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Hezbollah slams 'act of war'

Nasrallah admits 'unprecedented' blow, vows to keep up fight against Zionists

Crown Prince heads to New York



KUWAIT: Representative of HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and an accompanying delegation left Kuwait on Thursday for New York to attend the 79th UN General Assembly. HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah and senior state officials saw HH Sheikh Sabah off at the airport. — KUNA

BEIRUT: The leader of Hezbollah acknowledged on Thursday that his group had suffered a "major and unprecedented" blow after thousands of operatives' communication devices exploded across Lebanon in deadly attacks it blamed on the Zionist entity. In his first speech since the attacks, which killed 37 people and wounded nearly 3,000 more across two days, Hassan Nasrallah also struck a defiant tone, vowing that the Zionist entity would face a "just punishment".

Even as he delivered his televised address, Zionist warplanes broke the sound barrier over Beirut. Describing the attacks as a possible "act of war", he said the Zionist entity would face "tough retribution and just punishment, where it expects it and where it does not". The attacks "crossed all red lines", he said. The attacks were a "massacre" that "could be a war crime or a declaration of war", he added, accusing the Zionist entity of having wanted to "kill no less than 5,000 people in two minutes".

The Zionist entity has not commented on the attacks in which Hezbollah operatives' pagers and walkie-talkies exploded in supermarkets, on streets and at funerals, plunging the country into panic.



ZAWATAR, Lebanon: People watch a televised speech by the leader of Hezbollah Hassan Nasrallah in a house in this southern Lebanese village on Sept 19, 2024. — AFP

But its defense minister, Yoav Gallant, said on Wednesday, in reference to the Zionist entity's border with Lebanon: "The center of gravity is moving northward." "We are at the start of a new phase in the war," he warned.

Hezbollah is an ally of Palestinian group Hamas, which has been fighting a war in

Gaza since its Oct 7 attack on the Zionist entity. For nearly a year, the focus of the Zionist entity's firepower has been on Gaza, which is ruled by Hamas. But its troops have also been engaged in near-daily clashes with Hezbollah fighters along its northern border, killing hundreds in Lebanon and

Continued on Page 6

NEWS IN BRIEF

Sahel suspended for maintenance

KUWAIT: The Sahel app will be suspended at 12:15 am on Friday for maintenance, its operators announced Thursday, adding that they'll be working to restore the service as soon as possible.

No transactions without biometrics

KUWAIT: Civil ID issuance as well as all government and banking transactions will be suspended for people who fail to register their biometrics before the deadline, the interior ministry warned on Thursday. The deadline for citizens to complete their biometric registration is Sept 30, while expatriates have until Dec 31.

Committee revokes 112 citizenships

KUWAIT: The supreme nationality committee on Thursday recommended revoking the citizenship of 112 Kuwaitis for supplying false information to authorities to obtain the citizenship and taking another citizenship forbidden under Kuwaiti law. The Cabinet must confirm the recommendations to become effective. Over the past several months, Kuwait has revoked the citizenship of several hundred Kuwaitis for similar reasons. Under Kuwaiti law, courts are banned from hearing cases related to citizenship.

Kuwait welcomes UNGA resolution

KUWAIT: The foreign ministry on Thursday welcomed a resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly with a majority of 124 votes during its 10th extraordinary session late Wednesday. Based on a previous ruling from the International Court of Justice, the latest resolution has something to do with the legal impacts of the Zionist occupation forces' policies and practices in Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, and the illegal presence of the Zionist occupation there, the ministry said in a statement. — KUNA

Spanish premier, Palestinian leader urge de-escalation

MADRID: Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez on Thursday called for a de-escalation of the conflict in the Middle East. "Today the risk of escalation is once more increasing in a dangerous way" in Lebanon, said Sanchez, at a news conference with visiting Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas. "So we must again make a fresh appeal for restraint, for a de-escalation and for peaceful coexistence between countries, in the name of peace," he added.

Sanchez was speaking to journalists after more than an hour's talks with Abbas. Neither Sanchez nor Abbas referred directly to the explosions of electronic devices that

rocked Lebanon on Tuesday and Wednesday in the latest escalation of tensions. Even before that stunning act of apparent sabotage, tensions were running high in the Middle East, in large part due to the war between the Zionist entity and Palestinian group Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

Since the war began, Sanchez has positioned himself as a champion of the Palestinian cause within the European Union. His socialist government has increasingly taken highly critical positions towards the Zionist entity's conduct of its campaign against Hamas, rival to Abbas' own Fatah party. "The international community and Europe cannot remain impassive in the face of the suffering of thousands of innocents, largely women and children," he added.

Urging a two-state solution, long a cornerstone of international attempts to end the decades-long conflict, Sanchez said that a Palestinian nation "living side by side with (the Zionist entity)" was the only way to "bring stability to the region". He pointed out that this is Abbas' first visit to Spain since Madrid took the decision to recognize the state of Palestine on May 28. — AFP



MADRID: Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez welcomes Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas before their meeting at La Moncloa Palace on Sept 19, 2024. — AFP

Starlink launches service in Yemen, angering Houthis

DUBAI: Tech billionaire Elon Musk's satellite Internet service Starlink has launched in Yemen, provoking the anger of Iran-backed Houthi rebels in the country shattered by civil war. The company — run by the world's richest person — announced its arrival in Yemen, one of the world's least developed countries, in a post on social media platform X which is also owned by the US-based tycoon.

Starlink's network of low Earth orbit satellites can provide Internet to remote locations or areas that have had normal communications infrastructure disabled. "Starlink is now available in Yemen!" the post said on Wednesday. Yemen is the first country in the Middle East

to receive the service, which requires a dish and a router.

A map on Starlink's website shows the network, which can connect remote areas to high-speed internet via satellite, available across Yemen, in government-held areas as well as around its rebel-held capital Sanaa and much of the Red Sea coast held by the Houthis. The Houthi rebels' communication ministry warned its citizens against using Starlink which it called "a direct threat to Yemeni national security". The ministry added that the service "undermines the ability to protect citizens privacy and data".

In October last year, Article 19, which advocates for freedom of expression globally, joined with other local and international rights groups in an appeal to the Houthis "to cease internet shutdown measures and immediately lift the blockage on news websites and social media platforms". Houthi official Mohammed al-Bukhaiti condemned the Starlink launch, linking it to "the war waged by America on Yemen".

A member of the rebels' political bureau, he was responding to a post by the United States embassy to Ye-

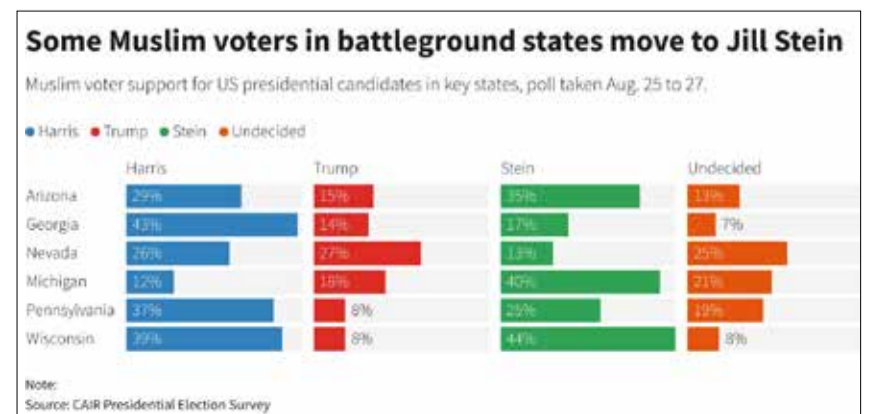
US Muslims back Stein in blow to Harris

WASHINGTON: Arab-American and Muslim voters angry at US support for the Zionist entity's offensive in Gaza are shunning Democrat Kamala Harris in the presidential race to back third-party candidate Jill Stein in numbers that could deny Harris

victories in battleground states that will decide the Nov 5 election.

A Council on American-Islamic Relations poll released this month showed that in Michigan, home to a large Arab American community, 40 percent of Muslim voters backed the Green Party's Stein. Republican candidate Donald Trump got 18 percent with Harris, who is President Joe Biden's vice president, trailing at 12 percent. Stein also leads Harris among Muslims in Arizona and Wisconsin, battleground states with sizable Muslim populations

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Kuwait inks deal to launch emergency aid in Sudan

KRCS continues relief efforts as humanitarian crisis deepens in war-stricken country



PORT SUDAN: KRCS team hand out an aid box to a Sudanese woman. — KUNA



TANGASI: Sudanese walk on a flooded street in the town of Tangasi, in Sudan's Meroe province, some 300 kilometers (200 miles) north of the capital Khartoum, on August 27, 2024. — AFP

KUWAIT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) has partnered with the Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS) to launch an emergency response initiative in support of Sudan's escalating humanitarian crisis caused by widespread flooding and the displacement of thousands of people. Speaking to the KUNA Thursday, KRCS Deputy Chairman Anwar Al-Hasawi said this new partnership aligns with Kuwait's longstanding commitment to humanitarian causes. The initiative is part of the society's broader mission to extend aid where it is needed most, especially in times of crisis, he added. Hasawi emphasized that the agreement will enhance cooperation with Sudanese counterparts to deliver critical assistance to those affected by the floods and those forced to flee their homes. The relief efforts, he said, are crucial in meeting the urgent needs of the displaced and mitigating the worsening humanitarian situation.

Violent clashes have erupted between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) since 2023, resulting in the displacement of more than 10.2 million people, including internally displaced people (IDPs), asylum seekers and refugees. This conflict exacerbated many of Sudan's existing challenges, including ongoing conflicts, disease outbreaks, economic and political instability and climate emergencies.

Sudan is facing "a starvation crisis of historic proportions and the international community is failing "to address the immense hunger", the

Norwegian Refugee Council, the Danish Refugee Council, and Mercy Corps had said in a joint statement earlier this month.

Food production has been severely affected. Many fields have been destroyed, mined or the farmers driven away, while livestock have been killed. "More than 25 million people – more than half the population – are suffering acute food insecurity. Many families have for months been reduced to one meal a day and have been forced to eat leaves or insects," the agencies said. They noted that while the people of Sudan "have shown immense resilience and strength" since the conflict started, they now "have nowhere left to turn".

Kuwait has been committed to providing continuous support to the Sudanese people since the beginning, reflecting the political leadership's dedication to humanitarian work, Hasawi said. KRCS has ramped up its efforts by dispatching substantial quantities of aid through relief planes and cargo ships while deploying a team of volunteers to Sudan to ensure the supplies reach displaced communities.

As part of its efforts, the KRCS team handed out Wednesday food to families affected by floods in Port Sudan. Speaking to KUNA in a statement, Abdulrahman Al-Saleh, head of the team, said food handed out meets the needs of a five-member family for one month. He added that the team were also briefed on the Kuwaiti-funded water projects at sheltering centers. He noted that they would



KUWAIT: A man loads supplies into a relief plane meant for Sudan as part of the air bridge launched by KRCS. — KUNA

continue providing aid in other Sudanese states, including River Nile State.

Saleh affirmed Kuwait's continued support to Sudanese people through the campaign, which started last May. Executive director of Sudan Red Crescent Society Anwar Abu Ali expressed appreci-

ation to Kuwait, its leadership, government and people for their support to Sudan. KRCS provided exceptional support and aid to the Sudanese, especially through two air bridges, with nearly 30 planes leaving to Sudan loaded with food, medicine and wheelchairs. — Agencies

Education ministry revives reading class at school libraries

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Education has issued a general bulletin for all public and private Arabic schools and kindergartens to ensure that class time is allotted for reading at the school library. An education ministry official emphasized the importance of holding the class and exposing students to various works of literature available at the school library. The official added that they were essential tools for students to develop their reading skills from a young age.

Reading class is not an entirely new concept in Kuwait but a lack of appropriate facilities and a condensed school curriculum have made it difficult to hold such a class on a regular basis. Despite the importance of having a library where students can read, they are rarely available at private Arabic schools and if one was available, it's usually too small for a class to be held there. The norm at private Arabic schools is to have classrooms made up of at least 40 students.

The education ministry statement said a librarian in each school has been assigned to coordinate with the school's Arabic Language Department to organize visits to the school library. They have also been tasked with preparing regular reports on the number of reading classes and learners coming to the library. The statistics will be sent through the Director of Educational Activities in the educational zone to the Libraries Research Department for analysis. The statement didn't elaborate on how schools without an appropriate library are expected to implement the rule.

MoE emphasizes open-door policy, need for better service

KUWAIT: Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and Acting Minister of Education Dr Nader Al-Jallal has directed the ministry's officials to resolve all issues brought to the officials by citizens according to the available capabilities while adhering to the regulations, systems and laws in force.

The minister stressed on Thursday the need to develop the ministry's performance and improve the services provided to people. Minister Al-Jallal gave the orders after meeting with some civilians who came to the ministry to resolve issues, process paperwork or submit complaints. The

Kuwait looks to India for improving its food infrastructure

NEW DELHI: Kuwait Ambassador to India Meshal Al-Shemali and representatives from the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition participated on Thursday in the official launch of the third edition of World Food India 2024 (WFI) conference, held in the Indian capital New Delhi.

In a statement to KUNA, Ambassador Al-Shemali said that the conference provides a fundamental opportunity to enhance cooperation between Kuwait and India in the areas of developing food infrastructure. The conference aims at introducing the world to rich Indian food culture as well as promoting investments in the diverse food processing sector of the country.

The Indian government is promoting the conference as a way for channeling investments into the country's food processing industry. This includes backward linkages, food processing equipment, processing related R&D, cold chain storage solutions, start-ups, logistic & retail chains, encompassing the entire food processing value chain.

Food security has long been on the Kuwaiti government's radar. Cabinet decided in August 2022 to establish the Supreme National Committee for Strengthening the Food and Water Security System, which includes experts from inside and outside the country as advisors to prepare and address technicalities and recommendations regarding food and water security. In February 2023, the committee approved the broad outlines of the strategy for achiev-

meeting was attended by Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education Mansour Al-Daihani, Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Public Education Mansour Al-Dhafiri and Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Facilities and Planning Mohammed Al-Khalidi and Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative Affairs and Administrative Development Matrook Al-Mutairi.

The directives are in implementation of the political leadership's open-door policy and are aimed at promoting the principle of transparency and direct communication with citizens to address their issues and listen to their suggestions and observations. The open-door policy has been a focus of the new Kuwaiti Cabinet, which was named in mid-May. Citizens who would like to book an appointment to meet with officials can do so through the "Sahel" app. Complaints and suggestions heard at the meetings will be summarized in reports to be regularly shared with relevant authorities.



Meshal Al-Shemali



ing food, water, and drug security in Kuwait. But no specific details have been provided on the strategy.

In 2023, Kuwait dropped 20 places on the Food Security Index by the Economic Research Unit of the British "Economist" group. The country ranks 50th globally out of 113 countries. Kuwait's food security challenge lies not in affordability but accessibility due to its dependence on imports.

Experts say that boosting the country's local production and strengthening the national food basket through expanding regional and international agricultural investments and owning agricultural lands, livestock, and fisheries in countries with fertile regions are some suggested strategies to ensure long-term food security in Kuwait.

The conference in India, Shemali told KUNA, is an important opportunity for investors, producers, and manufacturers in the food sector on a global lev-

el. Representatives of ministers, officials and heads of food safety and manufacturing companies from 90 countries and international organizations are participating in the conference, which will go on until September 22.

The participating Kuwaiti delegation included the Ambassador of Kuwait, President of the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies, Vice President of the Arab Cooperative Union, and General Director of Food Control and Inspection at the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition. The discussions at the conference revolved around food security and innovations in the field of retail processing, with the participation of manufacturers, producers and investors from around the world. WFI 2024 was organized by the Ministry of Food Industries in India and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce.



KUWAIT: Acting Minister of Education Dr Nader Al-Jallal meets with civilians at the education ministry. — KUNA

Local

Kuwait, IAEA mark 60 years of diplomatic ties

Kuwait condemns Zionist entity's rejection of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

VIENNA: Kuwait and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) are celebrating 60 years of diplomatic relations Thursday at the IAEA headquarters in Vienna. This event, hosted by IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi and Kuwait's Ambassador to Austria Talal Al-Fassam, coincides with the 68th annual IAEA General Conference, which began on Monday at the United Nations Office in Vienna and concludes Friday.

Speaking on Wednesday, Ambassador Al-Fassam affirmed Kuwait's continuous keenness on cooperating with the IAEA's various departments to execute key projects for economic and social development.

Kuwait has held prominent positions within IAEA, including chairing the IAEA Board of Governors, the second-highest authority in the agency, in 2003, and presiding over the 65th General Conference in 2021. A celebration was due to be held on Thursday evening in attendance of numerous Arab and foreign ambassadors and international officials. Additionally, a book will be launched, reflecting on the 60-year partnership and providing an analytical review of current trends, challenges, and prospects in utilizing nuclear energy for sustainable development.

Kuwait's cooperation with IAEA has been significant, particularly in the responsible use of nuclear technologies, contributing to Kuwait's scientific and technological development. Over the past 60 years, Kuwait has supported IAEA, contributing to the modernization of its laboratories in Seibersdorf, the Peaceful Uses Initiative (PUI), and the establishment of the IAEA Low Enriched Uranium (LEU) Bank. Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) has also participated in a joint exhibition with IAEA at the UN Climate Change Conference, showcasing the Kuwaiti research prowess.

Kuwait's collaboration with IAEA extends beyond nuclear safety and security to include various fields



Kuwait's Ambassador to Austria Talal Al-Fassam.

like science, technology, agriculture, and health. Ambassador Al-Fassam expressed Kuwait's pride in hosting three regional service and centers with the International Atomic Energy Agency in the fields of medicine, marine environment and radiation protection, and said that these centers were selected by the agency to help them implement their research programs and support regional and international projects. The Environmental and Life Sciences Research Center at KISR has been selected as a cooperation center with the agency in 2023-2024 to monitor radioactive marine pollution. He said Kuwait's work with IAEA stems from the country's belief in the need for joint action and international cooperation to confront pressing global issues such as climate change and ocean pollution, expressing his aspiration to continue the process of cooperation and strengthen it to wider horizons.

Through its embassy in Vienna, Kuwait has continuously worked to strengthen this relationship and seeks to explore new partnerships through IAEA

initiatives, including the Rays of Hope initiative. Last week, a high-level delegation from Kuwait Cancer Control Center (KCCC) visited IAEA to enhance radiotherapy services for cancer patients and explore opportunities for Kuwait to become a regional hub for the Rays of Hope initiative.

Iran should work with IAEA

Fassam emphasized the right of all nations to utilize nuclear power for peaceful initiatives. He called on Iran to commit to cooperating with the IAEA. He also looked forward to Iran's ratification and implementation of the Additional Inspection Protocol so that the Agency could be in a position to provide credible assurances about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran and to ensure its continued status as a non-nuclear-weapon state. Fassam commended the efforts of the Director General of the IAEA and its specialized experts in ensuring the safety and security of all nuclear facilities, including those located in conflict zones. He stressed the importance of cooperation of all parties concerned to avoid a nuclear disaster and protect the world from its devastating repercussions.

Kuwait has been committed, said Fassam, to submitting its national reports to the meetings of the contracting parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety. He also highlighted Kuwait declaring support for the Code of Conduct for the Security of Nuclear and Radioactive Materials in March 2024 to become the 151st country committed to this international initiative.

Zionist entity's flagrant violations

Ambassador Al-Fassam said that Kuwait is committed to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. He pointed out the Zionist entity's re-



fusal to join the the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its rejection of IAEA safeguards on some of its principle nuclear activities.

"We note the commitment of all countries of the Middle East ... with the exception of the Zionist entity, which continues to refuse to subject all its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency and also refuses to take any initiatives or even to take serious steps in this path to enable the agency to implement comprehensive safeguards in the Middle East or to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

He added that the Zionist entity not only rejects the initiatives, but is also continuing non-compliance and flagrant violation of many resolutions of international legitimacy related to nuclear weapons. "The State of Kuwait stresses the importance of the international community shouldering its responsibilities by stressing the need for the Zionist entity to accede to the NPT, comply with the provisions of the treaty and place all its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency."

Why some people are back to using dumbphones

By Hana Muneer

KUWAIT: In an era where smartphones dominate our daily lives, we see a surprising trend emerging: the renaissance of dumbphones. These basic devices involve pressing buttons through which communication is restricted to calls and messages. Once considered relics of the past, they are finding their way into the hands of a new generation of users.

Omar Khaled Al-Farsi is a 27-year-old lawyer who uses a Nokia flip phone in an era dominated by smartphones. This decision has been influenced by his desire to lead a simpler life. As a lawyer, he is constantly surrounded by screens - laptops, tablets, and monitors; so, when he is away from work, he likes to disconnect - the flip phones allow him to do that.

For Farsi, flip phones bring back memories of a simpler time when social media was less intrusive, and life felt less hectic. He believes this nostalgia is powerful, as it taps into a yearning for a time when digital life didn't overshadow real-world experiences. To him, flip phones symbolize a return to a more intimate life where typing involves pressing keypads, and calls are the primary form of communication. This yearning for simplicity extends much beyond mere nostalgia. As society increasingly becomes digitalized, many seek ways to reconnect with a simpler life. With their basic functionality and minimal distractions, these classic devices offer a tangible link to a less complicated and more connected past.

In today's fast-paced, always-connected world, many people are seeking ways to unplug and simplify their lives. According to Layan Nasser, a 36-year-old psychologist, smartphones while powerful and convenient, also come with several distractions, from constant notifications to the pressures of social media. "The flip phone's limited functionality serves as a



counterbalance to this digital overload, encouraging users to focus on essential communication."

It is interesting to note how this desire for a digital detox is closely tied to the broader trend of minimalism. People are increasingly looking to declutter their lives, both physically and mentally. Dumbphones with their simple approach, fit perfectly into this minimalistic mindset. For Nasser, they offer a way to stay connected without the burden of unnecessary features and apps that can lead to an overload of irrelevant information.

A significant factor that has driven Youssef, a 17-year-old high schooler, to the flip phone is his growing fatigue with social media. Platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter, while created to connect us, can often have the opposite effect - leading to feelings of isolation, anxiety, and disconnection. The pressure to constantly curate and present a perfect online image can detract from authentic human interactions.

As people gravitate towards older gadgets, there is a noticeable shift towards valuing a smaller, more intimate circle of friends and family. To them, these

devices align with this desire for more meaningful interactions. They facilitate genuine communication without the noise and clutter of constant online engagement, allowing us to prioritize quality over quantity in our relationships.

By eliminating access to social media apps and other distractions, these antique devices encourage us to engage more meaningfully with those around us. Without the lure of social media, we are more likely to focus on real-life relationships and experiences, nurturing deeper and more genuine connections. This shift towards a more intentional and present lifestyle is appealing to many who feel overwhelmed by the digital world.

As these retro gadgets make a comeback, their role in the tech landscape is evolving. While they may never replace iPhones and MacBooks entirely, their revival highlights a growing desire for meaningful and intimate connections. By offering a simpler, more focused communication experience, they provide a refreshing alternative for those seeking to disconnect from the digital noise and reconnect with what truly matters.

Social affairs ministry to train staff to handle domestic violence

KUWAIT: Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr Amthal Al-Huwailah, approved on Thursday a set of programs aimed at qualifying workers in family protection centers to develop their abilities to deal with cases of domestic violence in accordance with the approved psychological and social standards. In the presence of representatives of the Ministries of Interior, Justice, Health and Social Affairs, in addition to representatives of civil society institutions, Minister Al-Huwailah stressed the importance of developing policies and strategies that enhance family stability in society and combat violence, especially against women and children.

She stressed the need for concerted efforts of government agencies and civil society institutions to address the phenomenon of domestic violence and overcome all difficulties facing the implementation of protection programs. It is noteworthy that the National Committee for the Protection from Domestic Violence was formed based on Law (No. 16 of 2020) and its main work aims to protect the family from all forms of domestic violence and enhance family cohesion in Kuwaiti society.

More than 779 new cases related to domestic violence were registered in 2023, based on statistics from the public prosecution reported by local media. These numbers suggest a case of domestic violence is recorded in the country every 12 hours. A legal



KUWAIT: Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr Amthal Al-Huwailah is seen with officials during the inauguration of Jaber Al-Ali Cooperative Society's wedding hall. — KUNA

source told local media in December 2023 that having a law against domestic violence in Kuwait is a good thing, but it does not prevent it from occurring, especially since regulations pertaining to the law were not issued until more than two years later. According to the source, the phenomenon requires a detailed study and the development of recommendations to tackle the issue beyond the law.

In other news, Minister Al-Huwailah reiterated

the ministry focuses on digitalizing all its services as per the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Speaking to reporters after the inauguration of Jaber Al-Ali Cooperative Society's wedding hall, the minister said that the ministry strives to facilitate and provide the best services for citizenry. She pointed out that 68 wedding halls and society centers would be ready for online booking soon. — Agencies

PHF hosts 'back to school' events for children in hospitals

KUWAIT: As part of its community efforts and "Back to School" program series held to celebrate the new school year, the Patients Helping Fund Society organized a special event for sick children at Al-Amiri and Al-Sabah hospitals. The children were welcomed at the clinic, where they participated in an educational and recreational program filled with fun and joy.

During the event, gifts, balloons, schoolbags and stationery were distributed to help prepare the children for their return to school, ensuring they are in good health and high spirits. Additionally, hospitalized children in the wards received gifts.

At the Chest Diseases Hospital, a similar event took place, filled with excitement and happiness. Schoolbags and stationery were distributed to the children, encouraging them to continue their education, take care of their health, get proper sleep and maintain a healthy diet, avoiding harmful foods. The event was well-received by the children's parents and hospital administration, who thanked the association for its continued social engagement with this group of young patients.



Kuwait's 'habba' culture threatens individuality, climate

By Lolwa Salem

KUWAIT: Consumer behavior in Kuwait is characterized by 'habba' culture, which is a Kuwaiti word for an item or a place that people become obsessed with for a short period of time. Trends and micro trends are essentially part of the fabric of Kuwaiti society and there is something new every week. As a result, Kuwait has a high consumption rate.

People in Kuwait have come to the point where they feel they no longer need to make their own decisions, leading to a lack of awareness of what people buy due to blind spending with no consideration of economic, environmental or social implications.

Nabeela, who didn't give her last name, said that people in the country tend to be extra curious about what other people are doing, blaming her consumption habits on simply wanting to "find out for myself," if things other people do are worth the hype. She said most of her purchases, such as makeup and hair products, except for clothes are motivated by things she sees on social media. Sarah Adel said social media has a great impact on her consumption. "I truly can't remember the last time I made a decision that wasn't based on a TikTok," she said.

Buying things just because they are trendy means that most people begin to mirror each other. When people follow the same influencers and look at the same videos, they find themselves buying the same things, and then suddenly, individuality is long gone.

Another aspect to consider is the environment: when indulging in new trends every day, people end up discarding whatever items they bought that are not trendy anymore, which means that, on average, they throw away or discard items every week.

Saleh, who only gave his first name, said he tries not to fall for the bright lights and colors of advertising. "I try to finish my products until every last drop is gone, or only buy new jeans when my three pairs get a hole in them. Honestly! It's hard in Kuwait with our society but I've saved so much money." Saleh said that it's not too late for others to be more mindful and think through their purchases. He suggests people ask themselves "over and over if this is a need or a want or if you already have one at home".

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A woman with two children watches the full 'Harvest' supermoon rising over the Gulf waters off the coast of Kuwait City on September 18, 2024. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

NCCAL exhibit reimagines Kuwait's urban architecture

Exhibit gives people chance to view Kuwait's pavilion at Biennale Architettura 2023



KUWAIT: NCCAL Secretary General Dr Mohammed Al-Jassar (right) views the exhibit along with other officials. — KUNA photos



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Dr Mohammed Al-Jassar



Abdulaziz Al-Mazidi



KUWAIT: The National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) opened on Thursday an exhibition featuring Kuwait's pavilion at the 18th International Architecture Exhibition, Biennale Architettura 2023. The exhibition, which opened at the Yarmouk Cultural Center and is titled "Rethinking Rethinking Kuwait", provides people in Kuwait with the opportunity to view the architectural models within the pavilion, which was on display for six months in Venice.

NCCAL Secretary General Dr Mohammed Al-Jassar said in a statement to KUNA during the opening of the exhibition that it aims to raise questions about the urban development witnessed by Kuwait in the fifties and sixties of the last century and reimagine what the city could look like.

The team behind "Rethinking Rethinking Kuwait" engaged with local participants through an open call to reconceptualize Kuwait's urban planning systems through rethinking transportation, walkability, and accessibility. The project's focus is to improve the human scale of the city by enhancing urban transitional and interstitial spaces as well as prioritizing mass transit over individual vehicular modes of travel. The open call resulted in various projects ranging from vernacular design to planting ecologies.

Curators of "Rethinking Rethinking Kuwait" pavilion told KUNA in 2023 that it explores

new methods for architectural and urban design that emerges from the intersections of space and time. The project is an ongoing investigation attempting to rectify the effects of modernist urban planning that led to the erasure of most of Kuwait's historic-built fabric. The NCCAL-sponsored pavilion also delves into the ideas of "decolonization and decarbonization" by rethinking means of transportation and accessibility. It looks at Kuwait on a national scale with a focused study on Kuwait City as a prototypical condition. It features various studies that explore transitional spaces in the city that ranges in scope and scale.

The team included 27 Kuwaiti young women and men who worked with NCCAL to bring the project to life. Abdulaziz Al-Mazidi, commissioner of the pavilion, said the team was "honored" to represent Kuwait in Biennale Architettura 2023, which marked the country's fifth participation in international architecture exhibition. Kuwait first participated in 2012.

Mazidi, who is Head of the Design and Planning Department at NCCAL, added that the Venice Biennale is one of the most important cultural events related to architecture, as it is not just an exhibition, but a competition between the participants. The exhibition includes photographs of urban project designs and artworks that simulate urban designs and models for a number of existing and future urban projects.



Tokyo demands answers over Japanese boy killed in China

UK PM Starmer in 'hypocrisy' row over gifts and hospitality

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Women mourn over the coffin of killed Lebanese Hezbollah member Hussein Amhaz during his funeral in Baalbek, in Lebanon's Bekaa valley, on Sept 19, 2024. — AFP

Fear and panic haunt Lebanese

People toss power banks, keep mobiles away as devices explode

BEIRUT: Some panic-stricken Lebanese have tossed power banks, or sleep with mobile phones in another room, after hand-held devices used by Hezbollah operatives detonated two days in a row, killing 37 people. "What happened in the last two days is so frightening. It's terrifying," Lina Ismail told AFP by phone from the eastern city of Baalbek where some of the explosions occurred.

"We were so scared that we dismantled the inverter (a component inside solar energy systems) and turned off the device," she said. "I took away my daughter's power bank and we even sleep with our mobile phones in a separate room," she added in a trembling voice.

The explosions involved pagers and walkie-talkies used by Hezbollah members and wounded more than 2,900 others, according to official figures. Iran-backed Hezbollah blamed Zionist entity, which has not commented. Scenes of carnage circulating on social media, that shocked many in Lebanon, showed injured, bloodied peo-

ple lying in the street or falling to the ground after explosions in shops.

Doctors in Lebanon told AFP of horrific eye injuries and finger amputations caused by the blasts. "During war, you expect jets to launch strikes and that's the end of it," Ismail said, "but for someone to get blown up as they walk or while they're in their own house, nothing is more terrifying."

She said she heard three blasts near her home, two inside separate houses and one in a car. The wave of explosions have frayed the nerves of Lebanese already struggling to cope with the repercussions of more than 11 months of cross-border fire between Hezbollah and Zionist entity over the Gaza war. Many have told AFP the war revived traumas of past conflicts with some suffering panic attacks after hearing Zionist entity sonic booms or other loud bangs even unrelated to the war.

All of this adds to the burden for a country whose economy collapsed five years ago, leaving many in poverty. In the cafes of Beirut's busy Bada-

ro bar district, close to Hezbollah's southern suburb stronghold, booby-trapped devices are on everyone's minds. George Bahnam, who owns a small bakery, said his sister gave up using her iPhone after rumors it was "among the devices that can be hacked, because she was afraid it would explode". "We live in constant stress. The slightest thing that happens can affect us negatively," he said, while chatting with passing friends.

He said he felt distressed to see "young people wounded and lying on the ground". "We were reeling from economic stress... and today we don't know what the future will bring," Bahnam said, fearing a wider war. Social media users have shared posts with pictures of electronic devices they fear could explode if hacked — though experts, security sources and sources close to Hezbollah have said the blasts appeared to be the result of explosives planted inside Hezbollah devices.

On Thursday, Lebanese authorities prohibited passengers travelling from Beirut airport from

"transporting any pager or walkie-talkie device aboard planes". Ghadir Eid, 25, said she considered putting her phone away but "I changed my mind after a quick Internet search".

"At home, we stopped using solar energy because we did not feel safe about the batteries," she told AFP. In Lebanon, solar power helps counter routine electricity blackouts. Traffic appeared normal in Beirut and its southern suburbs on Thursday but many, including Eid, have decided to avoid crowded places or neighborhoods where Hezbollah holds sway "because we don't know who could explode". Schools and universities were closed on Wednesday following the initial blasts, but they re-opened Thursday, with people on edge. An exploding truck tire caused panic in the street as many feared more exploding devices. The blasts are "part of a slew of things that have piled up to create a state of anxiety and insecurity... especially because we don't know if war looms," a female passerby said. — AFP

Evacuations as tail of Storm Boris floods NE Italy

ROME: Italian authorities evacuated some 1,000 people from their homes as the tail end of Storm Boris pummeled a northeastern region that was devastated by deadly flooding last year, regional authorities said on Thursday. The strong winds and rains which have swept across central and eastern Europe, killing 24 people, lashed the Emilia-Romagna and Marche regions on Wednesday, leaving some towns under water.

Deputy Transport Minister Galeazzo Bignami told a press conference that two people were missing after they took refuge on a roof which then collapsed. Schools closed and trains were cancelled Thursday as the rains lashed the same area hit by two floods in May 2023, which killed 17 people and caused billions of euros in damage. Locals in Faenza told Local Team journalists they blamed authorities for fresh damage to their homes.

"There's one and a half meters of water in my house, again, after I'd just finished refurbishing it," one unnamed resident was quoted as saying. Over 1,000 people have been evacuated, regional Emilia-Romagna authorities told AFP Thursday. "We are in a full emergency," Ravenna mayor Michele De Pascale told Radio 24, saying the situation was "very similar to what we had last May (2023)".



TRAVERSARA, Italy: People stand on a road during floods in the small village of Traversara where rescuers and Air Force helicopters organize the evacuation of residents stuck in their houses surrounded by water, on Sept 19, 2024. — AFP

"The population is on high alert," said Emilia-Romagna's acting president, Irene Priolo, told Radio Rai 1, adding that last year 45,000 people were evacuated but that the damage this time was not expected to be as extensive. Priolo defended her administration, saying "so many construction works have been carried out" since the flooding last year.

Storm Boris has brought widespread flooding and torrential rain, with victims in Austria, the Czech Republic, Poland and Romania. Experts say climate change caused by greenhouse gas emissions generated by human activities is increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as torrential rains and floods. — AFP

Zionists expanding war to Lebanon, says Turkey FM

ISTANBUL: Turkey on Thursday accused Zionist entity of seeking to expand the war in Gaza to Lebanon with the "alarming" wave of deadly explosions that swept through Hezbollah strongholds. "The escalation in the region is alarming," Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said on state-run TRT television. "We see Zionist entity mounting its attacks towards Lebanon step by step."

The blasts have killed 32 people in two days, including two children, wounding more than 3,000 others, according to Lebanese health ministry figures. Zionist entity has not commented on the unprecedented operation in which Hezbollah operatives' walkie-talkies and pagers exploded in supermarkets, at funerals and on streets. But its defense minister Yoav Gallant, referring to Zionist entity's border with Lebanon, said Wednesday: "The centre of gravity is moving northward."

Turkey blamed Zionist entity for the blasts. "We have come to a point where these operations carried out by Zionist entity have become increasingly provocative, and in return, Iran, Hezbollah and elements close to them have no choice but respond," Fidan said. Hezbollah is an ally of the Palestinian militant group Hamas, which has been fighting a war in Gaza since its October 7 attack on Zionist entity.

For nearly a year, the focus of Zionist entity's firepower has been on Gaza, which is ruled by Hamas.

But its troops have also been engaged in near-daily clashes with Hezbollah militants along its northern border, killing hundreds in Lebanon, most of them fighters, and dozens more in Zionist entity. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Wednesday called Lebanon's Prime Minister Najib Mikati to offer his condolences over the wave of deadly blasts. Erdogan is a vocal critic of Zionist entity's offensive in Gaza.

Fidan, who was head of Turkey's spy agency before being appointed foreign minister, said of the method of mass explosions: "This is something that intelligence organizations use very often. "But this one was on a large scale," he added. Zionist entity's campaign risked extending beyond the entire region, he warned. "While we are currently thinking about Lebanon, there is always a risk of a war that may involve Jordan, Egypt, and the entire region," he said.

"Does Zionist entity want permanent peace or does it want to eliminate everything it sees a threat by using classical war methods?" he asked. "Currently, the fanatic government in Zionist entity is pursuing a strategy to eliminate all threats," he added. — AFP

Mpox vaccines administered in Rwanda

NAIROBI: Mpox vaccines have been administered in Africa for the first time, with several hundred high-risk individuals vaccinated in Rwanda, the African Union's disease control centre said Thursday.

The first 300 doses were administered on Tuesday near the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo, a spokesperson for the AU's Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) told AFP.

The DRC has been the worst-affected country, with nearly 22,000 cases and more than 700 deaths linked to the virus between January and August. On a call with reporters, Africa CDC director general Jean Kaseya said vaccinations would start in the DRC in "the first week of October".

Mpox, previously known as monkeypox, is



A man infected with mpox lies on a bed inside a ward at the Kamenge University Hospital's mpox treatment center in Bujumbura. — AFP

caused by a virus transmitted to humans by infected animals that can also be passed from human to human through close physical contact. Deadly in some cases, it causes fever, muscular aches and

large boil-like lesions on the skin. The World Health Organization last week prequalified an mpox vaccine, MVA-BN, for the first time, paving the way for the United Nations and other international agencies to procure them. The Africa CDC says there has been a total of 29,152 cases and 738 deaths across 15 countries on the continent. "Mpox is not under control," said Kaseya.

According to the WHO prequalification, the vaccine can be administered to people over the age of 18 as a two-dose injection given four weeks apart.

With most mpox cases and deaths in the DRC in children, the WHO stressed the vaccine could be used "off-label" in infants, children and adolescents, as well as in pregnant and immunocompromised people. "This means vaccine use is recommended in outbreak settings where the benefits of vaccination outweigh the potential risks," the WHO said in a recent briefing. The agency also recommends single-dose use in outbreak settings where supplies of the vaccine are constrained. But more data is needed on vaccine safety and effectiveness in such circumstances, it stressed. — AFP

International

Tokyo demands answers over Japanese boy killed in China

Kishida calls the attack 'extremely despicable', urges safety of Japanese citizens

TOKYO: Japan's prime minister demanded an explanation from Beijing on Thursday about the fatal stabbing of a Japanese schoolboy in Shenzhen and urged China to ensure the safety of Japanese citizens.

Wednesday's attack, on the anniversary of a notorious 1931 incident in the run-up to Japan's occupation of Manchuria, came against a backdrop of worsening bilateral relations. Beijing responded by expressing condolences for the killing, calling it an isolated incident that "could happen in any country".

While the motivation of the assailant remained unclear, Japanese officials have urged increased security around Japanese schools in China. "For now, we will strongly urge China to provide an explanation about the facts of what happened. Since it's been more than a day since the incident happened, we expect them to offer an explanation as soon as possible," Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said, calling the attack "extremely despicable". "A case like this must not be repeated. We will strongly call on China to ensure the safety of Japanese citizens and prevent a recurrence, while at the same time, doing everything doable in our capacity as the government," Kishida told reporters.

Police in Shenzhen said a man had attacked a minor on Wednesday morning and the child was rushed to hospital. The suspect, a 44-year-old man, was detained, they said.

Japanese media reported that the boy was a 10-year-old Japanese national living in the southern Chinese city, and was attacked near a Japanese school. Beijing on Thursday expressed "regret and sadness" over the "unfortunate incident". "We mourn the passing of the boy and express our condolences to his family," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian told a regular press conference.

Asked if the incident was isolated, Lin said that according to "the current understanding of the situation, this is an individual case". "Similar cases could happen in any country," he told reporters.

Late Wednesday, before the boy died, Japan's Vice Foreign Minister Masataka Okano summoned Chinese Ambassador to Japan Wu Jianguo to convey "serious concerns" over the attack.

Okano "strongly urged that security be strengthened, including around Japanese schools throughout China", Japan's foreign ministry said. In June, a Japanese mother and child were injured in another knife attack in Suzhou near Shanghai, which China's foreign ministry described at the time as an "isolated incident". A 55-year-old Chinese woman died attempting to stop the assailant and was honored for her actions by the local government after her death.

It remained unclear if the latest incident was politically motivated. It happened on the anniversary of the 1931 "Mukden incident" or "Manchurian incident" in the lead-up to World War II, known in China as a day of national humiliation. An explosion on a railway was used by Japanese soldiers as a pretext to occupy the city of Mukden, now called Shenyang, and invade the wider region of Manchuria.

China's foreign ministry also did not comment when asked at a regular briefing about the significance of the date, which state media said was marked on Wednesday with air raid sirens in multiple cities.

Relations have worsened in recent years as China takes a more assertive stance in territorial disputes in the region, and as Japan boosts security ties with the United States and its allies. China last year banned Japanese seafood imports after Japan began releasing into the Pacific treated waste water from the stricken Fukushima nuclear plant. After the



BEIJING: Police and security check a delivery rider (right) who arrived with what appeared to be a bouquet of flowers at the entrance of the Japanese embassy in Beijing on Sept 19, 2024. — AFP

release began, bricks and eggs were thrown at Japanese schools and consulates. Businesses in Japan were also inundated with nuisance calls from Chinese numbers. A Chinese aircraft carrier this week sailed between two Japanese islands near Taiwan, the first such intrusion into Japanese contiguous waters, a zone within 24 nautical miles of its coast. Government spokesman Hiroshi Moriya called the

incident "totally unacceptable from the perspective of the security environment of Japan and the region".

"We have expressed our serious concerns to the Chinese side through diplomatic channels," he said. China said the passage, which came less than a month after the first confirmed incursion into Japanese airspace by a Chinese surveillance aircraft, complied with international law. — AFP

Sri Lanka to vote in first poll since economic collapse

COLOMBO: Cash-strapped Sri Lanka will vote for its next president Saturday in an effective referendum on an unpopular International Monetary Fund austerity plan enacted after the island nation's unprecedented financial crisis. President Ranil Wickremesinghe urged voters to give him a fresh mandate to continue with austerity measures he says stabilized the economy and ended months of food, fuel and medicine shortages.

"We must continue with reforms to end bankruptcy," Wickremesinghe, 75, said at his final rally in Colombo on Wednesday night. "We must build a new economy." He has restored calm to the streets after civil unrest spurred by the downturn in 2022 saw thousands storm the compound of his predecessor, who promptly fled the country. "Decide if you want to go back to the period of terror, or progress", he added. But Wickremesinghe's tax hikes and other belt-tightening measures, imposed in line with a \$2.9-billion IMF bailout, have left millions struggling. Experts warn that Sri Lanka's economy is still vulnerable, with payments on the island's \$46-billion foreign debt yet to resume since a 2022 government default. "The election will largely be a referendum on how Wickremesinghe's government has handled the economic crisis and the ensuing modest recovery," the International Crisis Group said this week.

It added that many citizens were suffering "enormous hardship at the same time as Colombo cuts costs and takes other austerity measures perceived by the public as unfair". As election rallies ended on Wednesday night after a 56-day campaign period, the country entered a "cooling off period" of two days ahead of Saturday's vote.

Some 17.1 million people are eligible to vote. Over 200,000 officials have been deployed to conduct the election which will be guarded by 63,000 police. Results are expected by Sunday. Police spokesman Nihal Talduwa told reporters in Colombo that the campaign had been relatively peaceful with 464 polls-related complaints, but no serious crimes.

Wickremesinghe faces two formidable challenges including Anura Kumara Disanayaka, the



COLOMBO: European Parliament's deputy chief observer of European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) to Sri Lanka's presidential election Inta Lase (back center), addresses fellow members of the EU EOM ahead of the upcoming presidential elections in Colombo on Sept 19, 2024. — AFP

leader of a once-marginal Marxist party tarnished by its violent past. The party led two failed uprisings in the 1970s and 1980s that left more than 80,000 people dead, and won less than four percent of the vote in the last parliamentary elections. But Sri Lanka's crisis has proven an opportunity for the 55-year-old Disanayaka, who has seen a surge of support based on his pledge to change the island's "corrupt" political culture. "The 21st (voting day) will be the beginning of a long journey to completely change the system of governance in Sri Lanka," Disanayaka told his rally decorated with red flags at a suburb of Colombo. Analysts say he is likely to benefit from public anger over graft scandals and the chronic economic mismanagement that precipitated the unprecedented economic crisis.

"There is a significant number of voters trying to send a strong message... that they are very disappointed with the way this country has been governed," Murtaza Jafferjee of think tank Advocata told AFP. Fellow opposition leader Sajith Premadasa, once dismissed as the princeling dynast of a former

president assassinated in 1993 during the country's decades-long civil war, is also favored to make a strong showing. He vowed to ensure transparency in state procurements and fight endemic corruption.

The 57-year-old, a former ally and deputy of Wickremesinghe until he renounced his former leader in 2020, has campaigned on a pledge to secure concessions from the IMF. "We will revise the unfair burden-sharing structure of the IMF-supported tax code revision that is forcing professionals to seek employment abroad," Premadasa said in his manifesto. Official data showed that Sri Lanka's poverty rate doubled to 25 percent between 2021 and 2022, adding 2.5 million people to those already living on less than \$3.65 a day.

The IMF said reforms were beginning to pay off, with inflation below five percent from a peak of 70 percent at the height of the crisis, and growth slowly returning. "A lot of progress has been made, but the country is not out of the woods yet," the IMF's Julie Kozack told reporters in Washington last week. "It is important to safeguard those hard-won gains." — AFP

Vietnam death row tycoon faces money laundering trial

HO CHI MINH CITY: A Vietnamese property tycoon sentenced to death for fraud totaling \$27 billion went on trial Thursday in a related case accused of money laundering. Truong My Lan, chair of major developer Van Thinh Phat, was found guilty in April of swindling cash from the Saigon Commercial Bank (SCB) over a decade in one of the biggest corruption cases in history. Lan and 33 other defendants were brought to the court in Ho Chi Minh City early Thursday in a convoy of police vans, as dozens of fraud victims waited outside demanding to be let in to the hearing attended by nearly 100 defense lawyers.

Outside the main courtroom, around 1,000 seats were arranged in the corridor and surrounding areas, and large TV screens were set up for invited members of the public to follow the trial, state media said.

Security was tight as Lan—wearing a face mask and flanked by police officers—sat down for the start of a month-long trial in which she and her co-defendants face new charges of money laundering, illegal cross-border trafficking of cash and fraud. Around 36,000 people have been identified as victims of the SCB fraud, which shocked the communist nation and prompted rare protests from those who lost their money. Hoang Ngoc Diep

told AFP that she lost 1.7 billion dong (\$69,000) — money she had saved through "blood, sweat and tears"—after investing in an SCB bond in 2022.

"I had a mental breakdown and fell into a depression" after realizing what had happened, the 47-year-old said in an interview ahead of the trial. "My family used to depend on the interest to take care of my mentally ill sister and to send my children to school. I can no longer afford to give my children extra classes. I hope that the court will have a favorable outcome so that the victims can get back their hard-earned money... and make life a little less difficult." State media reports said Lan and her associates stole around \$18 billion by taking assets from SCB and issuing bonds between early 2018 and October 2022. Dozens of victims in the case held protests in central Hanoi this week, demanding authorities help them get their money back.

Media reports quoted a copy of the indictment as saying the 67-year-old tycoon had ordered her accomplices to withdraw cash and transfer it out of SCB's system. She then hid the origins of the cash and used it to settle debts between companies or transferred the money abroad for fake contracts.

Lan's driver transported the equivalent of more than \$4.4 billion in cash from SCB's headquarters in Ho Chi Minh City to her nearby home and to Van Thinh Phat's head office, the reports said.

A total of \$1.5 billion was transferred to foreign countries and Lan received more than \$3 billion from overseas between October 2012 and October 2022, the reports said. No specific details were available about which countries the money had been transferred to and from. Lan was given the death penalty in the previous



A Vietnam war veteran and fraud victim (center) arrives with other victims to attend the court proceedings of Vietnamese property tycoon Truong My Lan in Ho Chi Minh City on Sept 19, 2024. — AFP

case after being found guilty of embezzling \$12.5 billion. She is appealing against that verdict but no date for the appeal has been announced.

Prosecutors said the total damages caused by that scam amounted to \$27 billion—a figure equivalent to six percent of Vietnam's gross domestic product in 2023. Vietnam's communist leaders have intensified an anti-corruption campaign that swept through the party, police, armed forces and business community. Thousands of people—including top officials and senior business leaders—have been caught up in the Southeast Asian country's "blazing furnace" crackdown on graft. — AFP

Student ally of Bangladesh ex-PM beaten to death

DHAKA: A Bangladeshi student leader was beaten to death at his university campus in an apparent reprisal for attacks on protesters during the uprising that ousted ex-premier Sheikh Hasina last month.

Shamim Ahmed was enrolled at Jahangirnagar University in the capital Dhaka, and was a top member of the student wing of Hasina's Awami League party, police officer Abu Bakkar told AFP. Bakkar said Ahmed was beaten by unknown assailants on Wednesday night for leading an attack on student demonstrators at the campus in mid-July, when protests demanding Hasina's removal from office were gaining momentum.

"We took him to the Gonoshasthaya Hospital, where he later died," the officer added. Staff at the hospital confirmed to AFP that Ahmed had died after being brought in with multiple injuries. Ahmed is at least the second leader of the Awami League's student wing to be killed this month. Fellow leader Abdullah Al Masud died hours after being beaten by a mob in the northern city of Rajshahi on September 8, according to local media reports.

He had also been accused of marshalling counter-demonstrations against the student-led uprising against Hasina, who fled the country in early August moments before protesters stormed her Dhaka palace. Hasina's government was accused of widespread abuses, including the mass detention and extrajudicial killing of political rivals.

More than 450 people were killed in the weeks of violence leading up to the autocratic leader's toppling. Since her departure for exile in neighboring India, cabinet ministers and other senior members of Hasina's party have been arrested, and her government's appointees have been purged from courts and the central bank. At least 25 journalists seen as close to Hasina's regime have also been taken into custody since her ouster and replacement with an interim government led by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Mohammed Yunus. — AFP

Portugal tackles last of deadly forest fires

AGUEDA, Portugal: Portugal's firefighters have mastered most of the deadly forest fires in the north of the country, according to official data Thursday. And improving weather conditions have raised hopes that they could extinguish the last of the blazes by the end of the day.

The wildfires, which sprang up over the weekend fed by crushing heat and strong winds, have killed five people, four of them firefighters. Another 77 people were injured, 12 of them seriously.

By late morning on Thursday the civil protection service website said 1,200 firefighters were battling the six remaining fires in the northern districts of Aveiro and Viseu. A day earlier, 3,900 firefighters were tackling 42 active fires, supported by more than a thousand vehicles and around 30 aircraft. But overnight, the teams brought several blazes in villages in the Aveiro region covering a front of around 100 kilometers (60 miles) under control.

Temperatures have dropped since the weekend and rain is forecast for Friday. But there has been extensive damage in the north and centre of the country, much of it to the eucalyptus groves there. — AFP

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2024

Fed rate cut is 'very positive sign' for economy: Yellen

Several CBs join US Fed's rate cut movement • Bank of England freezes rate



LOS ANGELES, US: Home mortgage rates are posted outside a real estate office after the Federal Reserve interest rates announcement on Sept 18, 2024 in Los Angeles. —AFP

WASHINGTON: The US central bank's decision to slash interest rates this week is a "very positive sign" for where the world's biggest economy stands, US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said Thursday. Yellen's remarks came a day after the Federal Reserve opted for an aggressive rate cut of half a percentage point, its first since 2020 as inflation cooled.

"It reflects confidence on the part of the Fed that inflation has come way down and is on the path back to the two percent target, and that the risks with respect to inflation have really meaningfully diminished," Yellen told an event in Washington. "At the same time, we have a job market that remains strong," she said. Yellen added that bringing down inflation successfully in the context of a robust jobs market — known as a soft landing — is "exactly what we're seeing in the economy."

Her comments came after Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump charged Wednesday that the Fed's decision was either a response to a "very bad" economy, or it had been "playing politics." Lower interest rates bring down the cost of borrowing and could be seen as beneficial to the White House administration ahead of November's presidential election—with Vice President Kamala Harris the

Democratic nominee. But Fed Chair Jerome Powell stressed after announcing the rate reduction: "We're not serving any politician, any political figure, any cause, any issue." On Thursday, Yellen also defended tariffs that President Joe Biden's administration recently hiked on Chinese goods, ranging from electric vehicles to batteries.

"These are areas where China has enormous excess capacity. We've made a conscious decision that in the area of clean energy, we want to develop this as an industry in the United States," she said. "That's not to say we want to do everything entirely ourselves," Yellen said. "But we really want to reduce our dependence on China."

The US Federal Reserve cut its key lending rate by half a percentage-point Wednesday in its first reduction for more than four years, sharply lowering borrowing costs shortly before November's presidential election. The Fed's decision will affect the rates at which commercial banks lend to consumers and businesses, bringing down the cost of borrowing on everything from mortgages to credit cards.

The move marks the beginning of the end of the Fed's high interest rate environment aimed at throttling demand, with inflation now easing towards the

central bank's long-term two-percent target and the labor market continuing to cool amid a surprisingly resilient post-Covid economy.

Against this backdrop, Wednesday's large Fed rate cut is probably good news for Democratic presidential candidate and US Vice President Kamala Harris, who is running against Republican former president Donald Trump in the upcoming election.

"While this announcement is welcome news for Americans who have borne the brunt of high prices, my focus is on the work ahead to keep bringing prices down," Harris said in a statement.

At an event in New York on Wednesday, Trump told reporters that the independent US central bank's decision was either a response to a "very bad" economy, or it had been "playing politics."

"But it was a big cut," he added. Major US stock indices finished lower following the Fed's decision.

Policymakers voted 11-to-1 in favor of lowering the central bank's benchmark rate to between 4.75 percent and 5.00 percent, the Fed announced in a statement. They also penciled in an additional half-point of cuts before the end of this year, and an added percentage-point of cuts in 2025.

Meanwhile, the Bank of England on Thursday

kept its key interest rate at 5.0 percent, deciding against consecutive cuts one day after a bumper reduction from the US Federal Reserve. Following a regular meeting BoE governor Andrew Bailey said the central bank needed "to be careful not to cut too fast or by too much", as UK inflation stays above its target. Policymakers voted 8-1 for no change, having narrowly backed a cut in August. One member wanted the rate reduced to 4.75 percent this time around.

South Africa's central bank cut its benchmark interest rate for the first time since 2020 on Thursday, joining other nations in reducing borrowing costs as inflation eases. Central banks worldwide hiked rates after inflation soared in the wake of the Covid pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but many have started to cut them.

Brazil's central bank on Wednesday announced its first interest rate hike in two years, raising the benchmark lending rate to 10.75 percent even as the US Federal Reserve decided to lower borrowing costs. The central bank of Latin America's biggest economy raised the rate by a quarter of a percentage point over inflation concerns, marking a setback for President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who had pushed hard for lower rates. — AFP

Wall Street jumps with tech stocks in the lead

NEW YORK: Wall Street rallied on Thursday with the S&P 500 hitting another intraday record high after the Federal Reserve kicked off its easing cycle with half-a-percentage point reduction and forecast more cuts were on the horizon. Rate-sensitive growth stocks that have led much of this year's rally rose. Microsoft added 2 percent, Tesla gained 4.2 percent and Apple advanced 2.6 percent.

Semiconductor stocks such as Nvidia rose 4.7 percent, while Advanced Micro Devices gained 3.5 percent and Broadcom added 3.8 percent, sending the Philadelphia SE Semiconductor Index up 3.6 percent. The Russell 2000 index also rose 1.7 percent with the broader market, as a lower interest environment could mean lower operating costs and greater profits for credit-dependent companies.

At 09:46 am, the Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 391.24 points, or 0.94 percent, to 41,894.34, the



NEW YORK: Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. — AFP

S&P 500 gained 72.37 points, or 1.29 percent, to 5,690.63 and the Nasdaq Composite gained 377.68 points, or 2.15 percent, to 17,955.01. Nine out of the 11 S&P 500 sectors gained, led by tech stocks with a 2.8 percent rise, while utilities were the biggest laggards. After delivering its super-sized verdict on Wednesday, the Fed forecast rates to fall by another 50 bps by year-end and unveiled macroeconomic projections that analysts say reflect a goldilocks scenario,

where growth is steady and inflation and unemployment stay low. Data on the day showed jobless claims for the week ended Sept. 14 stood at 219,000, lower than economists' estimates of 230,000.

"There's a delayed reaction to the Fed's rate cut ... the claims came in low, so it's only going to help fuel the idea that a soft landing is in play," said Ross Mayfield, investment strategist at Baird. "The guidance for plenty more cuts by the end of 2025 should open up (rate-sensitive) sectors to reengage and expand." Traders now see a 63.1 percent chance that the central bank will lower interest rates by 25 basis points at its November meeting, as per the CME Group's FedWatch tool.

BofA Global Research now anticipates a total of 75 bps rate cuts by the end of this year, compared with 50 bps forecast earlier. Market reaction in the aftermath of the decision was muted, with all the three indexes closing slightly lower in the previous session. However, data going back to 1970 from Evercore ISI showed the S&P 500 has posted an average 14 percent gain in the six months following the first reduction of a rate-cutting cycle. September has generally been a disappointing month for US equities with the S&P 500 notching an average loss of 1.2 percent since 1928. — Reuters

India to produce more rice this year despite heavy rains

NEW DELHI: India's rice production this year will be higher than last year despite heavy rains and flooding in some states, Agricultural Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said on Thursday. The country is also considering easing curbs on non-basmati rice exports as inventories in the world's biggest exporter of the grain surge and farmers are set to harvest a new crop in the coming weeks.

India imposed a series of curbs on overseas shipments of different grades in 2023 to ensure sufficient supplies for the country's 1.4 billion people and to keep local prices in check. Last year, the El Nino weather pattern curtailed rains in the country, which

relies on the June-to-September monsoon for watering nearly half of its farmland that lacks irrigation. After a weak start in June, monsoon rains have been plentiful this year, with rains 7.6 percent above average so far in the four-month season.

However, heavy and persistent rains in some parts of the country have triggered flooding, causing concerns about some yield loss in this year's rice crop. "Our overall rice production will be more than last year despite flooding because rice planting is higher this year," Minister Chouhan said when asked whether an intense spell of rains and flooding would hit the crop nearly ready for harvesting.

"The problem of flooding is not widespread, and only some areas in just a few states have seen floods," he said. Chouhan said he recently visited some flood-hit states. Higher rice output will encourage India to allow exports of non-basmati white rice. Before the 2023 export restrictions, India accounted for more than 40 percent of global rice exports. Rice is a staple for more than 3 billion people, and

where growth is steady and inflation and unemployment stay low. Data on the day showed jobless claims for the week ended Sept. 14 stood at 219,000, lower than economists' estimates of 230,000.

"There's a delayed reaction to the Fed's rate cut ... the claims came in low, so it's only going to help fuel the idea that a soft landing is in play," said Ross Mayfield, investment strategist at Baird. "The guidance for plenty more cuts by the end of 2025 should open up (rate-sensitive) sectors to reengage and expand." Traders now see a 63.1 percent chance that the central bank will lower interest rates by 25 basis points at its November meeting, as per the CME Group's FedWatch tool.

BofA Global Research now anticipates a total of 75 bps rate cuts by the end of this year, compared with 50 bps forecast earlier. Market reaction in the aftermath of the decision was muted, with all the three indexes closing slightly lower in the previous session. However, data going back to 1970 from Evercore ISI showed the S&P 500 has posted an average 14 percent gain in the six months following the first reduction of a rate-cutting cycle. September has generally been a disappointing month for US equities with the S&P 500 notching an average loss of 1.2 percent since 1928. — Reuters

Cash-strapped Sri Lanka secures debt deal ahead of vote

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka secured a deal Thursday with international bondholders to finalize a prolonged debt restructure, a key International Monetary Fund demand to repair the island nation's ruined finances. The announcement came two days before Sri Lanka holds its first presidential election since its unprecedented 2022 economic crisis, which saw months of food, fuel and medicine shortages and sparked widespread social upheaval.

Creditors holding more than half of international sovereign bonds and foreign private loans to the South Asian nation agreed to a 27-percent haircut on their loans, a government statement said.

"Sri Lanka is pleased to report that it has reached an agreement in principle... on the terms of a comprehensive restructuring," it added. The country's austerity measures under the IMF program have been the central issue during campaigning for Saturday's presidential poll.

International Sovereign Bonds account for just over \$12.5 billion of the island's foreign debt, which stood at \$46 billion during Sri Lanka's first government default in 2022. President Ranil Wickremesinghe's government had announced a deal with bondholders in July, but ultimately walked away from it in the belief its provisions were economically unsustainable. As part of Thursday's deal, bondholders also agreed to an 11-percent haircut on overdue interest payments accumulated since the default.

The deal will still have to be approved by parliament during its next session in October.

Wickremesinghe's two main challengers in Saturday's vote have also vowed to renegotiate any debt deals if elected. The crisis two years ago brought enduring economic hardship and street protests that toppled then-president Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who was forced into temporary exile after a mob stormed his compound. Sri Lanka secured a \$2.9-billion bailout from the IMF in 2023 after doubling taxes, withdrawing energy subsidies and raising prices of essentials to shore up state revenue. — AFP



AMRITSAR, India: A worker rests on supplies kept in a goods truck, along a street in Amritsar on Sept 19, 2024. — AFP

nearly 90 percent of the water-intensive crop is produced in Asia. India on Friday removed a floor price for basmati rice exports just weeks ahead of the arrival of the new-season crop. — Reuters

Business

Coming winter 'sternest test yet' for Ukraine energy grid, says IEA

EU to help Ukraine weather Russia's attacks on its power infrastructure

PARIS: The coming winter will prove the "sternest test yet" for Ukraine's energy grid, the International Energy Agency said on Thursday, as the EU announced additional aid to help the country weather Russia's attacks on its power infrastructure.

Echoing the stark warning over Ukraine's coming needs, EU chief Ursula von der Leyen announced she would travel to Kyiv for Friday talks with President Volodymyr Zelensky, as the IEA put forward a 10-point plan to safeguard the war-battered country's energy security. "We must do all we can to keep the lights on. And as winter is approaching, we must keep the brave people of Ukraine warm, while we also keep the economy running," the European Commission president told a Brussels press conference held jointly with IEA chief Fatih Birol.

The IEA report said that in 2022 and 2023 "about half of Ukraine's power generation capacity was either occupied by Russian forces, destroyed or damaged, and approximately half of the large network substations were damaged by missiles and drones." "Ukraine's energy system has made it through the past two winters... But this winter will be, by far, its sternest test yet," the agency's executive director Birol said in a news release accompanying the report.

With Ukraine having lost more than two-thirds of its electricity production capacity since the Russian invasion, the report warned of a "yawning gap between available electricity supply and peak demand". It urged European countries to expedite deliveries of equipment and parts to rebuild the damaged facilities and called for measures to protect them from drones. Von der Leyen said the EU would make an additional 160 million euros (\$178 million) available to help Ukraine through the winter.

These will include 60 million euros in humanitarian aid and 100 million euros for repairs and renewable energy, she said, adding the latter amount would come from the proceeds of immobilized Russian assets in the European Union. "I will be travelling to Kyiv to discuss these matters in person with President Zelensky tomorrow," von der Leyen said.

In the summer, when energy needs tend to be lower, Ukraine's capacity for power generation already fell more than two gigawatts below the peak demand of 12 gigawatts. As demand for energy to heat homes increases in winter, the IEA predicts that the country's peak demand could increase to nearly 19 gigawatts. "Strains that are bearable in the summer months may become unbearable when temperatures start to fall and supplies of heat and water falter," the report said.

The IEA said that power plants damaged by Russian attacks or occupied by Russian troops, such as the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, urgently needed replacing or repairing, while the physical and IT security of critical infrastructure needed strengthening. It also recommended increasing electricity and gas import capacity from the European Union, accelerating the decentralization of electricity production and greater investment in energy efficiency. It estimated the cost of necessary repairs and upgrades at \$30 billion.

Outside Ukraine, the IEA report warned that neighboring Moldova's energy security could also be hit. Most of Moldova's electricity comes from one gas power plant in the breakaway Transnistria region, which is backed by Russia. Producing around two-thirds of the country's electricity, the Moldavskaya GRES power plant is largely fuelled by Russian gas imported via Ukraine. But last month, Ukraine announced its intention to discontinue at the end of this



KHARKIV: People gather outside a cafe during a blackout following Russian attacks on a city's energy infrastructure in Kharkiv, on April 8, 2024. — AFP

year an agreement signed in 2019 allowing Russia to pump gas via its territory.

With the taps turned off, both the plant's gas supplies and Moldova's electricity security would be subject to "significant uncertainty", the IEA said. As a result, the agency urged the country to secure its supplies by strengthening energy ties with its

European neighbors, "with benefits for the wider region". Set up under the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis, the IEA styles itself as "the world's leading energy authority". Though not a full member, Ukraine joined the agency as an associated country in July 2022. — AFP

Coal expansion in India risks massive methane growth

BANGKOK: India's plans to expand coal mining could double emissions of the potent greenhouse gas methane from its domestic coal sector by 2029, threatening its climate goals, a report warned Thursday. Methane is the second-most abundant greenhouse gas produced by human activity, after carbon dioxide. It breaks down faster but has a more powerful effect in the short term.

Coal mining is a key source of methane, which leaks from vents, open pits and cracks in the ground. India is already one of the world's leading sources of coal-mine methane emissions, as well as the second-biggest producer, importer and consumer of the fossil fuel.

To meet rapidly growing energy demand, it plans to boost domestic coal production from 982 million tons to more than 1.5 billion tons by 2030, according to the coal ministry. The planned expansions could more than double coal mine-related methane emissions by 2029 from a decade earlier, the report by independent energy think tank Ember said.

That projection is based on the methodology India uses to calculate its existing coal mine-linked methane emissions. India has committed to achieve

net-zero emissions by 2070. But the planned coal expansion "poses a considerable risk for the country's domestic emissions reduction plans and will have a profound short-term warming impact", Ember warned.

India, the world's most populous country, faces a conundrum as it seeks to honor its climate commitments while meeting skyrocketing demand for energy and supporting its fast-growing economy. Ember acknowledged that the "unprecedented increases" in demand for electricity in India are outstripping renewables capacity.

It proposed that India should invest in mitigation technology that could capture methane and even allow it to be used in place of imported gas, potentially saving money. The European Union and the United

States launched a "Global Methane Pledge" in 2021 under which countries commit to slashing emissions of the greenhouse gas 30 percent from 2020 levels by the end of this decade.

More than 150 countries have signed up—but not China, India or Russia. Researchers found this month concentrations of methane are rising at an accelerating pace and quicker than those of any other major greenhouse gas. While methane is also produced by agriculture and landfills, much of the increase is linked to coal extraction and oil and gas production. A report last week also sounded the alarm on methane emissions from planned Chinese coal mine expansions. Global Energy Monitor, an NGO, said China has an additional 1.2 billion tons of coal capacity in development, more than half the global pipeline. — AFP

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Business

Sales of US existing homes decline slightly, weekly jobless claims drop

Lower mortgage rates and growing supply likely to boost industry

WASHINGTON: Sales of previously owned US homes fell in August, according to industry data released Thursday, but lower mortgage rates and growing supply are likely to boost the industry.

Existing home sales dropped 2.5 percent last month from July to an annual rate of 3.86 million, seasonally adjusted, said the National Association of Realtors (NAR). This was largely in line with the 3.90 million consensus that analysts expected.

"Home sales were disappointing again in August, but the recent development of lower mortgage rates coupled with increasing inventory is a powerful combination that will provide the environment for sales to move higher in future months," said NAR chief economist Lawrence Yun.

He added in a statement that more inventory means homebuyers will be in a better position to find properties at favorable prices. Homebuyers in the United States have been grappling with a sharp rise in mortgage rates after the US central bank rapidly lifted the benchmark lending rate in 2022 to tackle inflation. But with growing expectations that the Federal Reserve

was going to pivot to rate cuts after holding rates at a decades-high level for months, mortgage rates have also shifted lower.

The popular 30-year fixed-rate mortgage averaged 6.2 percent as of September 12 according to Freddie Mac — reaching the lowest level since February 2023.

A year ago, the rate was around 7.2 percent. On Wednesday, the Fed kicked off a process of easing monetary policy with a bold half-percentage-point rate reduction, adding to expectations that mortgage rates would fall further. Compared with a year ago, NAR data showed that existing home sales were 4.2 percent down in August. The median price increased 3.1 percent from August 2023 to \$416,700, with all four US regions seeing price jumps. Yun told a press call on Thursday that although home sales are struggling, home prices remained high.

Meanwhile, the number of Americans filing new applications for unemployment benefits dropped to a four-month low last week, pointing to solid job growth in September and offering confirmation that the economy continued to expand in the third quarter. The weekly jobless claims report

from the Labor Department on Thursday, the most timely data on the economy's health, also showed unemployment rolls shrunk to levels last seen in early June. The US central bank on Wednesday cut interest rates by 50 basis points, the first reduction in borrowing costs since 2020, which Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said was meant to demonstrate policymakers' commitment to sustaining a low unemployment rate. "These hard numbers confirm the message delivered by Fed Chair Powell yesterday," said Carl Weinberg, chief economist at High Frequency Economics.

"The labor market is softening but not imploding as you would expect in a recession. Fed policy is aimed at supporting the job market before a recession shapes up."

Initial claims for state unemployment benefits dropped 12,000 last week to a seasonally adjusted 219,000 for the week ended Sept. 14, the lowest level since the middle of May, the Labor Department said on Thursday. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast 230,000 claims for the latest week.

Unadjusted claims increased by 6,436 to



AUSTIN, US: A home is available for sale on May 22, 2024 in Austin, Texas. — AFP

184,845 last week, amid notable rises in California, Texas and New York, which more than offset a decrease of 2,055 in Massachusetts. The labor market has cooled considerably, with a big step-down in hiring and a decrease in job

openings, which has raised concerns of a deterioration in conditions that could undermine the economic expansion. Layoffs, however, remain low, which is helping to prop up the economy, through solid consumer spending. — Agencies

Cuba tightens rules on fledgling private sector

HAVANA: Cuba's booming private businesses braced for impact on Wednesday as the island's communist-run government implemented a raft of new laws aimed at more tightly regulating the private sector amid a deepening economic crisis. The new rules come after less than three years of the legalization of private businesses following a decades-long ban put in place by former leader Fidel Castro.

The measures end incentives for the creation of new businesses, restrict independent wholesalers and add new requirements for applicants seeking to start a company. They also boost taxes, bolster worker's rights, tighten accounting requirements and sharpen oversight of the private sector. The fresh regulations come into effect as Cuba navigates its worst economic crisis in decades, with severe shortages of food, fuel and medicine and a record-breaking exodus of its citizens. The government says the reforms are necessary to correct distortions and boost the economy, while ensuring private enterprise benefits the broader population. Cities and towns can now deny a license to a business that doesn't fit within a local development plan, and municipalities may set prices in some cases.

"This is not a crusade against non-state forms of management ... but rather, it brings them within the framework of legality," said Economy and Planning Minister Joaquin Alonso Vazquez, adding the measures would help develop the country. William LeoGrande, a professor of Latin American politics and US foreign policy at Washington's American University said the regulations "all have a similar effect of constraining the private sector, rather than unleashing it."

"The Cuban government needs the private sector to help the economy recover, but distrusts it and wants to keep it under tight state control," he added. The stakes are high, says Oniel Diaz, co-founder of private business consultancy AUGE, which advises more than 200 Cuban small business clients.

Diaz said some of the rules, such as fighting tax evasion, are understandable while others will only slow further the ailing economy. "The question is ... whether or not these measures ... contribute to getting the country out of the economic crisis in which it has been mired and the answer is no," said Diaz.

The private sector has been a rare bright spot in an otherwise anemic economy that has failed to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and remains saddled by a decades-long US trade embargo that has complicated financial transactions by the Cuban government. Cuba in three years has approved 11,355 private businesses. The sector's employees, together with 600,000 self-employed workers in Cuba, now account for 25 percent of jobs and 15 percent of imports, according to official data. Small private retailers — a last remaining reliable and varied source of food — may be hardest hit by new accounting hurdles and a rule that requires wholesalers to work through state companies when importing from abroad, according to experts and business owners consulted by Reuters.

These small grocers and corner stores — common now in many Cuban cities — have filled a void left by a near-bankrupt state, importing and distributing more than a billion dollars of food and beverages in 2023, Diaz said. "The (government) wants to restrict the activity ... and allow spaces for (the state) to recover lost ground," Diaz said. Reuters spoke with several business owners who said they were still unclear how the regulations would be applied and how they might affect their business. They declined to speak on the record. For many Cubans, who worry more about putting food on the table, any opportunity to buy goods is welcome — as long as the price is right.

"I think small business is the best thing going," said Alexander Silega, a 36-year-old self-employed Havana resident. "But we need some regulation in terms of prices." — Reuters

NBK alerts against online job offer scams promising high salaries

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) remains steadfast in its dedication to enhancing financial literacy and fostering inclusivity across diverse societal groups. In line with this commitment, the bank actively supports the "Let's Be Aware" campaign, an initiative launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) in partnership with local banks and Kuwait Banking Association (KBA).

NBK amplifies its awareness efforts by disseminating educational materials and awareness content across all communication platforms and digital channels. This includes videos, text messages, and practical tips. Additionally, the bank republishes messages from the Central Bank of Kuwait to further raise awareness among diverse groups across the society, informing them about various fraud methods and how to effectively avoid them. NBK is committed to keeping customers informed about the latest fraud tactics and deceptive schemes used by fraudsters. In this campaign, the bank emphasizes the risks

Big Fed cut puts an ECB move on traders' radar

FRANKFURT: A big interest rate cut from the US Federal Reserve on Wednesday raised bets on further policy easing at the European Central Bank in October but this is still not the most likely outcome given different economic realities. The ECB has already cut interest rates in June and earlier this month, and many at the bank have hinted at steady, quarterly rate cuts ahead to make sure inflation is defeated on a durable basis.

While the Fed's apparent rush lends some support to arguments that the ECB is falling behind the curve given rising recession risks, the fundamental economics have not changed overnight, so policy hawks on the Governing Council can make an argument for waiting until December. "That the ECB needs to cut in October because of what the Fed did is a ridiculous argument that wouldn't fly on the Governing Council," Dirk Schumacher, an economist at Natixis, said.

"The only way to argue that is to say that it (the Fed cut) will change euro zone data and that may be the case but we haven't seen it yet." This is also reflected in market pricing, which now sees a 35 percent chance of a 25 basis point deposit rate cut in October, up from 30 percent a day ago, a small but still notable shift that leaves December as the most likely date for an ECB move.

The ECB is likely to take it slower because it has a lot less to do. It has five, maybe six 25-basis-point cuts until it reaches a "neutral" interest rate level at around 2.0 percent or 2.25 percent, according to various estimates that include

'Life or death' for big cities should planet warm 3C

PARIS: Longer and more frequent heatwaves, soaring demand for air conditioning, and widespread disease: life in cities would become unbearable should the planet keep warming at current rates, researchers warned Thursday. The World Resources Institute (WRI) looked at what might happen in nearly 1,000 major cities if temperatures remain on track to rise 3 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

They found that the impact on these cities — and the 2.1 billion people who inhabit them — would be dire compared to a scenario where global warming is restricted to 1.5C.

"At 3 degrees C of warming, many cities could face month-long heatwaves, skyrocketing energy demand for air conditioning, as well as a shiffling risk for insect-borne diseases — sometimes simultaneously," the authors wrote. In 2015, nearly 200 nations agreed in Paris that the world must strive to limit global warming to 1.5C to avoid the most disas-

trous consequences of climate change. Treated together, the world's climate pledges and commitments today would only cap warming at 2.9C, according to the latest UN assessments. "The difference between 1.5 degrees C and 3 degrees C has life or death consequences for billions of people worldwide," said Rogier van den Berg of WRI, a US-based think tank.

Their report — slated for publication in April but delayed for a revision — underscores the particular risk for fast-growing cities in low-income countries. By 2050, two-thirds of the world's population will live in cities and more than 90 percent of that urban growth will occur in Africa and Asia.

"People living in low-income cities will be the hardest hit," the authors wrote.

The IPCC, the world's leading scientific authority on climate change, has also been examining the specific threat for cities posed by rising temperatures and is devoting a major upcoming report to the issue. Robert Vautard, co-chair of an IPCC working group, said cities had "very specific climate problems" and most "were not yet built, so there is real potential for transformation at the root". Across the world's largest cities, WRI estimates the longest heatwave each year could last 16.3 days on average under a 1.5C scenario, but 24.5 days at 3C.

Their frequency is also likely to rise, from 4.9



FRANKFURT: A man walks past a giant euro logo at the visitor centre of the European Central Bank (ECB) headquarters in Frankfurt am Main. — AFP

the ECB's own. The Fed meanwhile has probably eight such reductions until then, so the world's top two central banks might still reach their end point of policy easing at the same time. Then there are the fundamentals.

Euro zone inflation, now at 2.2 percent, could tick up towards 2.5 percent by the end of the year and will likely come down only slowly to 2 percent by the final weeks of 2025 as entrenched wage pressures push up services costs. This is why conservative policymakers, or hawks in market jargon, have cautioned against moving too fast. Slovakia's Peter Kazimir has already pushed back on October while influential rate setters Isabel Schnabel and Klaas Knot have both in the past made the arguments that quarterly moves to coincide with fresh projections made sense.

"Inflation is currently not where we want it to be," Bundesbank chief Joachim Nagel said on Wednesday. Conservatives, who drove a record string of rate hikes in 2022 and 2023 are still likely to be in a majority and that is why

applications to prevent hacking and data theft.

The bank also emphasizes that it will never request personal information via email, text messages, or phone calls. Customers are advised to ignore such communications, which are fraudulent attempts to obtain banking details for theft or data compromise. With the wide array of fraud tactics in play, NBK is committed to protecting its customers and boosting their awareness of fraud prevention. The bank delivers essential advice and guidance across all its digital channels to ensure customers remain informed and secure. NBK leverages its extensive communication capabilities and leading electronic channels, which have the highest engagement among Kuwaiti banks, to bolster the Central Bank of Kuwait's efforts in safeguarding customers and the economy.

NBK is a key supporter and partner in all CBK campaigns and initiatives focused on enhancing financial and banking awareness across society. As Kuwait's largest financial institution, NBK is at the forefront of community education on essential banking issues. The bank not only organizes impactful events but also invests in comprehensive training programs for its employees to bolster their skills in fraud prevention and financial crime combat, reinforcing its commitment to safeguarding both its customers and the broader financial landscape.

markets are not repricing ECB moves after the Fed decision.

"Ultimately, the louder hawks should keep markets reluctant to price in more ECB easing, despite the Fed's dovish influence," ING's Francesco Pesole said. Hawks argue that wage growth remains too quick for comfort. Labor costs rose by 4.7 percent in the second quarter, well above the 3 percent considered consistent with the ECB's inflation target, and unions continue to demand big wage hikes to compensate for real income losses.

The ECB also gets only few pieces of really relevant data in the four weeks until its Oct. 17 meeting.

Wage and growth figures only come in the lead up to December, when new projections are also published. This leaves the ECB with second tier figures, such as survey data on lending and corporate intentions, to go by. These softer indicators would then have to show a big deterioration for policymakers to preempt their own projections with a rate cut.

Still, policy doves, mostly from southern Europe, keep making the case for quicker policy easing.

Mario Centeno, Portugal's central bank chief and the most outspoken policy dove, argues that the growth outlook is deteriorating so quickly that the ECB could undershoot its inflation target unless it moves fast. "Given the position in which we are today, in the monetary policy cycle, we have really to minimize the risk of undershooting, because that's the main risk," Centeno told Politico.

Doves argue that growth is faltering, industry is in recession, consumption is weak and people are boosting their savings, perhaps out of fear of an economic downturn.

These factors are all deflationary and create downside risks for price growth. They also say that inflation will fall to target in September and, even if there is an uptick in the months ahead, the specter of rampant inflation has been defeated, especially because energy prices remain muted. — Reuters



A street vendor pushes her bicycle carrying fruits in Hanoi.

heatwaves per year in the average city to 6.4 per year. This would in turn spur enormous demand for air conditioning and energy.

In Johannesburg, demand for air conditioning at 3C would be 69 percent higher than at 1.5C, placing extra strain on a city that already suffers water and electricity shortages. Hotter cities would also provide optimal conditions for mosquitoes that carry potentially life-threatening arboviruses like dengue, Zika and chikungunya. At 3C of warming, 11 of Brazil's largest cities could see high arbovirus risk for at least six months of the year. — AFP

Weekender

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2024



REIMAGINING WOMANHOOD

Kuwaiti artist Sheikha Al-Habshi creates bright, safe worlds for women through art



By Sahar Moussa

Sheikha Al-Habshi is a Kuwaiti artist and illustrator with a passion for storytelling through visual art. After earning her bachelor's degree in interior architecture from Kuwait University, she pursued her true calling in illustration, obtaining an MA from the University of Arts London. Specializing in graphic novels, Sheikha focuses on exploring the often-overlooked nuances of the Arab woman's experience, bringing these stories to life through her unique artistic lens.

Kuwait Times: When did you start drawing, and do you believe that someone needs to have natural talent to draw?

Sheikha Al-Habshi: I've always been interested in drawing and art, but I never felt like I was naturally talented. I often found myself falling short of my own expectations. It wasn't until I went to university, and saw one of my closest friends constantly drawing in class, that I felt inspired to explore it more seriously. Natural talent can only take you so far — eventually, it's all about the consistency and effort you put in. To be completely honest, I still question whether natural talent is even real in anything.

KT: Your use of bright colors is very striking. How do colors help you convey your messages or emotions in your illustrations?

Al-Habshi: I've always been drawn to bright colors. I constantly notice them in nature and think about how I can bring them into my work. But I also believe that growing up with the Internet, and being exposed to so much oversaturation, influenced me subconsciously to use bold colors as I got older. These colors have also helped me in my comics because they allow me to talk about difficult issues without triggering a very negative reaction from



university, it completely transformed my view of what a book could be. It showed me that the structure of a book can also reshape the narrative itself.

KT: How does your Kuwaiti identity influence your art, particularly in your portrayal of women?

Al-Habshi: My identity as a Kuwaiti woman heavily influences the topics I explore. I constantly question the nuances of culture within my society and the spaces women typically occupy. The conversations between women in these environments are always inspiring to me — they expose me to different opinions, experiences and stories, which help me recontextualize what a woman can be, rather than the one-dimensional idea some may have of us.

KT: What challenges have you faced as an illustrator in Kuwait, and how have you managed to overcome them?

Al-Habshi: I'm grateful to have a strong support system in my family and friends who help me through any difficulties I face. However, I often struggle with balancing the business side of things with my work as an artist. It's a constant battle to make time for my creativity as a freelancer, especially since job security isn't always steady. I have to remind myself to take time, process everything, and recognize that this is all part of the job — and that there's no one 'right' way to be an artist.



Sheikha Al-Habshi

people, thanks to the bright, funky colors!

KT: What inspires you to focus on illustrating women in your work, and why do you choose to depict only women?

Al-Habshi: It wasn't a conscious choice to only depict women when I first started drawing. I was mainly focused on capturing my own world, which just happened to be filled with women, especially within my friendships. We also live in a world that is particularly harsh on women, so in my illustrations, I make a deliberate effort to create a world for them that is bright, fun and safe.

KT: How did you first get into graphic novels and bookbinding? What attracted you to these particular art forms?

Al-Habshi: I have always been fascinated by graphic novels because of their ability to convey deeply nuanced personal stories through both drawing and writing, creating a powerful emotional impact. As for bookbinding, I hadn't encountered it before my MA, but once I started working on it in uni-



Weekender



A taste of home

How chefs in Kuwait keep their culture alive through food



By Passant Hisham

As one of the first families to move to Kuwait after 1948, Palestinian chef Sawsan Abueljubain holds only faint memories of her homeland, which she could only recall through keeping her country's traditional dishes alive. "Since our homeland was lost and our culture stolen, we've clung to our identity even more tightly," Abueljubain told Kuwait Times. "For me, I express that through cooking." Recognizing that Palestinian cuisine was beginning to lose its essence as it blended with other cultures in Kuwait, Abueljubain made it her mission to preserve its authenticity. "I wanted to cook food the same way my grandmother, mother and aunts taught me," she said. It's the simplicity of the past, when meals were made from whatever ingredients were available — like bread and vegetables — that reminds Abueljubain of her favorite dish, musakhan.



Hanan Alzaid

"Zubaidi fish always reminds me of the family gatherings we used to have"

Musakhan consists of roasted chicken served over flatbread and topped with a blend of flavors: Caramelized onions, sumac, olive oil and pine nuts. "Despite the scarcity of materials and ingredients back then," she noted, "the food always tasted its best." She also treasures maqluba, a dish flipped upside down to reveal layers of vegetables and either chicken or meat, as well as sfeeha yafawiye, a savory meat pie originating from the coastal Palestinian city of Yaffa.

For some, food is merely a way to fuel the body or satisfy hunger. But for others, especially in a country like Kuwait, where many cultures converge, it serves as a powerful link to identity or a brief journey back home.

Lebanese cook Dana Hamad, like Abueljubain, finds that her food keeps her connected to her roots. Every time she adds olive oil, a key ingredient in Lebanese cuisine, Hamad is reminded of the olive fields her grandparents once owned back home. "I vividly remember my childhood, helping them pick olives," she shared. For her, the process was "a labor of love — gathering the olives, taking them to the press, and eagerly waiting for the first drops of freshly squeezed olive oil."

What makes Lebanese cuisine truly special, according to her, is its ability to satisfy the palates of all ages, offering everything from light, refreshing salads like tabbouleh to hearty dishes like kibbeh. Known for its variety of small savory dishes, dips, and appetizers, Hamad describes Lebanese cuisine as one that "invites everyone to the table."

Reflecting her country's tradition of hospitality and sharing, Hamad also mentioned one of her most favorite dishes:



Warak Enab



Palestinian Musakhan



Dana Hamad

"Lebanese cuisine is one that 'invites everyone to the table'"



Fried Kibbeh

Stuffed grape leaves. It's not just a dish, but as she puts it, it's "often a family affair, passed down from grandmother to mother to child."

Lebanese and Palestinian cuisines are just a few of the many represented in Kuwait. While embracing the diverse cultures that have shaped the country, Kuwaiti cuisine has adapted and incorporated these influences, adding its own unique twist. "Our food has a distinguished flavor, one that's drawn from many countries," said Hanan Alzaid, a Kuwaiti chef. She highlighted the popular dish machboos diyay, which is also prepared in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, though each country has its own distinct version.

Alzaid's passion for cooking started at the age of 14, when she used to return from school reluctant to eat food prepared by her mother or the cook. "I only wanted to eat the food I cooked myself," she said.

As a Kuwaiti with a rich coastal heritage, this love for cooking led her to seafood dishes, particularly mutabak alzbaidi, a traditional Kuwaiti meal made with the beloved local zubaidi fish. "It always reminds me of the family gatherings we used to have," she fondly recalled. Alzaid noted that rice, a key ingredient in both dishes, plays a significant role in defining Kuwaiti cuisine.

Whenever she prepares a meal, she hopes that those eating it will appreciate the entire experience, not just the flavors. "As I lift the lid off the pot, I wait for the person to deeply inhale the aroma and see their eyes light up at the sight of the dish," she said. "Only then do I want them to start eating — after their eyes and nostrils have savored the food first."



Sawsan Abueljubain

"Since our homeland was lost and our culture stolen, we've clung to our identity even more tightly"



Sfeeha Yafawiye



Tabbouleh

Sawt music: Echoes of pre-oil Kuwaiti society



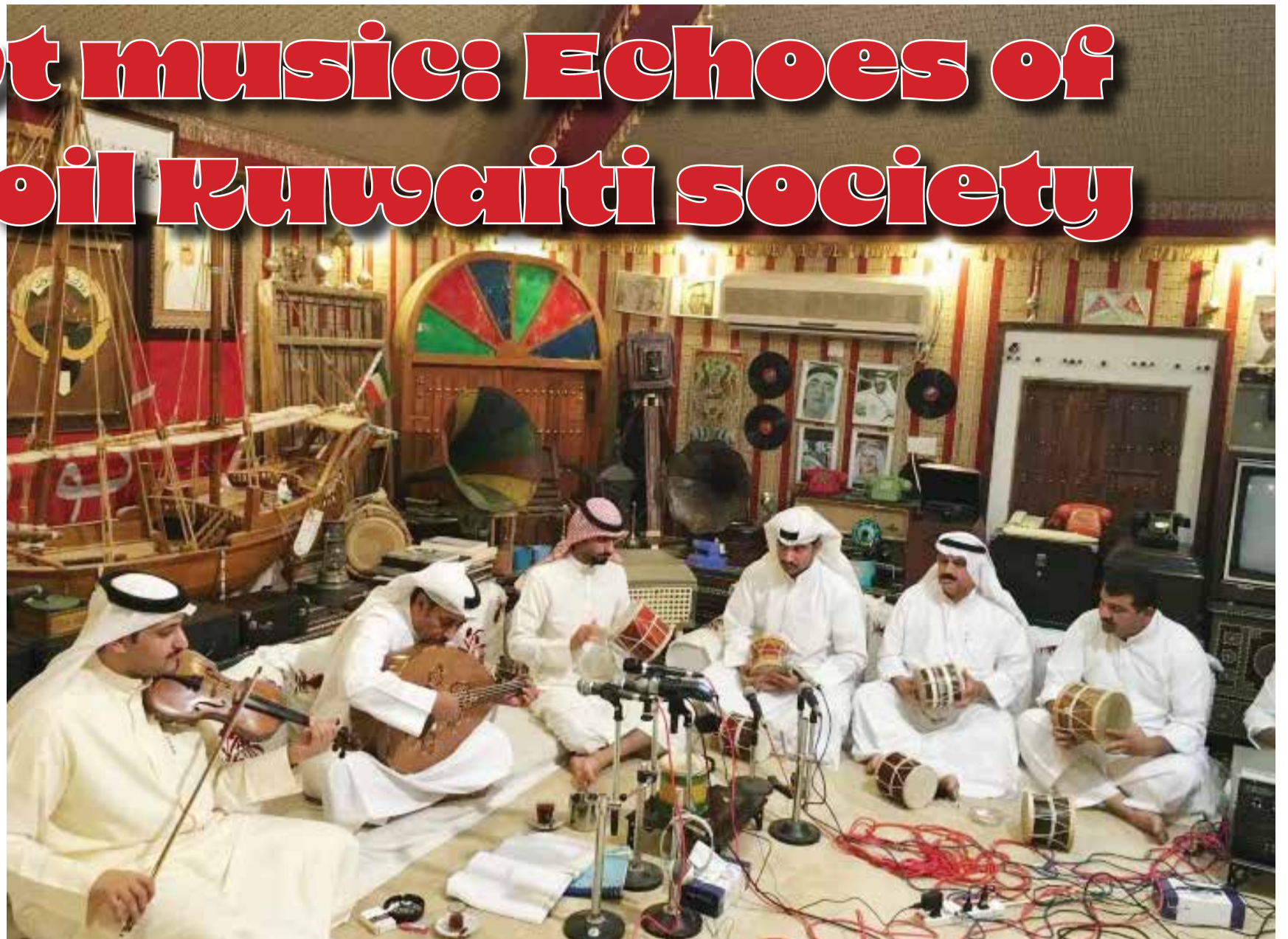
By Khaled Al-Abdulhadi

Sawt music is a vital genre deeply connected to Kuwaiti cultural history, offering insight into life in pre-oil Kuwait. Today, the genre is preserved by heritage organizations such as the Kuwait Heritage Society, Kuwait Sea Sports Club and the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters.

Ethnomusicologist Rolf Killus notes that most agree the genre in its current form was established by poet, composer, singer and oud player Abdallah Al-Faraj, an heir to a wealthy merchant family that had emigrated to Bombay, though he was born and died in Kuwait. His prominent contemporaries included Ibrahim bin Yaqoub, as well as Khaled and Yusef Al-Bakr.

Killus writes, "Sawt was the art music of the first urban centers in the Gulf region. This pan-East-Arabic-Gulf genre was created in Kuwait, likely due to its position at the crossroads of cultural influences."

According to Sarah Al-Zouman, bahri music is divided into work and celebratory songs. Work songs include "sangeen", sung when sailors set the ship out to sea, and "yamaal", with various versions performed when sailors row the vessel, trim the sail or pull the ship back to anchor. Celebratory music includes "al-uns", derived from the Arabic word for "happiness".



Zouman writes: "Al-uns takes place when men return safely from sea. They gather for an evening of singing, playing instruments and dancing to celebrate their successful journey."

Ahmad Al-Salhi describes sawt music as a broad range of styles, recognized by their social contexts, and influenced by nearby cultures. He notes that the Hadhar (urban dwellers) are associated with

bahri music, while the Bedouins have rababa music, accompanied by poetry.

Salhi explains: "Maritime songs (bahri) are considered work songs; most tasks carried out on ships have their own melodies, movements and unique rhythms. Other professions like blacksmithing (hadda) and shipbuilding (qlafa) had their own associated songs, but these disappeared as the practice of

these crafts diminished." Musical gatherings, known as samras (from the root samar, meaning to enjoy the night with conversation or music), are often held on weekends at night. Notable Sawt music performers include Abdellatif Al-Kuwaiti, Ibrahim Al-Khashram, Hamad Khalifah, Salem Al-Fahaad and Dawoud and Saleh Al-Kuwaiti, among others.

Kuwait's iconic water towers: A blend of history and modernity



A group of iconic water towers near Al-Adailiya Park. — Photos by Lea Al-Sabah

By Marwan Hafez

Kuwait's water towers are more than just functional structures — they are key landmarks in the city's history. Designed under the leadership of late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, these towers symbolize Kuwait's modernization and progress.

One group of towers is located next to Al-Adailiya Park, which attracts many locals due to the park's family-friendly amenities, diverse services and presence of numerous animals. Some visitors even build small shelters and provide food for the animals. According to a park cleaner who has been working there for six years, the park is especially lively during winter. "The park is very busy in winter with

people coming to play sports and let their kids have fun. It's quieter in the summer."

A group of young boys were seen playing football in the park's playground, although most of them weren't familiar with the water towers. "I don't know much about the towers, but I know they're an important part of Kuwait's history," Abdullah Mustafa Ibrahim said. He praised the park's size and strategic location, saying, "There's no park like Al-Adailiya Park in Kuwait."

Saud Al-Amar, a regular visitor who only knows that the water towers are an important landmark in Kuwait, said: "We enjoy coming to play football at Al-Adailiya Park. The park is nice, but the playgrounds need repair." He added: "The park's bathrooms sometimes have water issues and could use improvement."

Mohamed Mohamed echoed his sentiments. "The park is great, but the garden needs some attention," he said. "The towers are a key part of Kuwait's history. The park is generally good, but the bathrooms and football field need updates," Ahmed Khaled chimed in.

Kuwait's 31 water towers are well known for their unique designs. Five of the groups are mushroom-shaped. The towers were part of a project to improve water distribution, connecting large desalination plants to the city. Sheikh Jaber wanted the towers to be more than just functional — they needed to look modern and impressive. Today, they stand as a blend of practical design and artistic expression, showcasing Kuwait's progress and heritage.



WHAT'S ON IN KUWAIT

Event: "Feykom Tarab?" A night with Miami band
Location: The Arena - 360 Mall
Date: September 19-21, 2024

Event: Minus 11 - Snow Village
Location: Hunting and Equestrian Club
Date: September 20, 2024

Event: Italian cooking class
Location: The Hub
Date: September 20, 2024

Event: Open Mic Night
Location: Argan Bedaya - Sabah Al-Salem
Date: September 20, 2024

Event: Discussion on the movie "The First Man"
Location: CAP theater
Date: September 21, 2024

Event: Standup comedy
Location: Teatro Entertainment Center
Date: September 21, 2024

Event: Colors of India experience
Location: Kumar - Murouj
Date: September 21, 2024

Event: Korean Art Day
Location: Manag Korean Cultural Center
Date: September 21, 2024

Sports

Ton-up Ashwin lifts India to 339-6 against Bangladesh

India slipped to 34-3 inside the first hour of play

CHENNAI: A counter-attacking century from Ravichandran Ashwin pulled India to a "good position" at 339-6 on day one of the first Test after Bangladesh fast bowler Hasan Mahmud rattled the hosts with four wickets on Thursday.

India slipped to 34-3 inside the first hour of play in Chennai, then 144-6 in the second session before Ashwin, on 102, and Ravindra Jadeja, on 86, put on an unbeaten stand of 195 runs. Hasan had vindicated skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto's decision to field first in overcast conditions, striking early with three wickets and taking one more after lunch.

The tourists, fresh from their 2-0 sweep in Pakistan, are looking for their first Test win against India. Chennai-born Ashwin and the left-handed Jadeja — India's go-to spinners — blunted the Bangladesh bowling, to the delight of the home fans. "We always have a plan. We were relaxed in the dressing room when watching," India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal told reporters. "I think initially the ball was moving early and seaming a bit and the wicket was damp. We took our time. In the last session we scored quite well and are in a good position at the moment," he added.

Ashwin, 38, reached his sixth Test ton in 108 balls with 12 boundaries, removing his helmet and raising his hands to soak in the crowd's cheers. Hasan ripped through the Indian top-order including skipper Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli — both scoring just six runs — to leave the hosts at 34-3 inside the first hour of play. Jaiswal put on a 62-run partnership with fellow

left-hander Rishabh Pant to get some momentum into the Indian innings. Hasan broke the stand in the third over after lunch when wicketkeeper-batsman Pant, who is playing his first Test after a serious 2022 car crash, was caught behind off a loose shot. He made 39 with six boundaries. Jaiswal fell to Bangladesh's new pace sensation Nahid Rana for 56. Spinner Mehdi Hasan Miraz then took down KL Rahul for 16.

'In my zone'

Hasan's opening spell of 3-14 put the hosts immediately on the back foot, starting with Rohit caught at second slip. "The plan was simple, to bowl at my strength — bowl seam-up and shape the ball in and out — and I succeeded," said Hasan. "I was in my zone." He added: "Later in the day the wicket settled, but still I got some movement." Shubman Gill survived just eight deliveries before being caught behind for a duck when he attempted a flick down the leg side. Kohli walked in to loud cheers but the noise soon stopped when the former captain edged a length delivery outside the off-stump from Hasan to wicketkeeper Litton Das.

It was a disappointing outing for Kohli after missing his team's 4-1 home win over England in March due to the birth of his second child. India are looking to extend their lead at the top of the World Test Championship rankings as they begin a fresh Test season of 10 matches. The second and final Test starts on September 27 at Kanpur. — AFP



CHENNAI: India's Ravichandran Ashwin (L) celebrates after scoring a century (100 runs) as Bangladesh' Shakib Al Hasan watches during the first day of the first Test cricket match between India and Bangladesh at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai. — AFP

Latham, Williamson half-tons take Kiwis to 255-4 in S Lanka

GALLE: Half-centuries from Tom Latham and Kane Williamson put New Zealand at 255-4 and in hot pursuit of Sri Lanka on day two of the first Test on Thursday. The Black Caps trailed by 50 at stumps in Galle with Daryl Mitchell (41) and Tom Blundell (18) to resume in the morning.

No New Zealander has scored a Test century in Galle and both Williamson and Latham looked set to end that drought before falling against the run of play. Their 73-run partnership steadied the reply to Sri Lanka's first innings of 305 but ended when Latham fell before tea for 55, top-edging a sweep shot that was caught at backward square leg.

World number two batter Williamson departed in the final session for 70 while trying to work Dhananjaya de Silva on the leg-side for a single, caught by wicketkeeper Kusal Mendis. Aggressive sweep shots from the Kiwis foiled a concerted Sri Lankan spin attack and forced the hosts to spread the field.

It countered New Zealand's usual vulnerability to spinners at Galle, where the tourists have lost all four of their prior Test matches played there. De Silva had a second wicket when he bowled Rachin Ravindra, finishing 2-31 in an otherwise lacklustre day for the hosts.

Fewer than five overs were played in a morning session delayed by rain. Sri Lanka belatedly resumed their first innings from 302-7 overnight but lost all three remaining wickets for just three runs. Rookie New Zealand fast bowler William O'Rourke took



GALLE: New Zealand's Tom Blundell (2R) plays a shot during the second day of the first Test cricket match between Sri Lanka and New Zealand at the Galle International Cricket Stadium in Galle. — AFP

5-55, his second five-wicket haul in just three Tests since his February debut against South Africa.

That home series saw him take 9-93, the best match figures for a debutant Kiwi bowler. A groin injury ruled the 23-year-old O'Rourke out of the following series against Australia and his selection ahead of the more experienced Matt Henry had

been a surprise.

But he vindicated selectors by delivering consistent speeds above 145 kilometres (90 miles) per hour to carve through the Sri Lankan top order on day one. A century by Kamindu Mendis, his fourth from seven Test appearances, rescued Sri Lanka from 178-5. — AFP

Raducanu moves to Korea Open quarter-finals

SEOUL: Emma Raducanu moved into the Korea Open quarter-finals and faces a potential match-up with number-one seed Daria Kasatkina after beating China's Yuan Yue 6-4, 6-3 on Thursday. Britain's Raducanu, the 2021 US Open champion, took a medical time-out in the first set to get her foot strapped but she returned to oust number-eight seed Yuan on her seventh match point. The 21-year-old Raducanu, ranked 70th in the world, faces either Russia's Kasatkina, the world number 13, or American Hailey Baptiste in her next match. "I think the key to my success today was trying to let go of any frustration that happened," said Raducanu.

"Closing out the match I had a lot of match points I couldn't convert, so just staying focused and breaking in that last game." Raducanu, who is unseeded, has failed to build on her stunning US Open success but she is looking to make an impact in Seoul.

The tournament has been hit by a string of last-minute withdrawals, including world number one

Playing Nadal is 'a nightmare', says Alcaraz

BERLIN: Carlos Alcaraz has admitted to being star-struck when he first faced Rafael Nadal, saying that facing the 22-time Grand Slam champion was "kind of a nightmare". Speaking in Berlin on Thursday ahead of the Laver Cup, the 21-year-old Alcaraz reflected on his on-court battles with fellow Spaniard Nadal. "It was a huge thing when I played him for the first time," said the world number three. "The other times for me were kind of a nightmare." Alcaraz already has four Grand Slam titles, winning his first at the 2022 US Open in the same year Nadal won his most recent major at the French Open.

Nadal, 38, was set to take the court alongside Alcaraz in Berlin, but pulled out due to his continued struggles with injury. "Playing against Rafa is always tough. Every time for me it was a privilege to share the court," added Alcaraz. "Every time I faced him, I



Emma Raducanu

Iga Swiatek, US Open runner-up Jessica Pegula and former Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina. Raducanu came through a gruelling opening match in Seoul against American Peyton Stearns, and she was again forced to prove her physical mettle against Yuan, last year's beaten finalist. Raducanu broke Yuan's serve early in the first set but she gave up the advantage in the very next game. Raducanu again broke her opponent to serve for the first set, and this time she got the job done despite the medical interruption. — AFP

tried to be a good enough player to beat him." There was speculation Nadal may retire from the sport at the Laver Cup, as great rival Roger Federer had done two years ago, but he is set to continue.

Alcaraz will play doubles alongside German Alexander Zverev for Team Europe at the tournament, with their first clash coming against Americans Taylor Fritz and Ben Shelton for Team World. Preparing to play on home soil, Zverev said of Alcaraz: "It's a privilege to share the court with a legend of our sport already." The two have clashed three times in 2024, including in the French Open final, which Alcaraz won in five sets. "I think it's amazing to hear my teammates call me a tennis legend, but I try not to think about it," said Alcaraz.

"Above all, what makes you a legend in tennis is what you contribute to the sport and how you try and take tennis to the top, to be heard in every corner of the world. "To attract the largest possible audience, to people who have never seen tennis in their lives, thanks to you they watch it on TV or start to play, that makes you a legend, apart from the tournaments you have won and the success you have." Team Europe won the first four Laver Cups, starting in 2017, but Team World have won the past two. — AFP

Afghanistan humble SA in first ODI

SHARJAH: Afghanistan battled their way to a six-wicket win over South Africa in the opening one-day international in Sharjah on Wednesday after skittling the Proteas for just 106. South Africa avoided their lowest ever score in an ODI but some fine bowling from opening bowlers Fazalhaq Farooqi, who took 4-35, and AM Ghazanfar, 3-20, ensured that the Afghan batters would have a comfortable chase.

In the event, they lost Rahmanullah Gurbaz to the third ball of the innings, caught at third man off Lungyi Ngidi, and when Rahmat Shah was leg before to Bjorn Fortuin the Afghans were wobbling at 15-2.

Fortuin also removed Riaz Hassan for 16 while Aiden Markram, standing in as captain for the sick Temba Bavuma, dismissed Hashmatullah Shahidi. However, Azmatullah Omarzai (25 not out) and Gulbadin Naib, 34 off 27 balls, saw them home in 26 overs. After Markram elected to bat first after winning the toss, Reeza Hendricks and Tony de Zorzi added 17 for the first wicket before left-arm quick Farooqi bowled Hendricks for 9 to spark a dramatic collapse which saw South Africa slump to 36-7.

Farooqi added the wickets of Markram (2) and de Zorzi (11) to his tally while Ghazanfar accounted for Tristan Stubbs and Jason Smith, making his ODI debut, for ducks and Kyle Verreynne for 10. As if South Africa did not already have enough problems, Andile Phehlukwayo went walkabout as Ghazanfar was appealing for leg before, leaving Nabi to run him out.

With only 10 of the 50 overs bowled, it looked as though South Africa's record lowest ODI score of 69, made against Australia in Sydney in 1993, would be in danger. An eighth-wicket partnership of 39 between Wiaan Mulder and Fortuin, however, saw them past the danger and threatened to rebuild the innings.

Fortuin was bowled by Rashid Khan, playing his first ODI since last year's World Cup, but Mulder dragged them past the hundred mark, going on to reach his first ODI fifty. He fell shortly afterwards to Farooqi, his 52 coming from 84 balls with five fours and a six. Rashid wrapped up the innings in 33.3 overs when he had Ngidi leg before to finish with 2-30. — AFP

All Blacks primed for 'hell' of a Wallabies clash

SYDNEY: All Blacks coach Scott Robertson is expecting "a hell" of a Bledisloe Cup Test against Australia on Saturday, predicting a tight game despite the Wallabies being mercilessly exposed by Argentina. New Zealand head into the clash in Sydney as favorites, having owned the trophy since 2003 and losing just one of their last 12 Tests against Australia.

But they are on the back foot and Robertson is under scrutiny after consecutive Rugby Championship defeats to South Africa. "We want to build off what we've done but be more ruthless with our actions to finish games, give those passes, kick those goals and nail those little moments," said Robertson.

"The players and coaches have owned where we can be better." Robertson has rejigged his back three after the 18-12 defeat in Cape Town a fortnight ago with veteran full-back Beauden Barrett and left wing Caleb Clarke returning to the starting side, with Will Jordan on the other edge.

The visitors are also boosted by loosehead prop Ethan de Groot recovering from a neck injury. Robertson is expecting fellow New Zealander Joe Schmidt, the Wallabies coach, to spring some surprises. "We've put a lot of preparation in, as much as the Aussies would, and that gives you the sort of underlying confidence going into it, but there's always a little bit of trepidation," he said. "It's the appropriate fear that comes with any sport, especially contact sport. "It's going to be a hell of a Bledisloe Cup." As well as the annual trophy fought over by the two rivals, the game is also part of the Rugby Championship.

'Poor finish'

Australia are desperate for a win after their stunning capitulation this month in Argentina, where they led 20-3 before collapsing to a 67-27 defeat, their largest in history. Schmidt has made five changes to the starting side, with misfiring halves pair Jake Gordon and Ben Donaldson dropped and replaced by veteran Nic White and Noah Lolesio.

Centre Hunter Paisami and fullback Tom Wright return from injury, while flanker Fraser McReight is back after recovering from a broken finger. Prop James Slipper is on the bench and will become the most capped Wallaby ever should he take to the field, as expected, surpassing scrum-half George Gregan with his 140th cap.

"The players have reconnected well this week for our last game on home soil this year," said Schmidt. "We've acknowledged the poor finish to our time in Argentina and we're keen to turn that around on what will be a particularly special day for James and his family."

Assistant coach Geoff Parling said that the review process from the heavy Santa Fe defeat had been effective in pinpointing where they went wrong. "As long as we learn, reflect, we push on, we know what the fixes are," he said. "I think any team that's trying to be good has those up-and-down moments." The two sides play the return Bledisloe Cup clash in Wellington next week. — AFP



Scott Robertson

Sports

Chelsea under new boss, Man City with Miedema eye WSL title

City kick off their WSL campaign at Arsenal on Sunday

MANCHESTER: After a Women's Super League season that saw Chelsea crowned title winners on goal difference, runners-up Manchester City would love nothing more than to unseat the champions. The curtain comes up on the new campaign on Friday when Chelsea start WSL life without their feted manager Emma Hayes, now in charge of the United States, when they host Aston Villa.

There are numerous enticing storylines this term, chief among them being whether someone can wrest the title from the Blues, winners of seven out of the last eight under Hayes. Chelsea kick off their quest for a sixth successive crown with a new boss in former Lyon coach Frenchwoman Sonia Bompastor, who has the credentials to seamlessly transition into the post-Hayes era with similarly lofty expectations.

"I'm not really that different from Emma," Bompastor told reporters during the WSL media day earlier this month. "Maybe I have a different vision, a different philosophy, but when you coach at a big club like Lyon or Chelsea, your management has to be the same. The expectations you have from your players, the expectations the players have from you, that's the same."

Bompastor, known as a hard-nosed lead-

er, brought an impeccable record to Chelsea's Cobham Training Ground, having guided Lyon to seven trophies in three seasons, including three league titles. The Frenchwoman also led Lyon to a Champions League title—the one trophy that eluded Hayes—in 2022.

Gareth Taylor's Manchester City signed Vivianne Miedema, the WSL's all-time leading goalscorer, in the quest for their first title, adding the Netherlands striker to an forward line that already includes last season's Golden Boot winner Khadija Shaw.

"There were a few who were maybe surprised that a player of that ilk, with what she's done in the game, was available," Taylor has said of the former Arsenal and Bayern Munich player who has won domestic league titles along with the Euros.

"Really happy to have Viv, she's a box of frogs at times, and she can be a challenge, but what you do have is a highly, highly talented player who, with everything she's done in the past, still I feel has the best years in front of her." City kick off their WSL campaign at Arsenal on Sunday.

Player moves

A busy transfer window saw plenty of moves,

with Chelsea, City and Arsenal all very active as even clubs who previously eschewed the paying of fees in favor of picking up free agents got on board with the wheeling and dealing.

FA Cup holders Manchester United reconfigured their squad, adding Norway strikers Elisabeth Terland and Celine Bizet plus Sweden defender Anna Sandberg, with French forward Melvine Malard joining from Lyon after spending last season on loan.

Brighton & Hove Albion were active right up to the deadline on Sept 13, signing winger Nikita Parris from United as the final addition to an intriguing crop of arrivals that includes England's former Chelsea forward Fran Kirby. After a strong showing last term, Liverpool's off-season business may be of concern to some fans as seven players departed and only three came in.

Newcomers Crystal Palace will look to avoid the fate of Bristol City, who were relegated last term after one season in the top flight, and the recruitment of nine players may render them unrecognizable from the team that won the Championship.

However, One of the biggest stories to follow this season will be outside the top flight, where



Sonia Bompastor

London City Lionesses have built a star-studded squad bristling with internationals in an effort to get out of the Championship into the top division.

Owned by Michele Kang—who also owns NWSL side Washington Spirit and French giants Lyon—the list of high-profile arrivals was led by Sweden's Kosovare Asllani, and anything less than promotion would surely be seen as a failure. — Reuters

Miranchuk grabs equalizer as Atlanta hold Miami to a draw

MIAMI: Aleksey Miranchuk scored late to give Atlanta a 2-2 Major League Soccer draw against Inter Miami on Wednesday, with Lionel Messi unable to conjure any magic as a late substitute for the visitors.

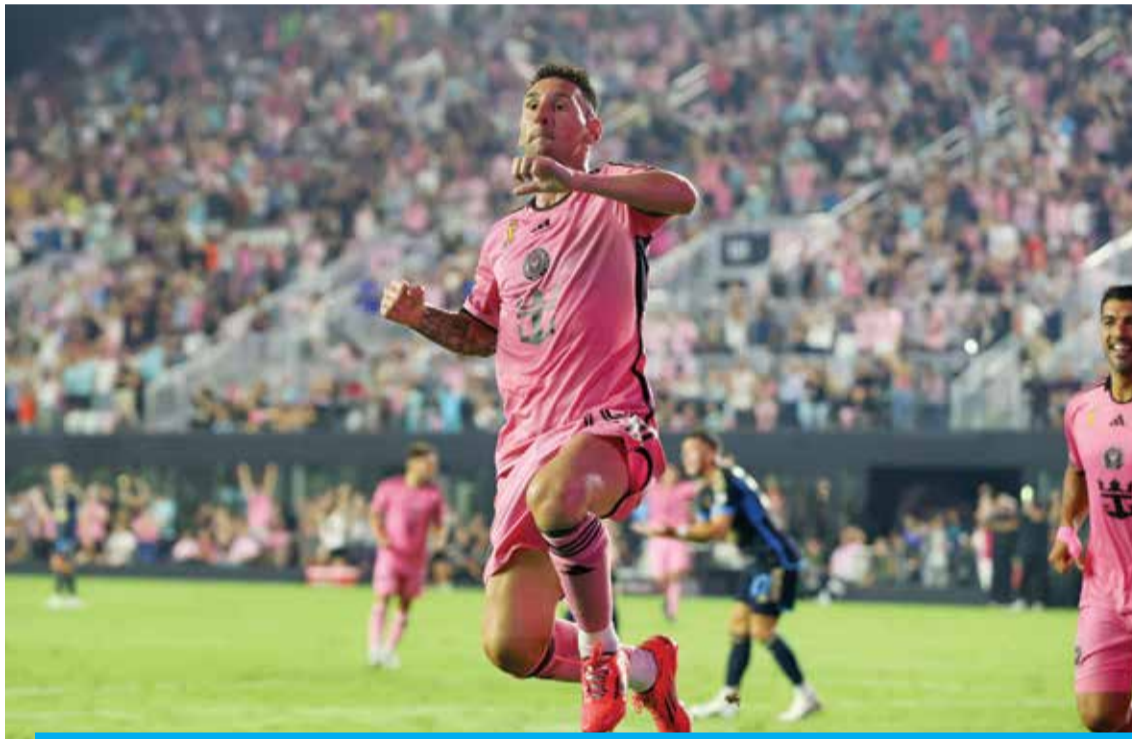
Eight-time Ballon d'Or winner Messi had dazzled in his return from a lengthy injury absence on Saturday, scoring two goals in the space of four minutes in Miami's 3-1 victory over Philadelphia. But coach Gerardo Martino said he would be careful not to overwork his superstar in a three-match week, and Messi was held out of the starting lineup in Atlanta along with former Barcelona teammates Luis Suarez and Jordi Alba.

Miami have secured an MLS Cup Eastern Conference playoff berth and with 63 points lead the race for the Supporters' Shield, awarded to the team that tops the overall standings. The Florida team led 2-1 on goals from David Ruiz and Leonardo Campana when Messi entered the match in the 61st minute.

The Argentinian superstar came close to a game-clinching goal in the 83rd, but his angled effort was blocked by Atlanta goalkeeper Brad Guzan and Suarez's attempt to tap in the rebound was also denied. A minute later Russia's Miranchuk, signed by Atlanta from Europa League winners Atalanta at the end of July, produced a sensational left-footed shot from outside the area.

Inter had led 1-0 at half-time courtesy of 20-year-old David Ruiz's first goal of the season. Ruiz, making his first start since June 15 in a lineup that featured just three of Miami's regular starters, took advantage of a through ball from Argentina's Franco Negri to slot home a well-placed shot.

Atlanta pulled level in the 56th through Saba Lobzhanidze, whose header hit defender Ian Fray and slipped through the legs of goalkeeper Drake Callender. Campana put Miami back in front in the



FORT LAUDERDALE: Inter Miami's Argentine forward #10 Lionel Messi celebrates his first goal during the Major League Soccer (MLS) regular season football match. — AFP

59th, scoring from a free kick to surpass Argentina's Gonzalo Higuain as Inter Miami's all-time leading scorer with his 30th. Messi's entrance seemed to galvanize both teams as well as enraptured spectators at Mercedes-Benz Stadium, where fans were disappointed when the Argentine superstar sat out a game last year.

But it was Atlanta who ultimately capitalized on the energy boost. While Messi, Alba and Suarez came in as substitutes in the second half, Miami were without suspended Sergio Busquets and Tomas Aviles as well as injured David Martinez and Diego Gomez.

'Tough game'

Martino watched the game from a suite as he served a suspension for an accumulation of yellow cards. "It was a tough game, especially when we came to play here it's a tough stadium

to play and a difficult team," Miami assistant coach Javier Morales said. "But I think we had a good performance."

"I think in the first half we found the goal and managed the game in a good way. And then in the second half, when they scored the goal, Campana responded with ours and then we thought that we were going to manage the game a little bit better."

"But of course, Atlanta is playing at home, they're going to push, they had a big crowd, and this is kind of the game that we expected." Although they got just one point from the encounter, Miami can still secure the Supporters' Shield with nine points over the remaining five matches of the regular season.

In the Eastern Conference, they hold an eight-point lead over Cincinnati, who had goals from Yuya Kubo and Luca Orellano in a 2-1 victory over Minnesota. — AFP



Stefano Pioli

Prior to his near five-year stint at the Rossoneri, Pioli coached Italian sides including Fiorentina, Inter Milan, Lazio and Bologna. He started his managerial career in 2003 with Salernitana and had worked exclusively in his native Italy up until his appointment by Al Nassr.

His Portuguese predecessor Castro was the third coach to depart Al Nassr since Ronaldo's groundbreaking arrival in early 2023 on a contract that was said to net him 400 million euros over two-and-a-half years.

The highly decorated Ronaldo is yet to win a Saudi trophy with the Riyadh club, with his sole silverware so far being last year's Arab Club Champions Cup.

Al Nassr, who finished a distant second in the last Saudi Pro League season, have drawn twice in three matches at the start of the new campaign and on Monday drew 1-1 with Iraq's Al Shorta in their AFC Champions League Elite opener. — AFP

Struggling Roma replace De Rossi with Ivan Juric

ROME: Roma sacked club icon Daniele De Rossi and replaced him with Ivan Juric on Wednesday after a poor start to the season which has left the Serie A team without a win and languishing near the relegation zone.



Ivan Juric

In a statement Roma said that Juric had been hired until the end of the season, following the sacking of De Rossi after just eight months in charge. Juric, who was most recently at Torino, is Roma's third head coach in 2024 as in January De Rossi was brought in to replace Jose Mourinho, and signed a three-year contract in June after taking the capital club to the Europa League semi-finals.

Roma said that De Rossi had been sacked "in the best interests of the team" but enraged supporters gathered outside the club's Trigoria training ground took their anger out on players leaving after Wednesday morning's training session.

A World Cup winner with Italy in 2006, De Rossi was dismissed as his boyhood club, with whom he signed a contract until 2027 in June, sit 16th in Serie A with three points after four matches. The sudden sacking comes after Roma drew 1-1 at Genoa on Sunday, throwing away what would have been a first win of the campaign in the final seconds of the match.

Local hero

De Rossi is an idol for Roma fans as a local boy who played in some of the club's best teams of the last two decades, alongside fellow icon Francesco Totti. The 41-year-old, who grew up in a rough and ready beachside suburb of Rome, won over fans who saw in his passionate style of play one of their own on the pitch, despite a lack of silverware.

He won two Italian Cups and the 2007 Italian Super Cup, before finishing his playing career at Boca Juniors in early 2020 after less than a season in Argentina. De Rossi had been a shock interim replacement for Mourinho as his only previous managerial experience had been four months at lower league outfit SPAL.

He was sacked in February last year in a season which finished with SPAL being relegated to the third-tier Serie C. However he got off to a stunning start to life as Roma boss, revitalising what had become a moribund team under Mourinho and taking them to the Europa League last four where they were beaten 4-2 on aggregate by German champions Bayer Leverkusen. — AFP

Al Nassr appoint former AC Milan boss Pioli as coach

RIYADH: Saudi club Al Nassr announced Wednesday the appointment of Stefano Pioli as coach of the side headed up by Portugal star Cristiano Ronaldo.

The Italian replaces Luis Castro, who parted ways with the club on Tuesday after a slow start to the season, both domestically and in the AFC Champions League.

"Pioli is Nassrawi," Al Nassr said a statement on social media platform X. "We welcome Stefano Pioli as our new coach." The 58-year-old was AC Milan boss from October 2019 to May 2024, and oversaw the club's Serie A title-winning campaign in 2022.

Classifieds

Clinics & Hospitals

Clinics

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

Shaab	22518752
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

Change of Name

I, Sylvester holder of Passport No. M7064690 do hereby change my name to Sylvester Cyril (as given name) Lobo (surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name Sylvester Cyril Lobo and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. (19/09/2024)

I, Shaikh Nawaz, S/o Shaikh Iliyaz, aged about 31 years, residing at No. 173, N.G. Kareem Block, 3rd Cross, Shanthinagar, Mysore-570019, have changed my name from Shaiq Nawaz to Shaikh Nawaz in my Passport No. W0760072 on my own free will & sworn in before Notary Akbar Shariff vide affidavit dated 12-9-2024. In future I will be known, called and identified as Shaikh Nawaz. (# 6166 18/09/2024)

I, Elvira Thomas John Fernandes d/o Edward Fernandes & Clara Fernandes, holder of Passport No. S2393400, do hereby change my name to Elvira D'Costa for all purposes. I will henceforth be known

Man City held by Inter as PSG pinch win in Champions League

Gittens' late double gives Dortmund Champions League win at Brugge



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's French forward #10 Ousmane Dembele (C) controls the ball during the UEFA Champions League 1st round day 1 football match between Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Girona FC at the Parc des Princes Stadium, in Paris. — AFP

PARIS: Manchester City made a sluggish start to their Champions League campaign as they drew 0-0 against Inter Milan on Wednesday, while Paris Saint-Germain needed a last-minute goal to beat tournament newcomers Girona.

Pep Guardiola's side have won all four of their Premier League games this season but failed to break down Italian champions Inter in a repeat of the 2023 final won by City. City lost Kevin De Bruyne to injury at half-time and Phil Foden fired straight at Inter goalkeeper Yann Sommer with their best chance as Erling Haaland was kept quiet on a night he was chasing his 100th goal for the English club.

"It was a very intense game against a strong opponent. We knew what was coming, they are a top team as well and they are used to winning, so we were not going to have an easy job," City defender Ruben Dias told TNT Sports. Henrikh Mkhitaryan

could have won it for Inter when he blazed over 15 minutes from time, allowing City to extend their unbeaten run in the competition to 24 matches—one off the record set by Manchester United between 2007 and 2009.

It is just the second time in 42 home Champions League games under Guardiola that City have failed to score. "Our plan was to show that we're not scared to play here," said Inter midfielder Hakan Calhanoglu. PSG looked as if they would also have to settle for a point against European debutants Girona, who are backed by the City Football Group and ran Real Madrid close for several months in Spain last season before coming third.

However, a goalkeeping blunder from Paulo Gazzaniga in the 90th minute resulted in Nuno Mendes' cross squirming through his grasp and handed the French champions victory. "It was a difficult game,

they're a team that plays well with the ball," Mendes told Canal Plus. "I was surprised (by the goal). The goalkeeper was there and it got through."

Gittens propels Dortmund

Last season's runners-up Borussia Dortmund, beaten by Madrid in the final, had English winger Jamie Gittens to thank as the 20-year-old came off the bench and scored twice in a 3-0 win at Club Brugge. Serhou Guirassy added a stoppage-time penalty for his first Dortmund goal since arriving in the summer from Stuttgart.

Celtic began in style by thrashing Slovan Bratislava 5-1 in Glasgow, winning their opening game in the Champions League for the first time in 13 attempts. Liam Scales' powerful header put Celtic ahead and the hosts struck again through Kyogo Furuhashi early in the second half before Arne En-

gels converted a penalty for 3-0.

Kevin Wimmer pulled one back with a fine strike for the Slovak champions, who came through four rounds of qualifying, but Celtic pulled away with further goals from Daizen Maeda and Adam Idah. "It's a fantastic night," Celtic captain Callum McGregor told TNT Sports.

"I hope the supporters enjoyed it because the managers and players did. This is the next level for the group in terms of growth and development." Bologna drew 0-0 at home to Shakhtar Donetsk in the Italian team's first ever Champions League match. Lukasz Skorupski saved an early penalty from Shakhtar's Georgiy Sudakov.

Sparta Prague swept Red Bull Salzburg aside 3-0 with goals from Kaan Kairinen, Victor Olatunji and Qazim Laci, as the Czech champions won for the first time in the competition proper since 2003. — AFP

White Sox heading for worst season in MLB history

LOS ANGELES: As perseverance fades into futility, the Chicago White Sox, enduring the most miserable campaign in modern Major League Baseball history, are struggling to avoid setting an MLB season loss record.

The White Sox lost 4-3 in 13 innings on Wednesday at the Los Angeles Angels, falling to 36-117 with nine games remaining in a nightmare six-month season. A Jordyn Adams single in the 13th inning drove in Eric Wagaman from third base with the winning run for the Angels, who rallied to tie the game three times.

The 1962 New York Mets set the MLB record for most losses in a season with 120 while the 2003 Detroit Tigers own the American League record for most defeats with 119. "Everyone in there is aware of where we're at," White Sox interim manager Grady Sizemore said of his locker room. "Whether we hit some magical number or not, it's still not a winning season. It's not the season we hoped."

Chicago's playoff dreams ended six weeks before the season's end, which comes a week from Sunday with the White Sox facing three games at San Diego, three home games against the Angels and three games at Detroit.

"If you're sitting there only focused on the negative, you're probably going to have negative outcomes," Sizemore said. "It doesn't do us any good to sit here and be like, 'We have to win this many games to avoid whatever.' We have to compete every night.

"The outside factors, all the other things, it doesn't really matter. At this point, we're trying to get better, we're trying to finish strong, and whatever the record is, is what it is, but it's not what we want it to be."

Going beyond the modern era, the 1899 Cleveland Spiders went 20-134, but that dismal 19th Century effort is no consolation. "Everyone in this organization is extremely unhappy with the results of this season," White Sox owner Jerry Reinsdorf said last week. "This year has been very painful for all, especially our fans. We did not arrive here overnight and



ANAHEIM: Corey Lee of the Chicago White Sox scores when Logan O'Hoppe #14 of the Los Angeles Angels is overthrown at the plate in the tenth inning at Angel Stadium of Anaheim. — AFP

solutions won't happen overnight either."

It's much like when Michael Jordan retired and the Reinsdorf-owned NBA Chicago Bulls, who won six titles in the 1990s, suffered six losing seasons in a row. "Going back to last year, we have made difficult decisions and changes to begin building a foundation for future success," Reinsdorf said.

"What has impressed me is how our players and staff have continued to work and bring a professional attitude to the ballpark each day despite a historically difficult season. No one is happy with the results, but I commend the continued effort." The White Sox matched an AL record set by the 1988 Baltimore Orioles by losing 21 games in a row from July 10 to August 5. Days later, the team fired manager Pedro Grifol after going 28-89 and elevated Sizemore to interim manager.

The White Sox own MLB worsts with 123 home runs, 470 runs, 449 runs batted in, a team .222 batting average and 596 walks allowed while rankings

last in the AL with 782 runs allowed and a 4.82 team pitcher earned-run average.

'Just need adjustments'

They have used more than 60 players this season, a team record. Talent has fled over the past two seasons and even top prospects in the development system can't help now. White Sox general manager Chris Getz has warned fans the club won't be spending big for free agent stars, trusting in young talent improving. "We're not going to be working heavy in free agency," Getz said. "We've got guys on the field right now who need to improve their game, a lot of young players who just need to make adjustments to be more productive." The White Sox beat visiting Oakland 7-6 last Sunday to snap a 16-game home losing streak on Andrew Benintendi's ninth-inning homer. "Every win is much needed, especially in our situation," said Benintendi. "We had lost 16 home games in a row so it felt nice." — AFP

Munich to rename stadium street after Beckenbauer

BERLIN: A street next to Bayern Munich's Allianz Arena stadium will be renamed to honor German football great Franz Beckenbauer who died earlier this year, the city council announced Thursday. Part of the street, currently called Werner Heisenberg Allee, which runs alongside the stadium in the north of the city will be renamed Franz Beckenbauer Platz.

The change means the stadium, which is set to host the Champions League final in May 2025, will officially be situated at Franz Beckenbauer Platz 5 -- the midfielder's shirt number. Beckenbauer, nicknamed 'Der Kaiser' for his dominant style on the field, was one of the greatest players of all time.

He died in January aged 78 and the Munich City Council announced the change will take effect on the first anniversary of his death, on January 7, 2025. "Naming a street is the highest honor that the city of Munich can bestow posthumously and a sign of the deep respect and appreciation that we have for Franz Beckenbauer," mayor Dieter Reiter said in a statement.

Beckenbauer won the World Cup both as a player and coach, along with the Euros and the Ballon d'Or. During 13 years with Bayern, the Munich-born midfielder won three European Cups and four German league titles, winning another with Hamburg in 1981-82.

Reiter called Beckenbauer "one of the greatest athletes our city has ever produced." "With his sporting successes and his commitment to football, he has left a lasting mark on Germany's sporting landscape. His calm, humorous manner and his way of expressing himself will forever remain part of the Munich attitude to life." Beckenbauer is also set to be honored with a statue outside the stadium alongside that of fellow Bayern and Germany teammate Gerd Mueller. — AFP