighboring EU countries, invoking the EU's Dublin rules, which require asylum applications to be processed in the first EU country of arrival.

Marc Speer, a sociologist at bordermonitoring.eu, noted that only 30 percent of asylum applications in Germany are Dublin cases. Marcus Engler, from the German Center for Integration and Migration Research (DeZIM), said migration patterns are typically shaped by a range of factors, including political upheavals at home and shifts in EU and national policy. "It's challenging to scientifically assess how these border controls influence the arrival of irregular migrants," he said.

Germany remains committed to EU asylum laws and provides individual procedures for asylum claims, which makes it an attractive destination, said Maximilian Pichl, an asylum law professor at RheinMain University of Applied Sciences. Existing migration networks and communities in Germany continue to draw migrants, he said.

Criticism

The checks now extend to northern and western borders with countries also including Belgium,

Luxembourg and Denmark, adding to existing controls at crossings with Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria, and Switzerland. On Monday, traffic at the borders was reported to be flowing smoothly. However, the new controls have faced criticism from Germany's neighbors including Poland and Austria.

Critics argue that the reintroduced controls jeopardize the EU's principle of free movement and risk undermining solidarity within the bloc. In Schengen, Luxembourg, the birthplace of borderless Europe, resident Lucien Max doubted the measures would be effective and was concerned about their impact on commuters. "I doubt if they really catch those people who need to be caught. It is more of a nuisance than something that helps."

German federal police will carry out checks flexibly, the interior ministry said, focusing on minimizing disruptions to commuters, travelers, and trade. However, with limited policing resources, selective checks described as "smart controls" by the ministry may lead to racial profiling, experts warn. "These checks are usually directed against people of color. Studies show that such random checks can open the door to racial profiling," said Pichl. The German interior ministry on Monday reiterated that racially motivated police actions are unacceptable and unlawful. — Reuters

France's Breton slams door on EU commission

BRUSSELS: France's powerful European Union commissioner Thierry Breton abruptly resigned with a parting shot at the bloc's chief on Monday, in a dramatic upset the day before Ursula von der Leyen unveils her new top team. President Emmanuel Macron swiftly tapped Stephane Sejourne, his outgoing foreign minister and a close ally, to succeed Breton as Paris's man at the EU.

One of the most influential figures in Brussels, Breton has been the bloc's internal market commissioner since 2019 and has taken a hard line against abuses by the world's biggest digital platforms — including sparring publicly with Elon Musk. Put forward by Macron for a second term, Breton's reappointment to a sizable commission role — reflecting the country's weight within the 27-nation bloc — had been taken as a given. But his abrasive relationship with his German boss von der Leyen — who he publicly challenged on multiple occasions during her first five-year term — appears to have proven untenable.

While Breton's announcement he was quitting came as a surprise, he presented it as the result of backroom maneuvering by von der Leyen to have him pushed out. "In the very final stretch of negotiations on the composition of the future College, you asked France to withdraw my name," Breton wrote in a scorching letter to von der Leyen, shared on X. "In light of these latest developments — further testimony to questionable governance — I have to conclude that I can no longer exercise my duties in the College."

A former CEO of France Telecom, the 69-year-old Breton was seen by Paris as a key counterweight to Berlin's influence at the heart of the EU. His wide-ranging portfolio also included defense and space, overseeing a defense industry push and marshalling the production of COVID jabs. But his dislike of von der Leyen was no secret. A centrist, Breton caused a stir earlier this year by publicly questioning the depth of support for her reelection within her center-right European People's Party. He also questioned her "transparency and impartiality" over the appointment of a political ally to a highly-paid post as small and medium-sized enterprises envoy. — AFP

International

Russia evacuates villages in Kursk

Kyiv invites Red Cross to visit parts of border region, provoking Moscow

MOSCOW: Russia ordered the evacuation of villages close to the Ukrainian border in the Kursk region, the local governor said Monday, as Moscow ramped up efforts to regain control of land seized in Kyiv's incursion. The reason for the border evacuations was unclear, but came days after Moscow began what appeared to be a major counter-offensive aimed at driving Ukraine out of the border territory.

Authorities have decided to order the "obligatory evacuation of settlements in the Rylsky and Khomutovsky districts that are within a 15-kilometre (nine-mile) zone adjacent to the border with Ukraine," Kursk region governor Alexei Smirnov said on Telegram. There are dozens of villages and towns within this 15-kilometre radius.

The regional administration urged those fleeing to take their belongings with them and "take care of pets" amid reports residents in previous evacuations had left their animals behind. More than 150,000 people in the region have fled their homes since Ukraine launched its offensive on August 6, advancing across tens of kilometers of Russian territory and seizing dozens of settlements.

The attack — which began more than two years after Russia launched a full-scale military assault on Ukraine — caught the Kremlin off-guard and was only halted after Moscow scrambled reinforcements to the area. The Russian army said on Monday it had taken back the "settlements of Uspenovka and Boriki" during counter-offensive operations, four days after announcing

it had regained ten other villages.

'Pure provocation'

Ukraine had hoped its major cross-border incursion into the Kursk region would slow down Russia's advances in the east, where Moscow has made a string of gains in recent weeks. But on Friday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky conceded that while Moscow had been slowed down somewhat, the situation on the eastern front was "very difficult".

Russian President Vladimir Putin said earlier this month his army's target of capturing the Donbas — which includes the east Ukrainian regions of Lugansk and Donetsk — was a priority. Russia's announcement came as Kyiv urged the United Nations and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to visit the parts of the Kursk region it controls.

Ukraine has sought to paint its army in a different light to the Russian forces that currently occupy around 20 percent of its territory. "I instructed the Ukrainian foreign ministry to officially invite the UN and ICRC to join humanitarian efforts in the Kursk region," Kyiv's Foreign Minister Andriy Sybga said on social media. "Ukraine is ready to facilitate their work and prove its adherence to international humanitarian law," he added. Russia, which is currently hosting ICRC President Mirjana Spoljaric, pushed back at Ukraine's proposal. "This is a pure provocation. And we expect a sober assessment of such provocative statements," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. — AFP



POKROVSK: A Ukrainian serviceman runs to help farmers extinguish a burning field near Pokrovsk, Donetsk region, on September 16, 2024. — AFP

Fear and tears as Boris wrecks Czech town

KRNOV, Czech Republic: Marek Prochazka will turn 50 on Wednesday, but he won't be celebrating, with his home town in the Czech Republic once again ravaged by floods. The town of Krnov on the border with Poland was hit by a devastating wave of stormwater Sunday as the Opava and Opavice rivers rose to record levels.

Picking his way between cobblestones ripped from a nearby historic street that are now strewn across the main square, Prochazka said the deluge brought by Storm Boris was even worse than the murderous 1997 flood that also hit the town of 23,000 people. That left 50 dead across mostly the east of the Central European country and caused 2.5 billion euros (\$2.8 billion) of damage. "It's a disaster," Prochazka told AFP as he carried a bucket of drinking water from a tank, with supplies of clean water hit. "Officials said 80 percent of Krnov was under water. We were trapped at home so we could not see anything except the stream on our street."

The town, with its neat historic churches and castle, is at the confluence of the two rivers, so was particularly vulnerable to the rising waters. Its center resembled a battlefield Monday as people walked among the mud and debris, negotiating newly-formed pools

and potholes gouged out by the floodwaters.

'Nightmare'

In a nearby housing estate, pensioner Eliska Cokreska had been walking around with the help of sticks to survey the damage. "I went as far as the castle garden, it's a disaster. All pavements are destroyed, everything's toppled here, everything's broken ... it's all destroyed, it's a nightmare," she told AFP. "It will take ages to put everything right."

The Krnov rivers rose quickly from the heavy rainfall Storm Boris brought to Central Europe over the weekend. They both peaked on Sunday and then retreated fast to reveal the damage for Monday's early risers. "Sunday was the worst, water was coming from all sides, you didn't know where it was coming from," said Cokreska. "We've had enough — we had one flood (in 1997) and now another," she added.

A mark on a house in the city center and freshwater stains suggested that Sunday's flood reached about 30 centimeters (one foot) higher than in 1997. "I was just telling myself, 'Oh God, make it pass,'" said Cokreska.

'Lost for words'

Officials said on Monday that one person died and eight are missing across the Czech Republic in the wake of the storm. Road and railway traffic was disrupted across the country and tens of thousands of households are still without power, especially in the northeast which was hit the hardest.

The rain resumed on Monday and was expected to last until Wednesday in some areas. Visibly moved, Krnov Councillor Marketa Juroskova Bezrucova said



BELA POD PRADEDEM: This photo taken on September 16, 2024 in Bela pod Pradedem shows damages caused by the floods of the swollen Bela brook. — AFP

she was "stressed, sad and gutted". "I was trapped at home, on the fifth floor but between the two rivers, thinking of our beautiful city," she added. "We have been doing it up and we were on track to make it

really beautiful and accessible for tourists," she said. She paused and tried to compose herself before her emotions got the better of her. "I'm just lost for words," she said as the tears welled up. — AFP

Pezeshkian backs missile program...

Continued from Page 1

police will no longer "bother" women, in remarks to the media on the second anniversary of Mahsa Amini's death in custody. Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian Kurd, died in police custody on Sept 16, 2022, days after the morality police arrested her in Tehran for an alleged breach of the Islamic republic's strict dress code for women.

Her death triggered months-long protests across the country, with hundreds of people, including dozens of security personnel, killed in the unrest. Thousands of demonstrators were arrested. "The morality police were not supposed to confront (women). I will follow up so they don't bother" them, Pezeshkian said during his first press conference since he took office in July. Pezeshkian replaced the ultraconservative Ebrahim Raisi, who died in a helicopter crash in May.

During his election campaign, he had vowed to "fully" oppose police patrols enforcing the mandatory hijab headscarf as well as easing long-standing internet restrictions. Iran has over the years tightly controlled internet use, restricting popular social media platforms such as Facebook and X. Harsher curbs were enforced following 2019 protests against fuel price hikes and during the wave of demonstrations triggered by Amini's death. On Monday, Pezeshkian said his government was working to ease restrictions online, especially on social media.

At Monday's press conference, Pezeshkian briefly

touched on other topics including Iran's fraught relations with the United States and the 2015 nuclear deal. "We do not want to fight with America if it respects our rights," he said. "It is not us who are hostile (to the Americans). We have not built military bases around their country."

Iran and the United States have had no diplomatic relations since 1980, the year after the Islamic Revolution that toppled its Western-backed Shah Mohammed Reza. A landmark 2015 deal between Tehran and world powers granted Iran sanctions relief in return for curbs on its nuclear program. But the deal quickly collapsed and tensions reignited following the United States' unilateral withdrawal from the accord in 2018 and reimposition of sanctions on Iran the following year.

Iran has since suspended its compliance with caps on nuclear activities. "We are not seeking nuclear weapons; we have respected the framework of the nuclear agreement," said Pezeshkian. "They (the United States) broke the agreement and forced us to do something." Pezeshkian also spoke about newly imposed sanctions. Last week, Britain, France and Germany announced punitive measures targeting Iranian air transport, accusing it of delivering ballistic missiles to Russia for use in the Ukraine war.

Iran has repeatedly denied sending any weapons to Russia for use in the war, and vowed to respond to the latest in a long string of Western sanctions on Tehran including over its nuclear activities. Pezeshkian said Iran "has not given" Russia any weapons. "It is possible that Iran and Russia had military cooperation in the past... because there was no ban at the time," he said. "What I can say with certainty is that since our arrival, we have not given them anything so that (the West) boycotts us." — Agencies

save — said his opponents "use highly inflammatory language". "I can use it too — far better than they can — but I don't," he added.

At the White House earlier Monday, Biden had told reporters "thank God the president is OK". But the Secret Service "needs more help," he said, "and I think Congress should respond to their needs". The protective service came under severe criticism after the shooting in Butler, Pennsylvania, in which the shooter was able to climb onto a nearby roof overlooking the rally.

As a major party candidate and former president, Trump has a sizeable security detail but smaller than that of a sitting president. This meant the bodyguards could not cordon off the entire golf course, Palm

Hamas vows to resist as Zionists...

Continued from Page 1

His comments came less than a week after Gallant told journalists that Hamas "no longer exists" as a military formation in Gaza. Deadly fighting raged on in the Gaza Strip on Monday, with survivors seen searching through the debris of crushed buildings following a strike on the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza. Ten people were killed and 15 others were wounded when an air strike hit the home of the Al-Qassas family in Nuseirat on Monday morning, a medic at Al-Awda hospital, where the bodies were brought, told AFP. "My house was hit while we were sleeping without any prior warning. There are many martyrs, among them the sons of my family and my little grandsons," said Rashed Al-Qassas, a surviving family member.

Gaza's civil defense agency said six Palestinians were killed in a similar air strike during the night on a house belonging to the Bassal family in Gaza City's Zeitun neighborhood, a regular target of Zionist military raids since the war began. Two people were killed in another overnight air strike in Rafah that targeted a house belonging to the Abu Shaar family, the agency said.

The Zionist military offensive has so far killed at least 41,226 people in Gaza, mostly women and children. The war has also drawn in Iran-backed fighters from across the region, including in Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and Iraq. Tensions have surged

Beach County Sheriff Ric Bradshaw said, explaining how the suspect was able to get to within a few hundred yards of Trump before being intercepted.

The would-be attacker has a lengthy criminal record, according to US media, and was obsessed with the Ukrainian cause. He traveled to Ukraine, claiming he wanted to volunteer and was recruiting foreign fighters to help repel Russia's invasion, giving numerous media interviews, including to AFP in 2022. However, there is no evidence that he ever fought there or was able to join the Ukrainian military. His social media presence indicates a wide variety of political affiliations at home.

The intensity of threats is rising as the presidential race enters its final weeks and polls continue to

along the Zionist entity's northern border with Lebanon, amid fears the violence could explode into an all-out war.

"The possibility for an agreed framework in the northern arena is running out as Hezbollah continues to 'tie itself' to Hamas," Gallant told US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin in a phone call. Zionist media outlets said Amos Hochstein, the special envoy of US President Joe Biden, arrived in the Zionist entity on Monday to help defuse tensions between the Zionist entity and Hezbollah.

Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah group has traded near-daily cross-border fire with Zionist forces since Oct 7. Hezbollah deputy chief Naim Qassem said Saturday his group has "no intention of going to war", but if the Zionist entity does "unleash" one "there will be large losses on both sides".

The Houthis said they had "penetrated" Zionist air defenses with their missile attack, while the Zionist entity said the missile likely fragmented mid-air but was not destroyed. In July, a Houthi drone strike killed a civilian in Tel Aviv, at least 1,800 km from Yemen. It prompted retaliatory strikes that caused significant damage and deaths at Yemen's rebel-controlled Hodeida port.

Since November the Houthis have targeted the Zionist entity and its perceived interests in stated solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza, launching dozens of missile and drone strikes that have disrupted global shipping through vital waterways off Yemen. In a televised speech, the Houthis' leader said the rebels and their regional allies were "preparing to do even more". "Our operations will continue as long as the aggression and siege on Gaza continue," Abdul Malik Al-Houthi said. — AFP

indicate a tight finish on Nov 5. The latest twist follows days of tension in the Ohio town of Springfield as a result of conspiracy theories stoked by Trump and his running mate JD Vance about the local Haitian immigrant community. Schools and other public institutions have been repeatedly shut down there since Thursday after receiving threats.

There are also broader worries that Trump will again refuse to concede if he loses to Harris, stoking a repeat of the violence on January 6, 2021, when his supporters stormed Congress to try and stop certification of Biden's victory two months earlier. Trump used Sunday's incident to appeal for campaign funds, posting on social media Monday: "FIGHT, FIGHT, FIGHT!!!!!!" and "Donate Today!" — AFP

Trump blames Biden and Harris 'rhetoric'...

Continued from Page 1

Trump, 78, referred to frequent comments that he poses a "threat to democracy". Biden and Harris have described Trump as a danger over his refusal to concede defeat to Biden in 2020 and his campaign to classify the mob of his supporters that stormed Congress in 2021 as political dissidents. Trump — whose main election message against Harris is built on dark warnings about immigrant "invasion" and claims that the United States is a "failing nation" that only he can

International

Unemployed youth cling to Kashmir elections for hope

Parties campaign with focus on job creation in region's first election in a decade

SRINAGAR, INDIA: Ayaz Nabi Malik from the Pulwama district in India-administered Kashmir region has a master's degree but has been unemployed for nearly a decade. Like many others in his situation, the 30-year old is looking towards the local assembly elections on September 18 to October 1 — the first in 10 years — with some hope after political parties put tackling youth unemployment at the heart of their campaigns.

With unemployment in the region running at 18.3 percent, nearly double India's national average of 9.2 percent, the situation is desperate, say locals. There is a lot of competition for government jobs given the development of the private sector has been limited by decades of conflict and unstable governance. A 28-year-old man from Srinagar who graduated in civil engineering in 2021 told the Thomson Reuters Foundation that the situation had gotten so bad that he was now suffering from anxiety and depression. "I've been struggling to get a government job ever since I completed my degree, but I haven't been able to secure one. Now, without a job, I find myself battling suicidal thoughts every day," said the man, who will remain anonymous due to the sensitivity of the issue.

To address these deepening economic and social problems, the contending parties, including India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and regional parties Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP), are promising to create jobs for young people and upskill workers. With an estimated 600,000 people currently out of work in the region, those policies can't come soon enough, said Javid Ahmed Tenga, president of the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI). The territory had a population of around 12.5 million in 2011, according to the latest census available.

"As the elections approach, it's crucial that the next government introduces policies that bolster the private sector and promote skill-based initiatives to

effectively tackle the unemployment crisis," he said.

Political promises

Nearly nine million people are registered to vote for the legislative assembly elections in Kashmir. The decision to hold regional elections for the first time in a decade comes after India's Supreme Court upheld a decision by the government to scrap the region's special status. Prime Minister Narendra Modi withdrew Kashmir's special autonomy in 2019 and split the former state into two federal territories, aiming to tighten its grip on the Muslim-majority region. The region has been at the center of decades of animosity between India and Pakistan since independence from British colonial rule. Modi says the region's special status had held back its development.

"After the revocation of (the special status), the Modi government claimed that a lot of money would come in and that big companies would arrive to boost the economy and create employment in Kashmir," said Sarah Hayat Shah, a spokesperson for JKNC, which is seen as the top contender at the regional elections. "However, these turned out to be nothing more than hollow promises." She said her party plans to add 100,000 jobs among the youth across various sectors, including skilled jobs under a start-up scheme.

The JKNC also plans to introduce an initiative that focuses on creating sustainable employment opportunities, or the Jammu and Kashmir Youth Employment Generation Act, within three months of taking office, she said. The PDP party aims to create jobs in various sectors including horticulture, agriculture, and the tourism industry, said Waheed Ur Rehman Para, a PDP candidate for the assembly of the Pulwama constituency.

Para said the PDP was committed to expanding the livelihood program, which foresees setting up centers across municipalities and rural areas to teach prospective candidates practical skills for employment and entrepreneurship, with a focus on the



SRINAGAR: Pedestrians walk past an Indian security personnel along a street in Srinagar on September 9, 2024. — AFP

youth. "Many have been living in a state of hopelessness," said 36-year old Para, who is also the PDP's youth leader.

Recruitment process

The unemployed man from Srinagar said he had applied for several jobs advertised by the local administration but had never been selected, calling the process "unfair" and a "scam". The local administration did not immediately reply to the Thomson Reuters Foundation's request for a comment. Kashmir is currently run by Manoj Sinha, a governor appointed by the BJP-led government.

The BJP said in its election manifesto that it was committed to making sure the recruitment process for government jobs in region is transparent. Such

allegations are not uncommon. In June, opposition parties and thousands of students protested against Modi's government for alleged irregularities in recent government-run tests for medical college admissions.

The man from Srinagar said he would vote in the upcoming election, having not voted in 2014, because the parties seem more focused on tackling youth unemployment this time around. Back in Pulwama, Malik said he was hopeful as he prepares to vote for the first time in his life. "After a decade of no local representation, there is significant anticipation among the unemployed youth like me who have been waiting for the democratic process to resume and elect candidates who will prioritize job creation," he said. — Reuters



SHANGHAI: A woman sweeps tree branches and leaves outside a shop brought down during the passage of Typhoon Bebinca in Shanghai on September 16, 2024.



Pedestrians struggle with their umbrellas in strong winds and rain from the passage of Typhoon Bebinca. — AFP photos

Shanghai cleans up after strongest storm in decades

SHANGHAI: Emergency workers cleared fallen trees and other debris from Shanghai's streets after the strongest storm to hit the Chinese megacity since 1949 disrupted transport and left tens of thousands of people without power. Typhoon Bebinca landed in Shanghai's eastern coastal area early on Monday morning with wind speeds of around 150 kilometers (95 miles) per hour, state media said.

The municipal news service said the typhoon had caused "significant damage across the city", felling more than 1,800 trees and leaving 30,000 households without electricity. Many businesses were already closed for the Mid-Autumn Festival public holiday and the city's 25 million residents were advised to avoid leaving their homes. Only one injury had been reported so far, the municipal news service said.

Workers in orange jumpsuits cleared a big pile of corrugated iron and other metal that appeared to have fallen from a nearby building onto a major road in the city center. Shanghai resident Tracy Huang, who had ventured outside to buy supplies, watched them as the rain continued to pour. "I didn't plan to go out today but there was a power outage in our house," she said. "I don't know (when the electricity will come back on) but it might be tonight ... the com-

munity staff said it was being repaired," she told AFP.

Authorities said 414,000 people across Shanghai had been evacuated to safer locations and tens of thousands of emergency personnel were on hand to be deployed. Uprooted trees blocked off several roads in the city center, AFP reporters saw, and the municipal news service said cars had been smashed by flying debris.

Uprooted trees

Many streets in the city's former French Concession turned a vivid green, carpeted with the felled boughs and leaves of the quarter's famous plane trees. Bicycles and rubbish bags littered the road as clean-up crews and some delivery drivers persevered against the driving rain.

Navy veteran Tang Yongkui told AFP his years at sea had made him unafraid of storms, so he had gone outside to watch. "The wind was really strong ... You couldn't see the leaves on the trees, there was rain everywhere," the 84-year-old said. "But it seems in the end that Shanghai's drainage is pretty good because by now there is no water left."

Xiong Zhuowu, a doctor and resident of the northern Baoshan district, posted a video of a real estate agent's sign being ripped away onto a roof in his compound. "I feel quite nervous today, I'm constantly checking what the situation is out the window," Xiong told AFP. "The property management found some trees with loose roots downstairs and immediately called me to move my car." A government live feed from Baoshan just after the typhoon hit showed ferocious winds ripping through a line of

trees on the riverbank.

The typhoon brought the normally heaving city to a standstill as it made landfall. Live video feeds during the morning rush hour showed Shanghai's usually jammed roads almost empty of traffic and its famed skyline obscured by thick fog.

Flights restarting

All flights from Shanghai's airports were grounded earlier but started up again slowly as the storm moved on through the afternoon. Highways were opened after being closed at 1 am local time and some ferries, metro services and trains resumed service.

State broadcaster CCTV said Bebinca was expected to move northwest, causing heavy rain and high winds in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui provinces. Some residents still braved the weather even at the storm's peak to go about their errands. "I saw a lot of typhoons in the south, so I think Shanghai is OK," resident Wu Yun told AFP as she struggled to open her umbrella against the wind. Another typhoon, Yagi, killed at least four people on China's southern Hainan island this month. Bebinca also passed through Japan and the Philippines, where falling trees killed six people.

China is the world's biggest emitter of the greenhouse gases that scientists say are driving climate change that makes extreme weather more frequent and intense. "This storm is a training exercise, a test for us," navy veteran Tang said as he watched workers haul branches and metal onto a truck. "We can't fight against nature. But we should protect it ..." — AFP

to "stop inciting propaganda and risking infringements", adding Beijing would "continue to carry out rights protection and law enforcement activities" there.

But Tarriela on Monday maintained the withdrawal from Sabina was "not a defeat", rejecting comparisons to the Scarborough Shoal, which Manila lost to Beijing after a similar months-long standoff in 2012. He said it would be "impossible" for China to totally stop the Philippines from sending its ships around the 137-square-kilometer (53-square-mile) Sabina Shoal.

"The coast guard can carry out whatever it takes for us to make sure that China will not be able to occupy and even reclaim Escoda Shoal," he said. "We have other coast guard vessels that, as we speak right now, may have been or may already be proceeding to Escoda Shoal," Tarriela said without providing details, citing operational security considerations. Sabina is located 140 kilometers (86 miles) west of Palawan and about 1,200 kilometers from Hainan island, the nearest major Chinese landmass. — AFP

Philippines 'did not abandon' South China Sea reef despite pullout

MANILA: The Philippines insisted on Monday that it had not given up a South China Sea reef, two days after it pulled out a ship stationed there following a months-long standoff with rival claimant China. Manila had deployed the coast guard flagship BRP Teresa Magbanua to Sabina Shoal in April to stop Beijing from building an artificial island there, as it has atop several other disputed features in the strategic waterway.

But the ship was abruptly called back to the western Philippine island of Palawan, with Manila citing damage from an earlier clash with Chinese ships, ailing crew members, dwindling food and bad weather. "We have not lost anything. We did not abandon anything. Escoda Shoal is still part of our exclusive

economic zone," Philippine Coast Guard spokesman Commodore Jay Tarriela told a news conference Monday, using the Filipino name for Sabina Shoal.

Beijing claims most of the South China Sea, including Sabina Shoal, despite an international tribunal ruling that its assertions have no merit. It has acted aggressively towards Philippine government vessels at Sabina and other disputed features in recent months, ramming, blocking, water-cannoning and even boarding them, causing damage and injuries.

The confrontations have sparked concern that the United States, a military ally of Manila, could be drawn into armed conflict with China. With the Chinese harassing resupply missions, Tarriela said it came to a point that the BRP Teresa Magbanua's water desalinator broke down, forcing the crew to rely on rainwater for drinking "for more than one month now". He said the crew were also reduced to "eating porridge for three weeks", which "obviously is not nutritious".

Following the ship's pullout, China's coast guard insisted on Sunday that Beijing "has indisputable sovereignty" over Sabina. It warned the Philip-

Pakistan court grants bail to MPs linked to ex-PM

ISLAMABAD: An anti-terrorism court in Pakistan granted bail Monday to 10 lawmakers from jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party, an AFP journalist witnessed. At least 30 people from Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party — including the 10 MPs — were remanded in custody last Tuesday, two days after they led a major rally in the capital, Islamabad.

The anti-terrorism court granted them bail of 30,000 rupees (\$100). PTI has faced a sweeping crackdown since Khan was jailed in August last year on a series of charges he says are politically motivated and designed to keep him from power.

The 10 MPs, some detained at their offices in the National Assembly, were charged under a new protest law and the anti-terrorism act. They were accused of violating the Peaceful Assembly and Public Order Act, passed just days before the rally was held, in a move rights groups say was an attempt to curb freedom of expression and peaceful protest. PTI has sparred with the military since Khan was deposed two years ago.

The confrontation came to a head after the former cricket star's first arrest on corruption charges in May 2023. His supporters waged days of sometimes violent protests and attacked military installations, sparking a sweeping crackdown on PTI led by the army — Pakistan's most powerful institution.

But the clampdown failed to diminish Khan's popularity and candidates backed by the former premier won the most seats in 2024 polls — marred by allegations of widespread rigging. Khan rose to power in 2018 with the help of the military, analysts say, but was ousted in 2022 after reportedly falling out with the generals.

A United Nations panel of experts found this month that his detention "had no legal basis and appears to have been intended to disqualify him from running for political office". A number of convictions against him have been overturned by the courts. — AFP

Ex-BBC anchor gets suspended sentence for illegal child images

LONDON: Former British TV presenter Huw Edwards, the long-time face of the BBC's flagship news program, was given a suspended sentence at a London court on Monday after admitting making indecent images of children. Monday's sentencing sealed a fall from grace for Edwards, a household name in Britain for around two decades who as the BBC's leading news anchor announced the death of Queen Elizabeth to the nation in 2022.

Edwards, 63, pleaded guilty in July to three charges of making indecent images of children, relating to 41 illegal images he was sent via WhatsApp — including two pornographic videos of a child aged between seven and nine-years-old. Judge Paul Goldspring sentenced Edwards to six months in prison suspended for two years, meaning Edwards will not go to jail unless he commits another criminal offence in that time.

Seven of the illegal images were of the most serious category, prosecutor Ian Hope said, and both of those videos were marked as "read" on WhatsApp. In response to the second video, Edwards asked the man sending them: "Any more?" The offence of making indecent images of children relates to the images that were sent to Edwards. Prosecutors did not allege Edwards had literally made the images in question.

His lawyer Philip Evans said Edwards was at the time of the offending suffering with his mental and physical health and he no memory of actually viewing any particular images. "He didn't use them for any personal gratification and he didn't gain any gratification from those indecent images," Evans said. — Reuters

Business

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2024

Zain wins the 'Best 5G Business Development Strategy' award

Presented by GSMA during 5G Core Summit held in Dubai



Almulla receives the award in Dubai.



From the MoU signing with Huawei.

KUWAIT: Zain has been recognized with the 'Best 5G Business Development Strategy' award at the 5G Core Summit, held recently in Dubai. The award, presented by the GSMA and Informa Tech, recognizes Zain for leading efforts to drive 5G-based innovation. The summit was attended by executives and leaders from the telecom and IT industries across the MENA region.

Zain Kuwait Mobile Networks Team Leader Khalifah Almulla received the award on stage. This recognition highlights Zain's proactive efforts in advancing 5G solutions and acknowledges the company's readiness to launch 5G New Calling (5GNC), an emerging capability in the 5G network that paves the way for a new era of voice and video communication. Zain plans to roll out this new service commercially across Kuwait by the end of this year.

During the summit, Zain signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with its global partner Huawei

- Recognition highlights readiness of Zain's 5G network infrastructure to launch 5G New Calling.
- Company signs MoU with Huawei to explore further 5GNC collaboration.

to explore further collaboration and development of 5GNC. Last year, Zain showcased this technology at the New Calling Summit in Paris, where it demonstrated the capabilities of its network and successfully trialed the service. Zain was the only operator from the region to be invited by the GSMA to showcase 5GNC to the global telecom community.

Zain was selected for this award based on several key criteria, including its solid 5G deployment strategy, efficient network architecture, the readiness of its operation and maintenance teams, and the introduction of key enhancements for network maintenance and troubleshooting. The company's integration of intelligent solutions and its level of innovation within the network were also pivotal in receiving this recognition.

The 'Best 5G Business Development Strategy' award is presented to operators who have successfully crafted an innovative strategy to transform the user experience. It also recognizes those who have understood the investments required across the entire 5G architecture and have implemented transformative service improvements, such as ultra-fast speeds, low latency, and the ability to handle massive simultaneous connections. Zain has effectively implemented these factors across its technology infrastructure.

5GNC enhances traditional calls with new capabilities, allowing both voice and video calls to be made directly over the network without the need for data services. This advancement introduces ultra-HD, intelligent, and interactive calling features on the native

call screen without requiring additional apps. Users can enjoy enhanced voice and video calls with 5GNC, featuring rich intelligence capabilities such as real-time voice and video recognition, instant live translation during calls, and the inclusion of fun avatars and filters for video calls.

In 2019, Zain led the market as the first operator to commercially launch 5G services, setting a precedent in the local and regional telecom industries. Since then, the company has continued to lead in adapting 5G technologies, revolutionizing the digital journeys of its customers. Zain remains committed to investing in its 5G infrastructure, achieving the highest speeds and operational efficiencies across its network. The company is dedicated to meeting the growing demand for data while exploring new ecosystems made possible by technological innovation, all with the aim of serving the needs of consumers, businesses, and government agencies.

India implements series of measures to placate farmers

NEW DELHI: India has implemented a series of measures to facilitate the exports of certain farm goods and limit imports of vegetable oils ahead of local elections in two states where farmers form an influential voting bloc. The moves surprised the market, as New Delhi typically tries to protect consumers' interests during the peak festival season. However, this year, it prioritized supporting farmers, setting aside inflationary concerns. Here are some facts about policy initiatives on rice, vegetable oils, wheat, onions and yellow peas:

Easing export curbs

India has removed a floor price for basmati rice exports to help farmers boost overseas sales of the premium grade. Last year New Delhi set a floor price, or minimum export price (MEP), of \$1,200 a metric ton and later cut the MEP to \$950 a ton. India and Pakistan, the only growers of basmati, compete for global market share for the premium rice. New Delhi also removed the \$550 a metric ton MEP on onions, one of the most ubiquitous food items in India. The world's biggest onion exporter also slashed export tax to 20 percent from 40 percent.

Imposing tariffs

India, the world's biggest edible oil importer, imposed a 20 percent basic customs duty on key edible oils, to help protect farmers reeling from lower oilseed prices. Effective import duty on crude palm oil, crude soybean and crude sunflower rose 27.5 percent from 5.5 percent as they are also subject to India's Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess and Social Welfare Surcharge. India also raised the import tax on refined palm oil, refined soybean and refined sunflower oil to 35.75 percent import, from 13.75 percent. India meets more than 70 percent of its vegetable oil demand through imports and palm oil constitutes more than 50 percent of total imports.

State assembly elections

Analysts say the moves were aimed at gaining the support of farmers in Maharashtra and Haryana. Maharashtra is a major producer of onions, sugar, and soybeans, while Haryana is a leading grower of basmati rice. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will pull out all the stops to retain power in Haryana, one of India's breadbasket states in the north. Haryana's voters will elect a new assembly on Oct 5. BJP will also try to claw back support among farmers from the western state of Maharashtra where assembly election is due later this year. Earlier this year, the BJP lost nearly 75 rural seats in India's general election. — Reuters



DUBAI: A chef packs takeaway food at a restaurant on Sept 4, 2024. — AFP photos



PARIS: A shopper takes a plastic bag from a vendor at a market on Sept 11, 2024.

Easy, convenient and cheap: How single-use plastic rules the world

BANGKOK: Each year the world produces around 400 million tons of plastic waste, much of it discarded after just a few minutes of use. Negotiators hope to reach the world's first treaty on plastic pollution this year, but across five very different countries, AFP found single-use plastic remains hugely popular as a cheap and convenient choice, illustrating the challenges ahead:

Bangkok

On a Bangkok street lined with food vendors, customers line up for Maliwan's famed traditional sweets. Steamed layer cakes - green with pandan leaf or blue with butterfly pea - sit in clear plastic bags alongside rows of taro pudding in plastic boxes. Each day, the 40-year-old business uses at least two kilos of single-use plastic. "Plastic is easy, convenient and cheap," said 44-year-old owner Watchararas Tamrongpattarakit.

Banana leaves used to be standard, but they are increasingly expensive and hard to source. They are also onerous to use because each one must be cleaned and checked for tears. It "isn't practical for our pace of sales", said Watchararas. Thailand started limiting single-use plastic before the pandemic, asking major retailers to stop handing out bags for free. But the policy has largely fallen by the wayside, with little uptake among the country's street food vendors.

Thailand produces two million tons of plastic waste a year, according to the country's Pollution Control Department. The World Bank estimates 11 percent goes uncollected, and is burned, disposed of on land or leaks into rivers and the ocean. Watchararas tries to consolidate purchases into fewer bags and said some customers bring their own reusable containers and totes. But Radeerut Sakulpongpaisal, a Maliwan customer for 30 years, said she finds plastic "convenient". "I also understand the environmental impact," the bank worker said. But "it's probably easier for both the shop and the customers".

Lagos

In the Obalende market at the heart of Nigeria's economic capital Lagos, emptied water sachets litter the ground. Each day, Lisebeth Ajayi watches dozens of customers use their teeth to tear open the bags of "pure water" and drink. "They don't have the money to buy the bottle water, that's why they do the pure water," said the 58-year-old, who sells bottles and bags of water, soap and sponges. Two 500-millilitre sachets sell for between 50 to 250 naira (3-15 US cents), compared to 250-300 naira for a 750-ml bottle.

Since they appeared in the 1990s, water sachets have become a major pollutant across much of Africa, but they remain popular for drinking, cooking and even washing. Some 200 firms produce the sachets in Lagos, and several hundred more recycle plastic, but supply vastly outstrips capacity in a country with few public wastebins and little environmental education. Lagos banned single-use plastic in January, but with little impact so far. The United Nations estimates up to 60 million water sachets are discarded across Nigeria every day.

Rio

Each day, vendors walk the sands of some of Rio de Janeiro's most beautiful beaches, lugging metal V-containers filled with the tea-like drink mate. The iced beverage, infused with fruit juice, is dispensed into plastic cups for eager sun worshippers dotted along the seafont. "Drinking mate is part of Rio de Janeiro's culture," explained Arthur Jorge da Silva, 47, as he scouted for customers. He acknowledged the environmental impacts of his towers of plastic cups, in a country ranked the fourth-biggest producer of plastic waste in 2019. But "it's complicated" to find affordable alternatives, he told AFP. The tanned salesman said mate vendors on the beach had used plastic for as long as he could remember.

He pays a dollar for a tower of 20 cups and charges customers \$1.80 for each drink. Bins along Rio's beaches receive about 130 tons of waste a day, but plastic is not separated, and just three percent of Brazil's waste is recycled annually. Evelyn Talavera, 24, said she does her best to clean up when leaving the beach. "We have to take care of our planet, throw the garbage away, keep the environment clean." Plas-

tic straws have been banned in Rio's restaurants and bars since 2018, and shops are no longer required to offer free plastic bags - though many still do. Congress is also considering legislation that would ban all single-use plastic.

Paris

In France, single-use plastic has been banned since 2016, but while items like straws and plastic cutlery have disappeared, plastic bags remain stubbornly common. At Paris' Aligre market, stalls are piled with fruit, vegetables and stacks of bags ready to be handed out. Most are stamped "reusable and 100-percent recyclable", and some are described as compostable or produced from natural materials. But experts have cast doubt on the environmental relevance of some of these claims. Vendor Laurent Benacer gets through a 24-euro (\$26) box of 2,000 bags each week. "In Paris, everyone asks for a bag," he told AFP. "I'd stopped, but my neighbors continued, so I had to restart." There are alternatives like paper bags, but some customers are simply not convinced. "Plastic bags remain practical, so everything doesn't spill everywhere," insisted 80-year-old customer Catherine Sale.

Dubai

At the Allo Beirut restaurant in Dubai, plastic containers are piled high, waiting to be filled and delivered across the city. "We receive more than 1,200 orders a day," said delivery manager Mohammed Chanane. "We use plastic boxes because they are more airtight, and better preserve the food," he said. With few pedestrians and an often-scorching climate, many of Dubai's 3.7 million residents rely on delivery for everything from petrol to coffee.

Residents of the United Arab Emirates have one of the highest volumes of waste per capita in the world. And single-use plastic accounts for 40 percent of all plastic used in the country. Since June, single-use plastic bags and several similar items have been banned. Polystyrene containers will follow next year. Allo Beirut is considering using cardboard containers, a move customer Youmna Asmar would welcome. She admitted horror at the build-up of plastic in her bins after a weekend of family orders. "I say to myself, if all of us are doing this, it's a lot." — AFP

Business

Stocks firm, dollar sags; markets bet big on Federal Reserve's cut

China data disappoints, adding to case for stimulus

LONDON: Global stocks edged up for a sixth day on Monday, in a week that is almost certain to see the start of an easing cycle in the United States that investors believe may begin with an outsized move. Central banks in Japan and the UK also meet this week, with both expected to stand pat for now, while a packed data schedule includes US retail sales and industrial production. Geopolitics loomed large with Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump the subject of a second assassination attempt on Sunday, according to the FBI.

But the key focus on Monday was the growing expectation for the Federal Reserve to cut rates by half a point after its meeting this week, as it seeks to keep the economy on course for a soft landing, in light of slowing jobs growth and moderating inflation. The MSCI All-World index headed for a sixth straight rise, up 0.1 percent. The index has rallied 10 percent in the last six weeks as enthusiasm about a chunky Fed rate cut has boosted stocks.

"Whether or not the Fed cuts rates by 25 bps or 50 bps the market reaction will depend on two things: how they communicate the cut and their reasons for cutting by 50 bps, and also the Dot Plot and what it tells us about Fed members' current expectations for the terminal rate," XTB research director Kathleen Brooks said. "If the Fed does start by cutting 50 bps, but at the same time reiterates that it is doing so to preserve the economy's soft landing, this is stock-market positive. If it sounds like the Fed has to panic cut interest rates because of some grey cloud on the horizon, then expect stocks to sell off," she said.

S&P 500 futures and Nasdaq futures dipped 0.1 percent, suggesting a flat start for the benchmark indices after the S&P 500 last week secured its strongest weekly performance this year. In Europe, the STOXX 600 held steady, having pared earlier losses, as investors booked some profit on last week's 1 percent rally. Economic data from China over the weekend showed industrial output growth slowed to a five-month low in August, while retail sales and new home prices weakened further. Economists at Goldman Sachs and Citigroup cut their forecasts for Chinese growth to 4.7 percent in 2024. A slew of public holidays across Asia kept equity market activity subdued.

Yen on a roll

As for the Fed, show traders are placing a 59 percent chance of a half-point cut, up from 30 percent a week ago. The odds have narrowed sharply after media reports revived the prospect of a more aggressive easing. Treasuries have rallied sharply, bringing the yield on the rate-sensitive two-year note down 35 bps since the start of September alone. On Monday, it was trading down 1.5 bps on the day at 3.561 percent, about its lowest for two years.

The Bank of England is expected to leave rates on hold at 5.00 percent when it meets on Thursday, though markets have priced in a 31 percent chance of another cut. The Bank of Japan meets on Friday and is widely expected to hold steady, though it may lay the groundwork for a further tightening in October. Lower Treasury yields gave the Jap-



PAPENBURG: The new Disney Treasure cruise ship of Disney Cruise line is moored at the Meyer shipyards in Papenburg, northwestern Germany on Sept 16, 2024. At the company meeting, the employees were informed that the troubled luxury shipbuilder had been saved by the intervention of the Federal Republic of Germany and the state of Lower Saxony. — AFP

anese yen another boost against the dollar, which fell 0.5 percent on the day to 140.11, skimming a 14-month low. The euro rose 0.4 percent to \$1.112,

with the prospect of more rate cuts from the European Central Bank keeping a lid on the currency at \$1.1200. — Reuters

Germany, Kenya strike labor migration deal

BERLIN: Germany and Kenya struck a labor and migration deal to allow skilled workers from the east African country to live and work in the biggest EU economy. The deal will help Germany as it struggles with an ageing and shrinking pool of workers, said Chancellor Olaf Scholz as he welcomed President William Ruto in Berlin.

The agreement will also streamline the repatriation of illegal immigrants, although there are relatively few Kenyan asylum seekers in Germany, which hosts far larger numbers of migrants from Syria and Afghanistan as well as Ukrainian war refugees. Irregular immigration has been a flashpoint political issue in Germany where popular fears have been fuelled by a recent spate of Islamist attacks and driven by the rise of the far-right AfD party. "The basis of our prosperity is being

open to the world," said Scholz, who added that the deal with Kenya would help counter the "glaring shortage of skilled workers" in Germany.

He said Kenya boasts "an incredible number of highly qualified IT specialists" and said many of its skilled workers and young people could soon come to Germany for work and vocational training. Ruto hailed the comprehensive migration and labor mobility partnership agreement, which he said would harness the "human capital in Kenya, where we have a big youth bulge". "We can combine the innovation, creativity, energy, talent, knowledge of our young people with German investment, technology and resources and provide for a win-win outcome."

Scholz said the agreement also provides for "effective return procedures for those who have come to us from Kenya but do not have or cannot acquire a right of residence here". Ruto said "this framework gives us an opportunity to avoid illegal migrants. Because illegal migrants pose a problem both to us and to Germany." Germany has since 2022 struck similar migration agreements with India and Georgia



BERLIN: German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier (right) and his wife Elke Buedenbender (left) flanked by Kenya's President William Ruto (2nd right) and his wife Rachel Chebet Ruto (2nd left) walk in front of the presidential Bellevue Palace in Berlin. — AFP

and plans to sign another when Scholz visits Uzbekistan next week. Berlin has also been in various stages of talks on similar arrangements with Colombia, Ghana, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Morocco and the Philippines. — AFP

TikTok's US future hangs in balance at federal court

WASHINGTON: TikTok will attempt to convince a federal court on Monday that a law requiring the video-sharing app to divest from its Chinese ownership or face a ban in the United States is unconstitutional. The fate of Americans' access to TikTok has become a prominent issue in the country's political debate, with Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump opposing any ban of the wildly popular app.

Democratic President Joe Biden, whose vice president Kamala Harris is running against Trump, signed the law that gives TikTok until January to shed its Chinese ownership or be expelled from the US market. ByteDance, TikTok's parent company, has stated it has no plans to sell TikTok, leaving the app's legal appeal - focused on US guarantees for free speech - as its only option for survival.

A ban would likely provoke a strong response from the Chinese government and further strain US-China relations. A three-judge panel of the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit will hear arguments from TikTok, ByteDance, and a group of users. They will primarily contend that the law violates free speech rights. The judges will decide the case in the coming weeks or months, but regardless of their decision, the case is likely to reach the US Supreme Court.

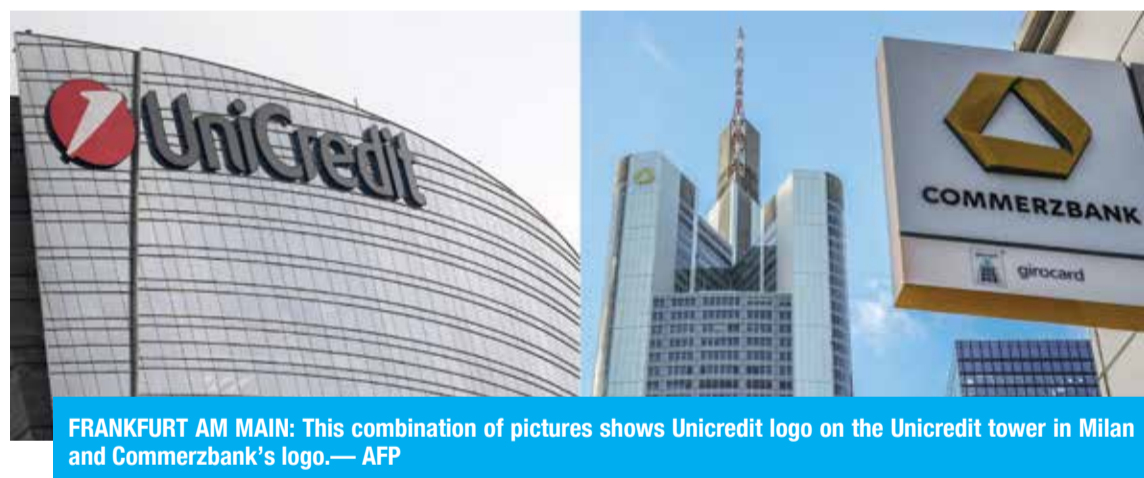
"There is no question: the Act will force a shutdown of TikTok by January 19, 2025," TikTok's appeal stated, "silencing those who use the platform to communicate in ways that cannot be replicated elsewhere." TikTok also argued that even if divestiture were possible, the app "would still be reduced to a shell of its former self, stripped of the innovative and expressive technology that tailors content to each user." TikTok asserts that "the Constitution is on our side," as it pushes for a ruling that would favor the app and its 170 million American users.

The US government counters that the law addresses national security concerns, not speech, and that ByteDance cannot claim First Amendment rights in the United States. "Given TikTok's broad reach within the United States, the capacity for China to use TikTok's features to achieve its overarching objective to undermine American interests creates a national-security threat of immense depth and scale," the US Justice Department wrote in its filing. The US argues that ByteDance could and would comply with Chinese government demands for data about US users, or yield to Chinese government pressure to censor or promote content on the platform.

'Vote for Trump'

TikTok first faced scrutiny under former president Trump's administration, which tried unsuccessfully to ban it. That effort was halted when a federal judge temporarily blocked Trump's move, citing in part the potential infringement of free speech rights. Trump has since changed his position. "For all of those that want to save TikTok in America, vote for Trump," he said in a video post last week. In a measure of the app's popularity, Biden's reelection campaign created a TikTok account earlier this year. Biden has since stepped aside from his reelection bid, but Harris, running in his place, also maintains a presence on the app, having embraced social media as a means to communicate with younger voters.

The new effort signed by Biden was designed to overcome the previous legal hurdles Trump faced, but some experts believe the US Supreme Court will have difficulty allowing national security considerations to outweigh free speech protections. Much of the US side's national security arguments are sealed, which "complicates efforts to evaluate" them, said professor Carl Tobias of the University of Richmond School of Law. "However, the US Supreme Court has generally been very cautious about accepting national security arguments when government regulation restricts First Amendment rights, especially involving the internet," he added. — AFP



FRANKFURT AM MAIN: This combination of pictures shows Unicredit logo on the Unicredit tower in Milan and Commerzbank's logo. — AFP

We see potential in Commerzbank merger: UniCredit

FRANKFURT: UniCredit CEO Andrea Orcel openly acknowledged Monday that he was in favor of a merger with Commerzbank, days after the Italian lender unexpectedly acquired a nine-percent stake in Germany's second-biggest bank. "It has been no secret for many years that we see potential in a merger," Orcel said in an interview with financial daily Handelsblatt. "For the moment, we are only a shareholder. But a merger of the two banks could lead to considerable added value for all stakeholders," Orcel said.

UniCredit caught markets by surprise last week when it disclosed it had built up a nine-percent stake in Commerzbank, half of which it acquired from the German state. UniCredit paid around 1.4 billion eu-

ros (\$1.5 billion) for the acquisition.

The announcement renewed speculation that the Milan-based bank was mulling a takeover of Commerzbank. UniCredit already owns German lender HypoVereinsbank. "Europe, and Germany too, needs stronger banks. Banks are needed to finance growth and the enormous transformation that lies ahead," Orcel told Handelsblatt.

A tie-up between UniCredit and Commerzbank would "create a much stronger competitor in the German banking market", he said. "Retail banking customers could be better supported, and the German Mittelstand (small- and medium-sized companies) could be strengthened with financing and more comprehensively supported internationally."

The German government is still Commerzbank's largest shareholder, with a remaining 12-percent stake. It recently said it aimed to sell down its stake, citing the bank's improved economic situation.

Berlin had bailed out Commerzbank with billions of euros in 2009 after the global financial crisis pushed it to the brink of collapse. — AFP

than in Ghana because of a more stable CFA franc currency and a less regulated sector. Ghana had produced 429,323 metric tons of cocoa by the end of June from the start of the season in September, less than 55 percent of the average at the same point in previous seasons and putting 2023/24 output on track for its biggest fall in more than two decades.

Charles Amenayaglo, director of special services at Cocobod, who leads the board's anti-smuggling task force, said smuggling losses more than tripled in 2023/24. "Conservatively, I will say we lost 160,000 tons," he said, adding that the task force also intercepted about 250 tons, up from 17 tons in 2022/23. "The data is alarming," said Abubakar Omaa, general secretary of Ghana's cocoa and coffee farmers association. — Reuters

Nigeria's Dangote refinery begins petrol deliveries

LAGOS: Nigeria's Dangote refinery, Africa's largest, has finally begun delivering petrol, a game changer for the oil-rich country that frequently faces gasoline shortages. The oft-delayed 650,000-barrel-a-day refinery built by Nigerian billionaire Aliko Dangote began producing diesel and aviation fuel in January, but the OPEC member has had to rely on costly gasoline imports to keep cars running because of a lack of refineries.

On September 3 it finally began to produce petrol and on Sunday some 500 trucks of the state-run Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation arrived at the huge facility to start delivering the fuel on what Finance Minister Wale Edun called a "historic breakthrough day". "Today we have taken an important step, a key step toward energy self-sufficiency in Nigeria", said Edun, who visited the refinery for the occasion. "We have taken an important step to energy security in Nigeria," he added. Nigeria swaps crude worth billions of dollars for petrol that it subsidized for years to maintain low domestic prices.

Fuel imports and subsidies have caused a massive drain on foreign exchange reserves at a time when Nigeria is struggling with dwindling oil revenues and foreign currency shortages. Dangote Industries Vice President Devakumar Edwin said that the refinery would meet the "entire requirements of the country" with only 44 percent of its production. As the remaining 56 percent had to be exported, Edwin added that the facility would not only reduce reliance on imports but was also going to ease the drain on Nigeria's foreign exchange reserves through export revenue.

The refinery, first scheduled to open in 2021, was officially inaugurated by then-president Muhammadu Buhari last year. Since coming to office in May last year, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has ended long-standing fuel subsidies and floated the naira currency in economic reforms he says will attract foreign investment and build long-term growth. But in the short term, fuel prices have doubled, inflation hit a three-decade high of 34 percent in June and the naira has collapsed against the dollar, adding to price pressures on imported goods.

The economic capital Lagos has seen weeks of sporadic long lines outside filling stations due to fuel shortages. The state-run energy company has raised petrol prices from 568 naira (\$0.36) a liter to at least 855 naira on Tuesday. Private operators often have shorter lines because they sell at higher prices. — AFP

Ghana loses tons of cocoa to smuggling

ACCRA: Ghana has lost more than a third of its 2023/24 cocoa output to smuggling, a top official from the cocoa marketing board (Cocobod) told Reuters, as low local prices and payment delays push some farmers to sell to increasingly sophisticated trafficking rings. Poor harvests in Ghana and Ivory Coast, the world's second largest and largest producers, have pushed markets into a four-year supply deficit, driving up global cocoa and chocolate prices this year.

But cocoa fetches more in Ivory Coast and Togo

Business

Boeing's strike: Bosses bruised, blindsided and on brink of crisis

Boeing faces new crunch talks • Trust between Boeing, union eroded

SEATTLE: Boeing bosses are staring down the barrel. The twists and turns of the past week paint a picture of managers badly wrong-footed by the depth of fury among workers who tossed out a 25 percent pay rise deal and launched strike action. "They probably didn't think that we had enough people for the strike," Kushal Varma, a Boeing mechanic, told Reuters. "But this is a movement of people who are willing to put their livelihoods on the line to get what's fair." With little time to regroup, and pressure mounting, management enters a fresh week of talks to contain the crisis at the \$97 billion US aerospace champion BAN.

A week ago, Boeing executives believed they'd done enough to secure the pay deal with around 33,000 workers in Washington state, the heart of the company's global manufacturing operations, according to two people directly involved in the talks that have played out at Seattle's upscale Westin hotel. The company's initial pay rise offer had been about 12 percent, said the people, who requested anonymity to discuss confidential and unreported details about the horse-trading, though that number gradually crept up during the weeks of negotiations.

But in an 11th-hour concession on Saturday, Sept 7 to clinch the support of union leader Jon Holden and seal what they expected to be a swift resolution to the dispute, Boeing executives hiked the offer significantly to 25 percent and pledged to build the company's next commercial jet in the state, the people added. "Much of it came together in the last four or five hours," Holden told Reuters after the tentative agreement was announced on Sept 8, adding that he and Boeing management had worked until "the we

hours". Boeing and the union hailed the deal as "historic" because of the record headline wage hike for the company and the first-of-its-kind plane commitment. It was a spectacular failure.

Three days later, 94 percent of members of Holden's International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) rejected the offer and 96 percent voted to strike. Reuters interviews with more than 20 people, including Boeing officials, union leaders and factory workers, show how badly the US aerospace champion underestimated the scale of the resentment felt by workers over cost-of-living pressures and pay agreements of previous years. Boeing and the IAM declined to comment for this article. The details of the deal's collapse also reveal how trust between Boeing and union leadership has eroded, complicating talks due to resume in coming days.

Two days after Boeing announced its offer, as union member frustration seeped into the media, commercial planes chief Stephanie Pope wrote an open letter to workers, saying the company had held nothing back and this was the best deal they would get. CEO Kelly Ortberg followed up with an open letter the next day, telling workers that voting against the deal would send them down a path "where no one wins". Rather than rallying the troops, the letters backfired, according to four workers who said many union members saw them as ultimatums.

"I thought they were unprofessional and threatening," said Josh King, a quality control inspector at a Boeing Seattle factory. Boeing finance chief Brian West acknowledged the disconnect with staff. "We had an unprecedented temporary agreement that was unanimously



SEATTLE: Union members react as Aerospace Machinists District 751 President Jon Holden (out of frame) announces that union members rejected a proposed Boeing contract and will go on strike, following voting results at their union hall in Seattle. — AFP

endorsed by union leadership. And over the last few days, it became very clear, loud and clear, with our union members that that offer didn't meet the mark," he told a Morgan Stanley conference at the beachside Ritz-Carlton in Dana Point, California on Friday.

In a conversation with a small group of investors on the sidelines of the event, West added that while Boeing had focused on the future plane pledge, workers were more concerned about their current wallets, according to a person who was present and requested anonymity as the discussion was private. Reuters was unable to reach West for comment. The 25

percent general wage increase offered was in line with gains won by other sectors such as autoworkers. Nonetheless, many Boeing workers have struggled to make ends meet over the years: since the last full wage deal in 2008, factory wages have lagged inflation, while healthcare and living costs have leapt.

Union leader in spotlight

Boeing, which dominates the global planemaking market with European rival Airbus AIR.PA, has been wrestling with production and safety crises since two deadly 737 MAX plane crashes in 2018 and 2019. The latest upheaval was

sparked by a door panel flying off a near-new 737 MAX plane in midair in January, prompting the exit of former CEO Dave Calhoun and a 30 percent drop in the company's share price this year.

As the new crunch labor talks loom, union chief Holden also finds himself under the microscope. On the Boeing side, boardroom trust in the IAM leader has been knocked by the reversal, which saw his members roundly reject a contract he negotiated and supported, according to the two people involved in the talks. His endorsement had appeared to be a much-needed win for Ortberg and Boeing, whose shares jumped almost 4 percent on Monday, Sept 9 as investors cheered.

Holden and Boeing chief negotiator Michael Fitzsimmons and their respective teams of about a dozen apiece had spent several weeks since July broadly discussing terms, the people said. In the last three weeks, the negotiations accelerated and intensified with the two teams moving into rooms at the Westin Hotel and holding talks several times a day, they added. Ortberg dropped in to the hotel on the evening of Saturday, Sept 7 to confirm the details with Holden, according to the sources. The deal was finally agreed shortly after 2 am and announced hours later.

On the union side, Holden also faces opposition from within his ranks, with some hardline members furious at him for endorsing an offer that most workers opposed, opening a rift at a critical point in the talks, five IAM members told Reuters. "You know, you don't trust him. You put faith in the guy ... and then we pretty much feel like he's failed you," said Mike Toman, a striking worker protesting outside a factory making Boeing's best-selling 737 jet. — Reuters

C Europe factories and retailers shut in flood-hit areas

PRAGUE: Factories and stores across central Europe shuttered production lines and closed their doors on Monday due to flooding that has killed at least 10 people, forced tens of thousands of evacuations and submerged towns from Poland to Romania. In Ostrava - an industrial city of 290,000 people in northeast Czech Republic - BorsodChem chemical plant has been shut, a spokesperson for the company, partially owned by China's Wanhua Chemical Group, said.

Coking plant OKK Koksovny - one of the largest producers of foundry coke in Europe - has stopped chemicals production but was continuing to keep coking batteries heated to minimum levels, spokesman Jindrich Vanek told Reuters. "There is water that has started rising and there must be a breach of the flood barriers," he said. "We are without electricity and we are heating our batteries with coking gas, keeping them at technological minimum."

Border areas between the Czech Republic and Poland were hit hard over the weekend, following days of heavy rain. Some bridges collapsed and homes were destroyed, while villages and towns in eastern Romania were submerged. While rivers in the Czech-Polish border area were starting to recede on Monday, flooding was widening to more areas and leaving bigger cities in both countries on alert. Veolia Energie has shut its Trebovice electricity and heating plant, which has cut hot water and



KRNOV: Porubka brook is flooded in a suburb of Ostrava as Central Europe faces heavy rainfall expected to cause floods. — AFP

heating supplies to large parts of Ostrava following flood damage, the company said in a statement.

"At the moment, the supply of heat and hot water in Ostrava is interrupted," the company said. "The key technologies remained undamaged and therefore if the situation develops favourably we estimate the restoration of supplies in a few days." The Czech Confederation of Industry said some companies not directly affected by the flooding still had to stop production in hard-hit regions because of problems transporting materials by rail. Power utility Tauron said six of its hydroelectric plants in southern Poland

were not working due to the floods.

More than 60,000 people were left without power on Monday morning, its press service said. Polish retailer Zabka said around 80 outlets were currently closed, mainly in the area around the southwest town of Klodzko. The shops were closed due to flooding, lack of electricity or evacuation ordered by the emergency services, its press service told Reuters via email on Monday. The retailer, owned by private equity fund CVC Capital Partners, added that it had provided water, provisions and transport support to its franchisees and was gathering information on their needs. — Reuters

Europe's EV troubles bubble up at Brussels Audi factory

BRUSSELS: Outside an Audi factory in Brussels described by the German carmaker as the "cradle" of its electric drive, around 200 picketing workers huddled around a bonfire in the morning drizzle. The firm is considering closing the plant, a move that analysts say is symptomatic of the troubles afflicting Europe's wider electric car industry, amid low demand and competition from China. Audi is a subsidiary of Volkswagen, which earlier this month made the bombshell announcement that it was considering the unprecedented step of closing production sites in Germany.

With 3,000 jobs on the line, the Brussels workers have launched a prolonged strike, with a large demonstration planned in the capital on Monday and walkouts elsewhere in solidarity. Some have been sleeping in tents outside the modern facility, which switched to producing electric vehicles (EVs) in 2018 after 70 years making combustion engine models. "They screwed up with electric," Karim Chawki, 52, a picketing worker, said. "They wanted to innovate. We were going to be a pilot plant but they drove it into a wall. It didn't work and now we are the ones who are going to pay."

Europe has been racing to produce more EVs as part of its green transition, with the clock ticking down on an EU deadline to phase out the sale of fossil fuel-burning cars by 2035. But sales have struggled to take off. New registrations dropped six percent on the previous year across the continent in July, according to the European Union. This was partially due to the phasing out of some sub-

sidies but the weakening demand has fuelled concerns about the sector.

Chinese blues

The potential closure of the factory in the Belgian capital was a "first effect" of the challenges facing European carmakers, said Felipe Munoz, an analyst with the automotive data company Jato Dynamics. Cheaper Chinese vehicles have saturated the market while consumers are yet to warm up to EVs, which have higher upfront costs and tend to lose value more quickly, he said. Audi did not immediately reply to a request for comment.

Announcing that it was considering shutting the Brussels site in July, the firm said demand for the high-end Q8 e-tron manufactured there dropped and the factory suffered from high logistics and production costs. "Europe is too far behind," said Chawki, an assembly worker, sporting a black beanie and a short, grizzled beard. "Have you ever seen Chinese cars? They're much more advanced," he added, sheltering with others under a trade union canopy.

A few kilometers away, plans to slap import duties of up to 36 percent on EVs imported from China are under discussion at the European Union's headquarters. The EU decided in July to levy extra tariffs after an anti-subsidy probe concluded car manufacturers in China benefitted unfairly from state subsidies. But the move has faced resistance from some countries, including Spain and Germany, which fear damage to trade ties with Beijing.

'Abandoned'

A report by former European Central Bank chief Mario Draghi last week said the tariffs would "help level the playing field". But an "industrial action plan" was needed to help European manufacturers to pull through and continue in their path towards decarbonization. "These countervailing duties can give companies a breather," said Conor McCaffrey, an



SEATTLE: Tech Specialist Raisu Williams demonstrates the media bar of the Sony Honda Mobility AFEELA prototype electric vehicle powered by Amazon Web Services in Seattle, Washington. — AFP

analyst at Bruegel, a Brussels-based think tank. "But alone they won't be enough. Productivity and competitiveness also need to massively increase."

European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen has promised a new "Clean Industrial Deal" to channel investment towards infrastructure and industry in the first 100 days after her new team takes office later this year. But that might come too late for the Brussels Audi workers facing the prospect of unemployment. "Their anger is very legitimate, very understandable, especially since Audi is not very clear on its plans," Bernard Clerfayt, the minister in charge of employment for the Brussels region, told AFP.

The company received about 27 million euros (\$30 million) in public funding to help reskill workers when it converted production to electric, he noted. Belgian unions have called for strike action across the country on Monday to protest against potential lay-offs, amid rumors of a possible foreign buyer. "We know nothing, they leave us in the dark," said father-of-one Regis Lauwereyns, 32. "We feel abandoned." — AFP

Europe in no hurry to loosen antitrust stance

BRUSSELS: Mario Draghi's call last week for a revamp of Europe's tough pro-competition policy rules prompted much speculation that the EU's next antitrust chief may take a lighter-touch approach to mergers that could yield European industrial "champions". While that may ultimately depend on the political mood in Brussels and Europe's national capitals as the bloc's economy lags behind its global rivals, there is little for now to suggest a more permissive shift, sources and analysts said. If anything, the EU consensus remains intact that policies that uphold competition, keep down prices and ensure a level playing field across the 27 national markets of the EU are one of the few bright spots in the region's struggling economy.

"If you loosen EU competition rules to build huge companies, create European champions, you will get companies that are French, German and Italian. The smaller countries will wonder 'What's in it for us?'," said one senior euro zone official. Certain deals - for example one that helped a green technology player against Chinese competition - could be politically viable, the official said, but added: "If it were to be across the board, then it is a no-go."

The EU's high-profile antitrust chief Margrethe Vestager, who only last week scored two major wins against Big Tech on tax fairness and anticompetitive practices, will soon hand over to her successor in a new European Commission lineup. Who that is will depend on fraught negotiations between EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen and member states to produce a team reflecting the geographic and political balance within the region, as well as gender and other criteria.

But any new arrival will be greeted by a near 900-head Directorate General of Competition which, long-time antitrust watchers say, is institutionally imbued with a belief in the economic benefits of strong competition policy. "And a new Competition Commissioner is always dependent on their services," said Umberto Gambini, partner at the Forward Global business consultancy and a former European Parliament lawmaker specialised in antitrust and state aid matters.

High burden of proof

It is far from clear in any case that what Draghi proposed last week would be a radical departure from the current line. In his long-awaited 400-page report, the former European Central Bank noted "there is a question" about whether vigorous competition policy prevented European companies reaching the scale needed to compete with Chinese or American giants.

In particular he proposed that future antitrust rulings take more into account factors such as whether a merger might give the new entity more investment clout to innovate. But asked if that meant any Commission acting on his proposals today would likely rubber-stamp the Alstom-Siemens engineering mega-merger it blocked in 2019, he only said "some of the reasons for blocking that merger would not be there." "Let me be very clear: we start from a common condition ... Competition is good. It is good for investment, good for productivity and good for income distribution," he said.

Indeed, the Draghi report put the burden on the merging parties to justify why any "innovation defense" should override other concerns about their link-up - with an especially high bar for companies that are already dominant market players. That reassured supporters of the strong pro-competition policy promoted by Europe and which the Biden administration has sought to take on board with Lina Kahn as chair of the US Federal Trade Commission. — Reuters

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2024

Stars shine on Emmys red carpet

Television's top stars sparkled Sunday on the red carpet for the Emmy Awards gala, back in its regular September time slot after twin Hollywood strikes delayed last year's ceremony to January. Here is a glimpse of the top looks seen at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles:

Ladies in red

Classic red to match the red carpet is a perennial style winner. "Shogun" star Anna Sawai was ready for her close-up—she accepted her Emmy for best actress in a drama in a fire-engine red strapless Vera Wang gown with a flounce just below the hips. Sofia Vergara, nominated for her performance as a notorious Colombian drug lord in "Griselda," rocked a strapless ruched red Dolce & Gabbana gown with a plunging neckline. And Ayo Edebiri, a winner at the last Emmys for her work on "The Bear" and a nominee again on Sunday,



Meryl Streep

looked glam in a strapless printed red, black and yellow Bottega Veneta gown with a high slit.

Black and blue

Black is always on point for Hollywood events, but blue also was everywhere at the Emmys. Selena Gomez, a first-time acting nominee for "Only Murders in the Building," wowed in a form-fitting Ralph Lauren black velvet gown with a shimmering silver halter neckline and a train. Sheryl Lee Ralph, a past Emmy winner and a nominee again Sunday for "Abbott Elementary," looked sleek in a black Versace gown with a similar halter neckline.

Two-time Oscar winner Jodie Foster, who won her first Emmy for best actress in a limited series for "True Detective: Night Country," stunned in a sleeveless midnight blue gown with a slim belt and asymmetrical bodice. And Brie Larson, nominated in Foster's category for "Lessons in Chemistry," adopted the peplum trend—and a very demure look—in a bead-



Anna Sawai attends the 76th Primetime Emmy Awards. — AFP photos



Nakata Kurumi and Tadanobu Asano

ed blue Chanel gown with thin sparkling straps, a full skirt and a sweet black bow at the waist.

Metallics

Glittering silver and gold looks definitely felt like a trend on the red carpet. Jennifer Aniston, once again nominated for best actress in a drama for "The Morning Show," sparkled in a sheer silvery strapless Oscar de la Renta gown with intricate pearl beading. Her



Jennifer Aniston



Nicola Coughlan

hair was down and loose—a style seen on many of television's leading ladies. "Bridgerton" star Nicola Coughlan, a presenter at the Emmys, glimmered in an off-the-shoulder silver Prabal Gurung sequin gown with the on-trend sculpted peplum at the waist. And Gillian Anderson, of "X-Files" fame, shimmered in a sil-



Selena Gomez



Sheryl Lee Ralph

ver gown with a square neckline and a full skirt.

Best of the rest

Meryl Streep, a nominee for her work on "Only Murders in the Building," wins the award for best menswear look with a powder pink Barbiecore power suit with a double-breasted jacket and a pussy bow blouse. Actress Kurumi Nakata, the wife of "Shogun" star Tadanobu Asano, brought a touch of the show to the red carpet in a traditional Japanese kimono. And Oscar winner Da'Vine Joy Randolph, a presenter on Sunday, brightened up the stage in a yellow hooded gown with one sleeve and ruching at the waist. A diamond serpent necklace completed the look. —AFP

Tito Jackson, member of the Jackson 5, dies at 70

US guitarist and singer Tito Jackson, an original member of the legendary Jackson 5 group and older brother of pop superstars Michael and Janet, has died at the age of 70, his sons said late Sunday. "It's with heavy hearts that we announce that our beloved father, Rock & Roll Hall of Famer Tito Jackson is no longer with us," his sons Taj, Taryll and TJ, who form the music group 3T, posted on Instagram alongside a photo of them with their father. "We are shocked, saddened and heartbroken. Our father was an incredible man who cared about everyone and their well-being," they said.

"Please remember to do what our father always preached and that is 'Love One Another.' We love you Pops. Your boys, Taj, Taryll and TJ." Family friend Steve Manning told Entertainment Tonight that Tito died of an apparent heart attack on Sunday while driving from New Mexico to his home in Oklahoma. Tito had recently been performing in Germany, England and California with his brothers Marlon and Jackie as The Jacksons.

Tito was an original member of the family group The Jackson 5, along with brothers Jackie, Jermaine, Marlon and Michael. After signing with Motown Records in 1969, they had a string of international hits in the late 1960s and early 70s including "I Want You Back," "ABC," and "I'll Be There." Younger brother Michael, who went on to solo superstardom, died in 2009 at the age of 50. Tito, along with his brothers in The Jackson 5, was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1997 by fellow Motown legend Diana Ross.

According to his website, since 2003 Tito had been performing and



Tito Jackson performs during the 'Michael Forever' concert in memory of the late Michael Jackson at The Millennium Stadium in Cardiff, Wales on October 8, 2011. — AFP

touring with own big blues and funk band. In 2016 he became the last of the Jackson siblings to have a solo Billboard hit, charting with the single "Get It Baby," followed by his debut solo album "Tito Time." His second album - and first blues one - "Under Your Spell" was released in 2021 and featured special guests including George Benson, Bobby Rush and Stevie Wonder. Tito is survived by his three sons. His former wife - their mother Dolores - died in 1994. — AFP

Japan celebrates historic Emmys triumph for 'Shogun'

Japan celebrated on Monday the record-breaking Emmy Awards triumph of "Shogun," although many confessed not having watched the series about the country's warring dynasties in the feudal era. "Shogun" smashed all-time records at the television awards in Los Angeles on Sunday, taking home an astounding 18 statuettes and becoming the first non-English-language winner of the highly coveted award for best drama series. Lead Hiroyuki Sanada, who played Lord Toranaga, became the first Japanese actor to win an Emmy, while Anna Sawai achieved the same for her performance as Lady Mariko.

"As a Japanese, I'm happy Sanada won," Kiyoko Kanda, a 70-year-old pensioner, told AFP in Tokyo. "He worked so hard since he moved to Los Angeles," she said. "In 'Last Samurai,' Tom Cruise was the lead, but it's exciting Sanada is the main character in 'Shogun,'" Kanda added. But she admitted that she only watched the trailer. The series is available only on Disney's streaming platform, which is relatively new in Japan. "I want to watch it. I'm curious to know how Japan is portrayed," Kanda said. Otsuka, who declined to give her first name, said she, too, has not watched the show.

"But I saw the news and I'm happy he won," Sanada, now 63, began his acting career at the age of five in Tokyo and moved to LA after appearing in "Last Samurai" in 2003. The words "historic achievements" and "Hiroyuki Sanada" were trending on X in Japanese, while Sanada's speech at the awards racked up tens of thousands of views. Yusuke Takizawa, 41, also only watched a trailer but he said he was amazed by the quality of the show. "I was impressed by the high-spirited acting, the attention to detail and the film technology," Takizawa told AFP outside Osaka Castle, a major historical location for the series.

"I think many young people will want to try their hand in Hollywood after watching Sanada," he said. Tourists at the castle also welcomed the record Emmy win. "I think was the best TV show that I've seen this year," said



Japanese actor Hiroyuki Sanada (center), alongside cast and crew, winners of Outstanding Drama Series for "Shogun" pose in the press room. — AFP

Zara Ferjani, a visitor from London. "I thought it was amazing... The direction was beautiful, and I really enjoyed watching something that wasn't in English as well," the 33-year-old said. She said she had planned to watch "Shogun" after returning home from Japan. "But one of my friends strongly advised me to watch it beforehand, just to appreciate the culture more and definitely Osaka Castle more," she added.

Breaking from clichés

Many in the Japanese film industry were also jubilant. "He won after many years of trying hard in Hollywood. It's too cool," wrote Shinichiro Ueda, director of the hit low-budget film "One Cut of the Dead," on X. Video game creator and movie fan Hideo Kojima, who has described the show as "Game of Thrones in 17th-century Japan," repost-

ed a news story on the win. The drama, adapted from a popular novel by James Clavell and filmed in Canada, tells the tale of Lord Toranaga, who fights for his life against his enemies alongside Mariko and British sailor John Blackthorne.

A previous TV adaptation made in 1980 was centered on Blackthorne's perspective. But the new "Shogun" breaks away from decades of clichéd and often bungled depictions of Japan in Western cinema, with Japanese spoken throughout most of the show. Sanada, who also co-produced the drama, is credited with bringing a new level of cultural and historical authenticity to "Shogun." An army of experts, including several wig technicians from Japan, worked behind the scenes to make the series realistic, poring over sets, costumes and the actors' movements. —AFP



Japanese actor Hiroyuki Sanada, winner of the Outstanding Lead Actor in a Drama Series award for "Shogun", poses in the press room.



Japanese actress Anna Sawai, winner of the Outstanding Lead Actress in a Drama Series award for "Shogun", poses in the press room.



Visual effects supervisor Michael Czett, winner of the Outstanding Special Visual Effects in a Season or a Movie for "Shogun", poses in the press room.

'Shogun' smashes Emmys record as 'Hacks' and 'Baby Reindeer' shine



Cast and crew of "Shogun" including Anna Sawai, Rachel Kondo, Cosmo Jarvis, Michael DeLuca, Shannon Goss, Hiroyuki Sanada, Michaela Clavell, Hiroto Kanai, and Eriko Miyagawa accept the Outstanding Drama Series award onstage during the 76th Primetime Emmy Awards at Peacock Theater on Sept 15, 2024 in Los Angeles, California. — AFP photos

Japan-set historical epic "Shogun" smashed all-time records and was named best drama at television's Emmy Awards on Sunday, as "Hacks" and "Baby Reindeer" racked up big wins at the glitzy gala in Los Angeles. "Shogun," the tale of warring dynasties in feudal Japan, ended the night with an astounding 18 statuettes, becoming the first ever non-English-language winner of the highly coveted award for best drama series. The previous record for any season of a television show was 13. "It was an East-meets-West dream project, with respect," said veteran leading man Hiroyuki Sanada, who became

the first Japanese actor to win an Emmy. Anna Sawai followed him onto the Emmys stage minutes later with a best actress win, before the cast and producers of "Shogun" returned for the overall best drama award. The series from Disney-owned FX, based on James Clavell's historical fiction, had led the nominations with 25 overall. Shot in Canada, it features a primarily Japanese cast and subtitles. Showrunner Justin Marks thanked producers for commissioning "a very expensive, subtitled, Japanese period piece, whose central climax revolves around a poetry competition."

"Shogun is a show about translation -- not what is lost, but what is found, when you do safety meetings in two languages, and you learn not to walk on tatami mats with your utility boots," he said. It also won the Emmy for best directing of a drama series, in addition to the 14 won in minor categories at a separate gala last weekend. Mini-series "John Adams" won 13 Emmys in 2008. "Game of Thrones" had held the record for dramas at 12.

'Hacks' surprise

This was the second Emmys gala this year, after crippling twin strikes in Hollywood last year bumped the 2023 ceremony to January. In the night's biggest surprise, the final award for best comedy series went to "Hacks." The show -- starring Jean Smart as a diva comedienne who repeatedly locks horns with her dysfunctional millennial assistant -- fended off previous winner and hot favorite "The Bear."

Smart claimed her third lead actress Emmy for her role, quipping: "I appreciate this, because I just don't get enough attention." "The Bear" still managed a whopping 11 awards, including Jeremy Allen White and Ebon Moss-Bachrach as best lead and supporting actor.

Co-star Liza Colon-Zayas sprung a surprise by besting the likes of Meryl Streep ("Only Murders in the Building") to win best supporting actress. "To all the Latinas who are looking at me, keep believing. And vote -- vote for your rights," she said, in one of several political notes at a gala taking place less than two months before the US presidential election.

The dark satire set in a Chicago restaurant dominated the last Emmys, despite controversy over whether it is actually a comedy. Eugene Levy, hosting with his son Daniel, poked fun at the criticisms, insisting: "In the true spirit of 'The Bear,' we will not be making any jokes."

'Baby Reindeer'

Sunday's other big winner was Netflix's word-of-mouth smash "Baby Reindeer," based on a relatively unknown Scottish comedian's harrowing one-man show about sexual abuse. It won best limited series -- a prestigious category for shows that end in a single season. "Ten years ago, I was down and out... I never ever thought I'd be able to rectify myself for what had happened to me, and get myself back on my feet again," said the show's creator Richard Gadd, who won best actor and a writing award.



US actor Jeremy Allen White poses in the press room with the award for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy Series for "The Bear".



US actress Jean Smart poses in the press room with the award for the Outstanding Lead Actress in a Comedy Series for "Hacks".



US actor Jeremy Allen White (left) with the award for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy Series for "The Bear", US actress Liza Colon-Zayas (center) with the award for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series for "The Bear" and US actor Ebon Moss-Bachrach with the award for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series for "The Bear" pose in the press room.



US television director Frederick E. O. Toye, winner of the Outstanding Directing for a Drama Series for "Shogun", poses in the press room.



English actress Jessica Gunning (left), winner of the Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Limited or Anthology Series or Movie for "Baby Reindeer" and Scottish actor Richard Gadd, winner of the Outstanding Limited or Anthology Series for "Baby Reindeer", pose in the press room.



US actress Jodie Foster, winner Outstanding Lead Actress in a Limited or Anthology Series or Movie for "True Detective: Night Country", poses in the press room.



US actor Lamorne Morris, winner of the Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Limited or Anthology Series or Movie for " Fargo", poses in the press room.



(From left to right) US writer Jen Statsky, US actor Paul W. Downs, and US director and writer Lucia Aniello, winners of the Outstanding Comedy Series award and Outstanding Writing for a Comedy Series award for "Hacks" pose in the press room.



Scottish actor Alan Cumming (center) with the Cast and Crew of "The Traitors" pose in the press room after winning the Outstanding Reality Competition Program Award.

Part of the attention stemmed from the show's claim to be "a true story" – an insistence that earned the streamer a \$170 million lawsuit from a British woman who claims she was the inspiration for Gadd's obsessive and violent stalker. Jessica Gunning, who played the stalker, won the Emmy for best supporting actress in a limited series.

"Thank you for trusting me to be your Martha – I will never ever forget her, or you," she told Gadd, who is also nominated for best actor honors. Jodie Foster won her first Emmy with best actress for her turn as an Alaskan cop in "True Detective: Night Country," besting fellow Oscar winner Brie Larson ("Lessons in Chemistry").

'Shogun' rivals

"Shogun" dominated the drama sections as expected. It was only the second non-English-language show to earn a best drama nomination, after South Korea's "Squid Game" two years ago. But there were key prizes for rival shows. The final season of Netflix's British royal saga drew a lukewarm response from critics, but Elizabeth Debicki won best supporting actress as Princess Diana. Billy Crudup won best supporting actor in a drama for Apple's "The Morning Show." —AFP



Honoree Greg Berlanti accepts the Governors Award onstage.



US television host and comedian Jimmy Kimmel speaks in front of a portrait of late US actor Bob Newhart onstage.

Emmy winners

OUTSTANDING DRAMA SERIES:
"Shogun"

OUTSTANDING COMEDY SERIES:
"Hacks"

OUTSTANDING LIMITED OR ANTHOLOGY SERIES:
"Baby Reindeer"

LEAD ACTOR, DRAMA: HiroYuki Sanada, "Shogun"

LEAD ACTRESS, DRAMA: Anna Sawai, "Shogun"

LEAD ACTOR, COMEDY: Jeremy Allen White, "The Bear"

LEAD ACTRESS, COMEDY: Jean Smart, "Hacks"

LEAD ACTOR, LIMITED SERIES OR MOVIE: Richard Gadd, "Baby Reindeer"

LEAD ACTRESS, LIMITED SERIES OR MOVIE: Jodie Foster, "True Detective: Night Country"

SUPPORTING ACTOR, DRAMA: Billy Crudup, "The Morning Show"

SUPPORTING ACTRESS, DRAMA: Elizabeth Debicki, "The Crown"

SUPPORTING ACTOR, COMEDY: Ebon Moss-Bachrach, "The Bear"

SUPPORTING ACTRESS, COMEDY: Liza Colon-Zayas, "The Bear"

SUPPORTING ACTOR, LIMITED SERIES OR MOVIE: Lamorne Morris, " Fargo"

SUPPORTING ACTRESS, LIMITED SERIES OR MOVIE: Jessica Gunning, "Baby Reindeer".



US actor Billy Crudup poses in the press room with the award for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Drama Series for "The Morning Show".



Scottish actor Alan Cumming poses in the press room after winning the Outstanding Reality Competition Program Award for "The Traitors".



Australian actress Elizabeth Debicki poses in the press room with the Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Drama Series for "The Crown".

Five key moments from Emmys night

Japanese-language feudal epic "Shogun" made Emmys history on Sunday as the most awarded show in a single season, as well as the first non-English language winner of the coveted best drama prize. The brightest stars of the small screen gathered in Los Angeles for the gala, the biggest night in television. Here are a few other memorable moments from the ceremony:

'It always gets better'

Netflix's smash word-of-mouth hit "Baby Reindeer" has been controversial because of the streamer's claim that it is a "true story." Comedian Richard Gadd, whose dark story is the basis of the series, won a writing award for his efforts – one of three statuettes for him overall – and used his acceptance speech to encourage others going through difficulty. "Ten years ago, I was down and out, right? I never ever thought I'd get my life together. I never ever thought I'd be able to rectify myself for what had happened to me, and get myself back on my feet again. "And then here I am, just over a decade later, picking up one of the biggest writing awards in television. "I don't know much about this life... but I do know that nothing lasts forever, and no matter how bad it gets, it always gets better."

No rest for the winners

When "Hacks" scored a surprise win

as best comedy, beating out "The Bear," showrunner Lucia Aniello revealed the cast and crew did not have much time to luxuriate in their victory. "Please support comedy. It speaks truth to power. It really does," she said, as the music began to play her off the stage. "So support your local comedian, and we have to go because we start shooting the next season in five days."

The election

Just a few weeks out from a hotly contested presidential election pitting Democrat Kamala Harris against Republican former president Donald Trump, it's no surprise that a few of those present dived into politics. Candice Bergen, who played a TV journalist in the long-running US sitcom "Murphy Brown," recalled how her character was attacked by former Republican vice president Dan Quayle for raising a child as a single mother. "Oh, how far we've come. Today, a Republican candidate for vice president would never attack a woman for having kids," she quipped, a reference to Trump's running mate JD Vance, who has lashed out at "childless cat ladies." "So as they say: my work here is done. Meow!"

'I come in peace'

There have been few awards gala moments in recent years as memorable as when Will Smith barged on stage



Scottish writer and comedian Richard Gadd accepts the Outstanding Lead Actor in a Limited or Anthology Series or Movie award for "Baby Reindeer" onstage.—AFP photos

and slapped comedian Chris Rock at the 2022 Oscars. So when another Will Smith took to the stage on Sunday to receive his Emmy for best writing for a drama series with "Slow Horses," which stars Gary Oldman, he acknowledged the moment. "First of all: relax," he told the audience. "Despite my name, I come in peace."

Who's a good boy?

Comedian John Oliver, whose "Last Week Tonight with John Oliver" scooped the Emmy for best scripted variety series, began his acceptance speech with the usual litany of thanks to cast and crew, but then took a sharp turn. First he bungled the name of his son – calling the boy "husband" before correcting himself to "Hudson," noting: "That's going to come back to haunt

me." Then he veered into the topic of pets. "I also want to thank... our dog. We had the most fantastic dog, and she was at our wedding, and she got us through a pandemic. She was with us for two pregnancies, and... perfect choice of music," he said as a funeral-sounding tune started up to encourage him to finish up. "We had to say goodbye to her." "This isn't just for her. This is for all dogs. All dogs, you're all very good girls. You're very good boys. You all deserve a treat." —AFP



US actress Candice Bergen speaks onstage.



British television host John Oliver, winner of the Outstanding Scripted Variety Series Award for "Last Week Tonight with John Oliver", poses in the press room.

Sports

Chiefs escape Bengals on last-second field goal, Saints crush Cowboys

Bengals benefitted from multiple Chiefs miscues to lead 16-10 at halftime

LOS ANGELES: The Kansas City Chiefs grabbed another wild win on Sunday, with Harrison Butker's field goal as time expired lifting the reigning Super Bowl champions to a 26-25 NFL triumph over AFC rivals Cincinnati. The decisive field goal marked the fifth lead change of the second half, with the Chiefs coming out on top a week after beating Baltimore when video review denied the Ravens a final-play touchdown.

The Chiefs trailed by two and faced a long-yardage fourth down when quarterback Patrick Mahomes fired a deep pass to Rashee Rice. It was incomplete, but Cincinnati Bengals defender Daijahn Anthony made his move a hair too early and was called for pass interference. The 29-yard penalty kept the drive alive, allowing Kansas City to get Butker in position to strike on the final play of the game.

"We've been in these situations before and we have full confidence," Mahomes said. "No matter how the game's going, we're going to do enough to win and that's what we did today." But Mahomes, who threw for 151 yards with two touchdowns and two interceptions, said the Chiefs offense "made too many mistakes."

"We've got a lot to learn from, but I'm glad we got a win," he said. Cincinnati

quarterback Joe Burrow threw for 258 yards and two touchdowns, but the Bengals dropped their third straight against the Chiefs and are 0-2 to start the season. Aiming to bounce back after falling to unheralded New England last week, the Bengals benefitted from multiple Chiefs miscues to lead 16-10 at halftime at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City.

The Chiefs took the lead for the first time, 17-16, on a TD catch by hulking offensive lineman Wanya Morris midway through the third quarter. Burrow hit Andrei Iosivas for a touchdown to put Cincy back in front, but minutes later Chamari Conner scooped up a Burrow fumble and returned it for a touchdown. Kansas City's two-point conversion attempt failed, and the Bengals grabbed a 25-23 lead on Evan McPherson's fourth field goal. But with less than three minutes to play Cincinnati had to punt and the Chiefs got a final chance.

Saints cruise

There was no late drama in Dallas, where New Orleans running back Alvin Kamara scored four touchdowns and the Saints ran roughshod over the Cowboys in a 44-19 victory. Kamara's three rushing touchdowns included a five-yarder on the Saints' opening drive. After their rout of Carolina

in week one, the Saints have opened the season with back-to-back 40-point games for just the second time in franchise history. The other was in 2009 when they would go on to win the Super Bowl.

The Saints scored on their first six possessions. Kamara added TD runs of 12 and seven yards and scored on a 57-yard catch and run. Kamara said his big day was a matter of the offense firing on all cylinders. "It feels good right now," he said. "The receivers did their thing. The O-line did what they were supposed to do. It was easy for me. I didn't even have to run, really." The Las Vegas Raiders spoiled Baltimore's home opener, erasing a 10-point fourth quarter deficit to beat the Ravens 26-23.

Raiders quarterback Gardner Minshew piloted three scoring drives in the final period, capped by Daniel Carlson's 38-yard field goal with 27 seconds left. Tampa Bay quarterback Baker Mayfield threw for 185 yards and a touchdown and ran for another TD and the Bucs defense came up big in a 20-16 victory over the Lions, who were in scoring range on their final three drives but came up empty.

The Seattle Seahawks denied the New England Patriots a second straight upset victory, Jason Myers booting his third field



Patrick Mahomes

goal of the day in overtime to seal a 23-20 victory. Minnesota surprised the San Francisco 49ers 23-17, a victory highlighted by Justin Jefferson's 97-yard touchdown catch. The New York Jets, with two TD passes from veteran quarterback Aaron Rodgers,

bounced back from a week one defeat with a 24-17 victory over the Tennessee Titans. The Los Angeles Rams' demoralizing 41-10 loss to the Arizona Cardinals was made even worse by an ankle injury to wide receiver Cooper Kupp. — AFP

Spain's Alex Palou wins third IndyCar title in four years

LOS ANGELES: Spain's Alex Palou won his third IndyCar title in four years on Sunday, with an 11th-placed finish in the season-ending Music City Grand Prix in Nashville, Tennessee, enough to secure the crown. Palou arrived in Nashville atop the standings with only Australian Will Power within striking distance.

But a seat belt problem forced Power into an early pit stop and effectively out of the championship running. He finished 24th in the race won by Colton Herta and Palou, who won his first IndyCar title in 2021, became the first repeat champion since Dario Franchitti won three titles from 2009 to 2011.

"Super proud. It's been an amazing year," said Palou, who at 27 years and five months old became the second-youngest driver to win a third IndyCar title. Sam Hornish was 27 years and two months old when he claimed his third crown in 2006. "I'm happy we got the championship back home," Palou added. Palou brought a 33-point lead into the final race — an advantage cut by 10 points two weeks ago in Milwaukee when a battery failure on the pace lap proved costly. He was 15th fastest in qualifying on Saturday, but due to a grid penalty for an illegal engine change he started in the 24th spot as Power qualified fourth.

But Power's seat belt drama meant Palou's title was essentially sealed 13 laps into the 206-lap race. "My belt came off!" Power radioed to his crew before heading into the pits. He was five laps down before the problem was solved and he was back on the track.

"I was driving down the front stretch there, and I just felt a pop on the lap belt," Power said. "That's a very abnormal thing. I don't know what went wrong. Very strange failure. I've never had that before. You have engine failures, gearbox failures. I had a belt failure."

"Disappointing, but big congrats to Alex," Power added. "A tough guy to beat." Herta stalked and passed Pato O'Ward on Lap 202 to earn his first career oval victory and finish second in the final season standings. New Zealand's Scott McLaughlin was third and Power was fourth overall.

"I'm so happy," Herta said. "We knew we were going to have a hot rod in the race. It's been an amazing year. I just saw I finished second in the championship, which is awesome. Hoping to do a little bit better next year." — AFP

Pogacar prepares for championships with win in Montreal

PARIS: Tadej Pogacar won the Grand Prix Cycliste de Montreal on Sunday for his first triumph since winning his third Tour de France in July. Pogacar skipped the Olympics but joined a strong field for the two Grand Prix in Canada this week with riders seeking top form ahead of the world championships in two weeks.

The Slovenian UAE rider attacked late in the race of 17 laps of 12.3 kilometres around Montreal for his 21st win of the season by a clear margin. Pello Bilbao of Spain was second at 24 seconds with a clutch of riders contesting a sprint for third where Julian Alaphilippe of France took the photo finish another 16 seconds back for third after the tough five hours slog in 28C (82F) heat.

The 25-year-old Pogacar also won here in 2022. "It was great racing and we did exactly what we wanted to," he said of his UAE Team who chaperoned Pogacar until he attacked with two laps to go, dropping Alaphilippe and American rider Matteo Jorgenson. — AFP

Rahm wins LIV Golf Chicago

LOS ANGELES: Spain's Jon Rahm fired four birdies — including a 12-footer at the 17th — to win LIV Golf Chicago on Sunday and clinch the Saudi-backed circuit's individual season title worth \$18 million.

The two-time major winner from Spain, who made the jump to the breakaway league last December, captured his second victory in the past three events, sandwiched around a runner-up finish to Brooks Koepka in a playoff at LIV Golf Greenbrier in August. Rahm, who hasn't finished outside the top 10 in 11 events, arrived at Bolingbrook Golf Course near Chicago this week with Joaquin Niemann — a two-time winner this season — his only rival for the season title.

After a six-under-par second round on Saturday, Rahm took a one-shot lead over compatriot Sergio Garcia into the final round, with Niemann three adrift and needing to finish in front of Rahm to bag the individual champion's bonus.

Rahm had birdies at the third, sixth and 10th holes, and after letting a couple of birdie chances go begging, he sealed it with his birdie at 17, carding a four-under final round for a 54-hole total of 11-under par.

"I woke up really nervous today," Rahm said. "I wanted to do a really good show and get it over the line. Just really happy I played as good as I did. To go bogey-free on the weekend, one bogey all tournament, it's quite spectacular," he said. "I'm very proud of the putt on 17, which made 18 a lot, a lot, easier."

In addition to his \$18 million champion's bonus he

Shapovalov enjoys Davis Cup redemption, Canada into finals

PARIS: Denis Shapovalov let out a roar of delight as he sealed 2022 champions Canada's place in this year's Davis Cup finals on Sunday beating Britain's Dan Evans 6-0, 7-5 - redemption for the last time he faced the same opponents. Back in 2017 Shapovalov's wild hitting of a ball in frustration hit the umpire leading to him being defaulted and Britain awarded the tie as a result 3-2.

The 25-year-old made no such slip-up on Sunday as he won the opening rubber and ensured the Canadians and not Britain would be joining Argentina as the two countries to progress from the group in Manchester, England.

Shapovalov, who has slipped to 100 in the world having once been as high as 10th, admitted having cruised through the first set it was tough to keep the momentum going. "Very happy to get the win, he's a tricky opponent and he fights so well," said Shapovalov who managed to silence the partisan 15,700 crowd. "He was clawing his way back in the second set. I haven't played a cleaner first set than that in my life so super happy to get the win. I could feel Dan getting pumped up and the crowd too so I was definitely starting to turn so I was happy to get it done in straights."

Felix Auger-Aliassime settled the tie for Canada with a 7-6 (10/8), 7-5 win over Jack Draper. The British won the final doubles to make it 2-1 but it was

Goalkeeper attacked after CAF Cup match

JOHANNESBURG: Aishi Manula, the goalkeeper of Tanzanian club Simba, was struck by a policeman after a stormy CAF Confederation Cup qualifier in Libya on Sunday, an official from the visiting team told AFP. The second round, first leg against Al Ahly Tripoli ended 0-0 in a packed 45,000-seat Tripoli stadium and Simba players dashed for cover at full-time as plastic bottles were flung at them.

"It was scary. I saw Aishi being struck for no reason by a policeman and bottles and other ob-



BOLINGBROOK: Jon Rahm of Spain and Adam Hayes, Rahm's caddy, celebrate with the trophy after winning LIV Golf: Chicago at Bolingbrook Golf Club on September 15, 2024 in Bolingbrook. — AFP

bagged \$4 million for the tournament win. He finished three shots better than Niemann, whose four-under final gave him an eight-under total that left him tied for second with Garcia.

The LIV season concludes next week with the team championship in Dallas. After that, Rahm has his sights set on playing a trio of DP World Tour events to maintain his Ryder Cup eligibility. He said

Wednesday he was unwilling to pay the fines levied by the DP World Tour on golfers who fail to obtain releases to play in LIV events that conflict with tour tournaments. Rahm has reportedly appealed the fines, and as that process plays out would be eligible to tee up at the Spanish Open later this month. He also wants to play the Andalucia Masters and the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship. — AFP



Denis Shapovalov

not enough to guide them into the finals. Netherlands clinched the last of the eight places going by avoiding a 3-0 defeat against defending champions Italy in Bologna, a result which would have seen Brazil progress instead.

With US Open champion Jannik Sinner watching from the stands, the Dutch were looking down the barrel when Matteo Berrettini came from behind to beat Botic van de Zandschulp 3-6, 6-4, 6-4 with Flavio Cobolli following up with a 7-6 (7/4), 4-6, 6-3 win over Tallon Griekspoor.

Moroccan league and cup double winners Raja Casablanca last season. Another first leg in Libya produced a thriller with Al Hilal Benghazi snatching a 3-2 victory over Al Masry of Egypt after trailing twice in the eastern city. Salah Mohsen put Masry ahead in each half, but two goals from Mohammed al Shiteewi, either side of one from Faisal al Badri, set up an intriguing September 22 return match in Alexandria.

Dynamos of Zimbabwe look set to reach the group stage for the first time, at the third attempt, after a 1-0 win over Orapa United of Botswana in Francistown. But the most popular club in the southern Africa nation left it late to build an aggregate lead as Valentine Kadonzvo scored with just two minutes of regular time remaining. — AFP

Sports

Slot gets first taste of Liverpool pressure after honeymoon period

Liverpool have little time to lick their wounds with a trip to AC Milan

LIVERPOOL: Arne Slot had made a serene start to the unenviable task of succeeding Jurgen Klopp at Liverpool, but a 1-0 home defeat to Nottingham Forest has brought the Dutchman's honeymoon period to an abrupt end and exposed cracks in the Reds' facade.

Liverpool have little time to lick their wounds with a trip to AC Milan to come on Tuesday to open their return to the Champions League after a year away from Europe's elite club competition. Under Klopp, Liverpool's prestige at the top of the European game was restored. The English giants reached three Champions League finals in five seasons between 2018 and 2022 and won the European Cup for the sixth time in the club's history.

That is the legacy Slot inherits and the former Feyenoord boss has not been handed a kind draw by the new Champions League format. Liverpool will face the two most successful sides in the competition's history in Milan and Real Madrid.

Xabi Alonso, who had been the favorite to replace Klopp, will return to Anfield with German champions Bayer Leverkusen in November, while Slot goes back to the Netherlands to face Dutch

title holders PSV Eindhoven. They also face more Italian, Spanish, German and French opposition in Bologna, Girona, Leipzig and Lille. Yet Liverpool may relish that challenge after struggling when Forest put 11 men behind the ball on Saturday and held out for their first win at Anfield in 55 years.

The home side enjoyed nearly 70 percent possession but lacked the necessary spark to make it count. "We lost the ball so many times in simple situations," said a frustrated Slot. "We had a lot of ball possession but only managed to create three or four quite good chances, so that is by far not enough."

The feeling of deflation for the Anfield faithful contrasted sharply with the elation that greeted a 3-0 win at Manchester United before the international break. Even Klopp had struggled to master Old Trafford during his nearly nine years in charge and the early signs of Slot's reign were positive.

Over-reliance on Salah?

Liverpool won their opening three Premier League games without conceding as the Dutch coach imposed more control and a bit more caution to the free-flowing brand of heavy metal football that



LIVERPOOL: Liverpool's Dutch manager Arne Slot arrives to lead a training session at the team's training ground in Liverpool, northwest England. — AFP

quickly won fans over under Klopp.

Slot now has to strike the balance of imposing his own style while keeping both the players and supporters onside during a transition period. "If I would change my way of preparation after a loss, that

means I only do the best work I can after we lose," added Slot on how he will change things up for the trip to Milan.

"I want to see the same attitude every single day: after a big win, after a small win, after a draw, after a loss." The international break acts as a mitigating factor for Liverpool's off day. Luis Diaz and Alexis Mac Allister were replaced with the score still at 0-0 against Forest after their transatlantic duties in South American World Cup qualifying.

But their failure to fire on an off day for Mohamed Salah exposed a reliance on the 32-year-old to still carry the goalscoring burden that Slot has to find a solution for, especially with the Egyptian into the final year of his contract.

"Everyone is coming back from different places and playing a different way but still I think even today when we were not at our best we created chances and it should have gone better," said Liverpool captain Virgil van Dijk. "We have to turn this around and make this a sort of reality check to be better for the rest of the season because if you want to achieve things this season the contrast between the games we played is too big." — AFP

Gallagher, Alvarez get first Atletico goals in Valencia win

MADRID: Conor Gallagher and Julian Alvarez netted their first Atletico Madrid goals as Diego Simeone's side earned a comfortable 3-0 victory over Valencia on Sunday. Antoine Griezmann tucked home the second for the dominant Rojiblancos at their Metropolitan stadium.

Atletico are unbeaten in their first five fixtures and level on 11 points with second-place city rivals Real Madrid and Villarreal, in fourth. England international Gallagher, who arrived from Chelsea this summer, tucked home in the 39th minute after Rodrigo de Paul played him in with a clever pass that nutmegged a defender.

"Conor had a great game, he adds a lot of intensity to the match," said Atletico goalkeeper Jan Oblak. Atletico stayed on top in the second half and Griezmann pounced from close range after 54 minutes. Marcos Llorente crossed for Samuel Lino, who misjudged his effort and the ball bounced up off his shoulder, with Griezmann reading it faster than anyone else, to finish when it dropped for his second goal of the season.

Simeone brought summer arrival Julian Alvarez off the bench in the second half and the former Manchester City striker pounced late on to get his



MADRID: Atletico Madrid's Norwegian forward #09 Alexander Sorloth (C) heads the ball during the Spanish league football match between Club Atletico de Madrid and Valencia CF at the Metropolitan stadium in Madrid. — AFP

first goal in five appearances for his new club. Atletico host RB Leipzig on Thursday in their Champions League opener.

"When you win everything is good, but what's

important is the game ahead... Thursday, and after that another game. "We have to go game by game and win as many as possible and hope that takes us where we want to go." — AFP

Mbappe bolstering holders Madrid's CL ambitions

MADRID: The format may be new, but few would bet against the winner staying the same. As if record 15-time winners Real Madrid's Champions League prospects were not great enough already, superstar striker Kylian Mbappe's arrival makes Los Blancos the most daunting team in the competition.

German side Stuttgart have the honors of facing the reigning kings of Europe in the opening week of the competition, travelling to the Santiago Bernabeu on Tuesday. Madrid defeated Borussia Dortmund in last season's Wembley final to claim the trophy for the sixth time in the last 11 years.

Coach Carlo Ancelotti, the most decorated manager in the history of the tournament with five triumphs, has not yet found the perfect set-up to get Mbappe firing from open play, but few doubt he will.

The 25-year-old had arguably his best game for the club in the 2-0 win over Real Sociedad on Saturday in La Liga, threatening the Basque side with his pace and connecting well with Vinicius Junior in attack. Mbappe scored, albeit from the penalty spot, and he is looking forward to his Champions League debut in Madrid's resplendent white.

"It will be very important for me — as I said on the first day, I came to Madrid to live these type of nights," explained the striker. "I am very focused on what we have to do, the Champions League has changed a lot, it's a new competition, and we have to win to start well."



MADRID: Real Madrid's Spanish defender Carvajal attends a training session on the eve of their UEFA Champions League football match against Stuttgart VFB at the club's training facilities of Valdebebas. — AFP

The new-look structure has thrown up ties for Madrid at home against Dortmund, in a rematch of last season's showpiece, and away at Liverpool, whom they defeated in the 2022 final. First come Stuttgart, continuing a streak of German opponents for Los Blancos, after they faced Bayern Munich in the semis before Dortmund in London.

Los Blancos have played one European game already this season, defeating Atalanta to win the UEFA Super Cup in August, with Mbappe scoring on his debut. Madrid defender Antonio Rudiger came through Stuttgart's youth system and played

in the first team for four seasons.

Ancelotti has problems in midfield with Eduardo Camavinga, Dani Ceballos, Jude Bellingham and Aurelien Tchouameni out injured, although the Italian was hopeful the latter two could take part against the Germans.

While Madrid's shiny new toy Mbappe is drawing much of the attention, Ancelotti has plenty of stars at his disposal with the talent to turn defeats into draws and draws into victories, something of a penchant for the club, particularly under the lights in Europe. — AFP

In-form Napoli top Serie A after Inter stumble at Monza

MILAN: Napoli are top of Serie A after thrashing Cagliari 4-0 on Sunday in a match which was stopped in the first half due to fan disorder, as Inter Milan were held to a 1-1 draw at Monza ahead of their Champions League opener at Manchester City.

Goals from Giovanni Di Lorenzo, Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, Romelu Lukaku and Alessandro Buongiorno gave Napoli their third straight win and a one-point lead over Inter, Torino and Juventus, who they face in Turin next weekend.

Sunday's display was another step in the right direction for new coach Antonio Conte, who is already having to field questions about whether his team will challenge for the league title. "Teams are still settling in as the transfer window closed late and we are all trying to find our shape," said Conte to DAZN. "We've worked hard over the last two and a half months, we've got to keep pushing forward without thinking about anyone else."

Napoli's win was marred by ugly scenes midway through the opening period when the away fans unveiled a banner which mimicked sheep bleating and sparked the throwing of objects between the two sets of supporters.

That banner came after Napoli's fans were pictured with another one on their ferry trip to largely rural Sardinia which read "sheep hunting". The match was stopped for seven minutes as both home and away ends supporters threw projectiles and flares.

Antonio Conte's side were already leading at that point through Di Lorenzo's wildly deflected 18th-minute opener, and Kvaratskhelia and Lukaku showed signs of a burgeoning partnership by setting each other up for the goals which sealed the three points by the 70th minute.

Buongiorno nodded home the fourth in stoppage time to make it a perfect night for Napoli and set up a mouth-watering clash with Juve. Inter gave up their league lead as Denzel Dumfries saved a point for the champions with three minutes remaining after Dany Mota's brilliant 81st minute header threatened to give Monza their first win under new coach Alessandro Nesta.

Simone Inzaghi's unbeaten side, who would have moved a point above Napoli with a win, were uninspiring in a largely drab encounter at the U-Power Stadium and will need to improve at City on Wednesday night, with the Milan derby also coming up next weekend.

"We created some chances but weren't able to take advantage. We were slower and not as on it as we normally are," said Inzaghi to DAZN.

Ademola Lookman made sure that Atalanta warmed up for their return to the Champions League with the winner in a 3-2 victory over Fiorentina. Nigeria forward Lookman did not feature in Atalanta's first three league matches after agitating for a transfer to Paris Saint-Germain.

But the 26-year-old netted the decisive strike in stoppage time at the end of the first half, jinking through the Fiorentina defence before shooting past David de Gea, seconds after Charles De Ketelaere headed Atalanta level. — AFP

Classifieds

Clinics

Clinics

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

Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

Hospitals

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

Change of Name

I, **Abdul Kadar**, holder of passport no. Z3201026 has changed my name to Abdulqadir Jafar Ali (given name) Tapiya (surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name Abdulqadir Jafar Ali Tapiya and also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents.
(16/09/2024)

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, **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, **Akula** Karimulla S/o Akula Mabu (old name), holder of Indian passport No. R8108839, R/O 14/256, Police line Kamalapuram Kadapa district, AP. Now I changed my name to Shaik Karimulla S/o Shaik Mahaboob (new name)
(#6165 13/09/2024)



GAINESVILLE: Captain for Team United States Stacy Lewis is presented with the Solheim Cup trophy after Team United States wins the Solheim Cup during the Sunday Singles matches during the final round of the Solheim Cup 2024 at Robert Trent Jones Golf Club in Gainesville. — AFP

United States beat Europe to win first Solheim Cup since 2017

Despite three early US wins, it became a fight into the late matches

GAINESVILLE: Second-ranked Lilia Vu captured the deciding half-point and the United States defeated Europe 15.5-12.5 on Sunday to win the Solheim Cup for the first time since 2017.

The 26-year-old American was two down to Swiss rookie Albane Valenzuela with two holes remaining but birdied to win 17 then dropped her approach inches from the hole at 18 and tapped in for birdie to win the hole and finished tied.

That gave the Americans 14.5 points to clinch an overall victory at Robert Trent Jones Golf Club after two losses and a draw against Europe in the past three show-downs. "This is a dream of mine and so happy that I was able to do that," said Vu, a daughter of Vietnamese immigrants. "It meant the world."

The Americans, who lead the all-time rivalry 11-7 with one draw, began Sunday's 12 concluding singles matches with a 10-6 advantage, needing only four wins and a draw to reclaim the Cup. Despite three early US wins, it became a fight into the late matches.

"This is so cool. So stressful to watch.

But just so proud of the players," US captain Stacy Lewis said. "It really could have gone either way. Just proud of the team and Lilia's finish there was unbelievable. That's what you expect from one of the best players in the world."

Europe failed to match the greatest last-day Solheim comeback, needing to capture eight singles matches on US soil for the first time, and missed the chance to take the trophy for an unprecedented fourth consecutive time. "We gave them a run for their money," Europe captain Suzann Pettersen said.

"There were possibilities out there and several times we thought we could get it done. It came down to a couple of matches. Happy for Stacy on home turf but we'll come back very hungry." World number one Nelly Korda, a six-time PGA winner this year, was on her first Solheim Cup winner.

"It has been a dream come true," Korda said. "It has been such an amazing week. We all bonded really well." The US women stretched their lead to 13-8 early but Europe made an intense

last stand. American Andrea Lee tied Germany's Esther Henseleit by making a clutch five-foot par putt at 18 to add a half-point for each side.

Lee pulled level on a 20-foot birdie putt to win the 16th. Paris Olympic runner-up Henseleit answered with a 12-foot par putt at 17 to stay level. Then France's Celine Boutier kept European hopes alive by sinking a six-foot birdie putt at 18 to edge Lexi Thompson 1-up.

Boutier, 3-down with seven holes to play, birdied 12 and 13 and squared the match with a 10-foot birdie putt at 15 before her clutch finish. "It feels amazing," Boutier said. "It was a great match. She played awesome. Very needed point."

Ireland's Leona Maguire next dispatched Ally Ewing 4&3 as the pressure built. Sweden's Maja Stark sank a tension-packed 10-foot par putt at 18 to tie Lauren Coughlin to deny a US victory, a half-point putting the Americans on the brink at 14-11.

"It was huge," she said. "Having the putt to not lose Solheim, it's so much pressure." That set the stage for Vu's he-

roics, with Sweden's Madelene Sagstrom and American Jennifer Kupcho adding wins after the trophy was decided.

Big US wins early

England's 12th-ranked Charley Hull never trailed in routing top-ranked Korda 6&4 in the first match. "I played my heart out," Hull said. "It was a pretty cool moment." American Megan Khang never lost a hole in crushing Dane Emily Pedersen 6&5 to finish 3-0.

"This week definitely brought out a lot of confidence in putting," Khang said. "Seeing those putts drop when it matters under that immense pressure, that's huge." Ninth-ranked Rose Zhang improved to 4-0 with a 6&4 victory over Spain's Carlota Ciganda. Zhang went 4-0 and won 15 back-nine holes this week while losing only one.

"It was so incredible," Zhang said. "The Solheim Cup reignited my passion for the game." England's Georgia Hall led after every hole in beating Alison Lee 4&3 while Allisen Corpuz never trailed in beating Anna Nordqvist 4&3. — AFP

Athletics legend Coe vies with six rivals for IOC presidency

LAUSANNE: World Athletics chief Sebastian Coe is the highest profile of the seven candidates to have declared on Monday their bid to succeed International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach. Coe will face stiff opposition from, amongst others, Kirsty Coventry, bidding to become the first woman and African to head the IOC, and cycling boss David Lappartient.



Sebastian Coe

The charismatic Briton, a two-time Olympic 1,500 meters champion, also has challenges due to the rules laid down last week by the IOC Ethics Commission. Coe turns 68 on September 29 and although there is room for maneuver to raise the retirement age of IOC members and presidents to 74 he will be older than that come the end of an eight-year mandate.

The election will be at the IOC Session in Athens, which runs from March 18-21 next year. Bach, 70, is standing down after serving 12 years. The German announced at the end of the Paris Games that he would not be seeking another term.

The other four candidates include two from Asia—another continent never to have had an IOC president—Jordan's Prince Faisal al-Hussein and gymnastics chief Morinari Watanabe. Juan Antonio Samaranch Junior, whose father of the same name was IOC president from 1980-2001 and transformed it into a commercial powerhouse, and a surprise entrant, ski federation president Johan Eliasch, round up the candidates.

Under the election rules Coe, Eliasch, Lappartient and Watanabe will all have to resign as heads of their respective federations and seek re-election as individual members at the Athens Session. First up for the septet is presenting their respective programs to the IOC members at the turn of the year.

"The candidates will present their programs, in camera, to the full IOC membership on the occasion of a meeting to be held in Lausanne (Switzerland) in January 2025," read a short IOC statement unveiling the candidates.

There will be a transition period post election—not something Bach enjoyed when he succeeded Jacques Rogge in 2013 -- with the new president and his team assuming control in June. Bach has had a bumpy ride, with Russia causing him the most problems.

Ironic as it was their president Vladimir Putin who was the first to phone and congratulate the 1976 Olympic gold medal-winning team fencer on his election in Buenos Aires in 2013. There was the state-sponsored doping scandal which cast a dark shadow over the Sochi Winter Games in 2014 and then Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. — AFP

Yamal bags brace as Barca take Girona revenge

GIRONA: Teenage star Lamine Yamal struck twice as La Liga leaders Barcelona thrashed Girona 4-1 on Sunday. Elsewhere Atletico Madrid eased to a 3-0 victory over Valencia to pull level with second-place Real Madrid.

Hansi Flick's Barca have now won all five of their opening matches and avenged two humiliating Catalan derby defeats by Girona last season with an emphatic victory at Montilivi. Yamal's first-half double sent Barcelona on their way with Dani Olmo and Pedri Gonzalez adding further goals after the break.

Cristhian Stuani pulled one back for the hosts, last season's surprise package who finished third in only their fourth season in the top flight. Girona lost several key players in the summer with coach Michel Sanchez forced to rebuild.

Barcelona have new momentum under former Bayern Munich and Germany coach Flick and produced their best performance of his reign to date. "I think you can see the confidence we have, and when we have the ball, we have the quality to play and to create chances," Flick told reporters.

"I think today we had a lot of chances to score one or two goals more, but in the end I'm very happy with the performance of the team." Yamal, 17, and striker Robert Lewandowski came close in the opening exchanges before the teenage star, who led Spain to Euro 2024 victory in the summer, broke the deadlock.

The winger picked the pocket of David Lopez as he tried to bring the ball out of defense, before finishing with aplomb past Paulo Gazzaniga after 30 minutes. "We started very concentrated, very focused, we

pressed them—we know when we give them the space they need for combinations we get in trouble," said Flick.

"You saw the first goal, it was unbelievably good (pressing) from Lamine." Yamal grabbed his second before the break with a fine guided finish from the edge of the box after a free-kick was cleared into his path. Olmo expanded Barcelona's lead early in the second half with a sublime finish from a tight angle, leaving the new arrival from RB Leipzig on three goals from three La Liga matches.

Their fourth came through Pedri when midfielder Marc Casado cleverly played him through and the Canary Islander took his time to sidestep Gazzaniga and finish.

"Turn the page"

Former Espanyol striker Stuani finished from close range with 10 minutes remaining to give Girona a consolation, before Barcelona substitute Ferran Torres was sent off for a high tackle on Yaser Asprilla. They were the only blots on Barcelona's otherwise pristine copy-book as they maintained their 100 percent record at the start of the campaign.

On Saturday champions Real Madrid earned a 2-0 win at Real Sociedad to move second, four points behind Flick's side. Girona are seventh after the defeat, with their next match a Champions League debut away at Paris Saint-Germain.

"We have to try and forget about (the loss) as quickly as possible, this week we have a very special game, we have to face that with as much excitement as possible because for us it's an historic match," Stuani told Movistar.

Later on Conor Gallagher and Julian Alvarez netted their first Atletico Madrid goals as Diego Simeone's side earned a comfortable victory over Valencia on Sunday.

Antoine Griezmann tucked home the second for the dominant Rojiblancos at their Metropolitano stadium. Atletico are unbeaten in their first five fixtures and level on 11 points with Madrid, and Villarreal in fourth.



GIRONA: Barcelona's Spanish forward #19 Lamine Yamal warms up before the Spanish league football match between Girona FC and FC Barcelona at the Montilivi stadium in Girona. — AFP

England international Gallagher, who arrived from Chelsea this summer, tucked home in the 39th minute after Rodrigo de Paul played him in with a clever pass that nutmegged a defender. "Conor had a great game, he adds a lot of intensity to the match," said Atletico goalkeeper Jan Oblak.

Atletico stayed on top in the second half and Griezmann pounced from close range after 54 minutes, staying alert to react quickest to a loose ball. Simeone brought summer arrival Julian Alvarez off the bench in the second half and the former Manchester City striker tapped home late on to get his first goal in five appearances for his new club. — AFP