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Crown Prince meets world leaders

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, received Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani (left), Bahraini Crown Prince and Prime Minister Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa (center) and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif (right) on the sidelines of the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly. During the meetings, multiple topics of mutual interest, as well as ways to bolster bilateral relations, in addition to the latest regional and international developments were discussed. — KUNA (See Page 3)

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The Cabinet has approved an Amiri decree which almost entirely scraps the right of foreign women to acquire Kuwaiti citizenship after marrying a Kuwaiti citizen. Under the existing law, which was amended a few years ago, if a foreign woman is married to a Kuwaiti citizen, she has the right to apply for citizenship after several years, provided she has children from her Kuwaiti husband.

Previously, the waiting period was around five years, but the period was extended. The new decree makes it extremely difficult for foreign wives to get citizenship. It states that "the acquisition of Kuwaiti citizenship by a foreigner does not result in his wife becoming a Kuwaiti citizen". It also states "the marriage of a foreign woman to a Kuwaiti does not result in her becoming a citizen".

The new measure comes as part of a move to tighten the screws for naturalization. During the past five months, Kuwait has revoked the citizenship of hundreds of Kuwaitis for several reasons, mainly

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Cable cut hits Internet services

KUWAIT: The FALCON submarine cable operated by GCX sustained damage in the link that connects Kuwait and Al-Khobar, Saudi Arabia, outside Kuwait's territorial waters, which affected the quality of Internet services in Kuwait, the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) said Wednesday. Coordination is ongoing with local Internet service providers to reroute data through alternative submarine cables, CITRA added.

MoH recovers from cyberattack

KUWAIT: The health ministry announced that key systems have been restored following a cyberattack that affected some hospitals and the Sahel app. The ministry's systems, including those at the Kuwait Cancer Control Center and administrative functions like health insurance, were restored from backups. Technical teams identified and contained the breach, with assistance from government security agencies to prevent further spread. The ministry ensured that essential healthcare services remained uninterrupted and has updated its systems to prevent future attacks. Efforts are ongoing to fully restore all systems while ensuring data protection and high-quality healthcare. — KUNA

No transactions without biometrics

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Civil Identification (PACI) said all transactions would be put on hold for citizens by the end of this month unless the biometric process is completed. This came in a statement by PACI, which affirmed that the procedure is in line with top authorities' directives. It urged citizens to complete the process before Sept 30 to ensure their transactions go smoothly. The deadline for the biometric registration for expatriates is Dec 30. — KUNA

BDS: Boycotting is a moral duty, not a personal choice

By Passant Hisham

KUWAIT: Yousef Shamsah and Mishari Ibrahim, members of BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) Kuwait, called for boycotting companies that sup-

port the Zionist occupation, emphasizing that this movement is crucial for the security of Arab nations. In an interview with Kuwait Times, Shamsah warned the Zionist entity's goal is to dominate the region, and countries that ignore the boycott risk facing similar consequences as Palestine.

While supporting personal boycotts, Ibrahim stressed that divestment — urging companies and governments to withdraw investments — has a more significant impact. The BDS movement in Kuwait achieved success in 2014, leading to major financial losses for companies supporting the Zionist entity. (See Page 2)

Yousef Shamsah Mishari Ibrahim

Zionists eye entry into Lebanon as Hezb hits Tel Aviv

BEIRUT: US President Joe Biden warned Wednesday of the possibility of an "all-out war" in the Middle East as the Zionist entity put troops on alert for possible entry into Lebanon and the war in Gaza grinds on. "An all-out war is possible," Biden told ABC chat show "The View". "What I think is, also, the opportunity is still in play to have a settlement that could fundamentally change the whole region."

The Zionist army chief told soldiers on Wednesday to prepare for a possible ground offensive to fight Hezbollah in Lebanon as the air force conducted hundreds of deadly strikes around the country. "We are attacking all day, both to prepare the ground for the possibility of your entry, but also to continue striking Hezbollah," Lieutenant General Herzi Halevi told a tank brigade, according to a statement from the military. Lebanon's health minister said Wednesday's strikes killed 51 people and

Continued on Page 6

NEW YORK: People participate in a "Flood Manhattan for Lebanon" protest at Madison Square Park on Sept 24, 2024. — AFP

US waives visas for Qatar in first for Arab country

WASHINGTON: The United States said Tuesday it will waive visa requirements for citizens of Qatar, making the close Gulf partner the first Arab country to clear the hurdle. The energy-rich Gulf monarchy cleared the "stringent security requirements" to become the 42nd member of the visa waiver program,

the Department of Homeland Security announced.

The agreement "will deepen our strategic partnership and enhance the flow of people and commerce between our two countries," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement. Qatar — where citizens make up a small minority of residents — has been jockeying with fellow wealthy Gulf Arab states for a greater global role.

Home to a major US air base, Qatar has taken a lead in so far unsuccessful efforts to mediate a Gaza ceasefire and earlier helped the United States fly out thousands of Afghan allies as the Taliban seized control. US officials said they were open to other Gulf Arab nations eventually entering the program.

The countries whose citizens are exempt from US visas are overwhelmingly wealthy and mostly in Europe and East Asia. The United States last year added the Zionist entity after years of friction. To enter the program, the Zionist entity made promises not to discriminate against its admission of US citizens of Palestinian or other Arab descent.

Under the waiver program, citizens apply online for pre-clearance to enter the United States rather than going through the paperwork and expense of a visa. Some applicants are still told to seek a visa, including if they have visited a number of countries with adversarial relationships with the United States, such as Iran. — AFP



Amir's Representative meets world leaders, senior officials



NEW YORK: Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, received US National Security Agency Advisor Jake Sullivan on Tuesday.



Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, received Latvian President Edgars Rinkevics on Tuesday.



Representative of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince, receives Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of BlackRock Company Larry Fink.



Representative of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince, received the President of Libya's Presidential Council Mohamed Al Menfi on Tuesday. — KUNA photos



Representative of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, received Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmon on Tuesday.



Representative of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince, met Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides on Tuesday.



Representative of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, received Vietnamese President To Lam on Tuesday.



Representative of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince, held talks with Polish President Andrzej Duda on Tuesday.

Cabinet condemns Zionist attacks

Ministers extol Crown Prince's speech at UN summit

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Cabinet denounced strongly the Zionist occupation airstrikes launched on Lebanon that killed and wounded hundreds of people. During its meeting held on Tuesday at Bayan Palace under the chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Cabinet said that these attacks are a blatant violation of all international norms and law, including international humanitarian law, and pose grave threats to the region's stability and security.

Kuwait expressed its solidarity with and support for Lebanon, rejecting all measures that undermine Lebanon's sovereignty and stability, Shareeda Al-Maousherji, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, said in a statement after the meeting. The Cabinet warned once more against the repercussions of increased escalation and danger in the region due to Zionists' continued aggression on the brotherly Palestinian people in the besieged Gaza Strip.

It also cautioned against Zionist occupation ignorance of international calls and the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, calling for taking a decisive step towards crimes committed against innocents, Al-Maousherji said. In addition, the Cabinet

extolled Kuwait's speech delivered by the Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, during the future summit at the headquarters of the United Nations in New York.

During the speech, His Highness the Crown Prince reiterated the necessity for all to comply with all international treaties, charters, and laws and avoid double standards. His Highness the Crown Prince also condemned the genocide in Palestine that claimed more than 41,000 Palestinians, most of whom are women and children. After its establishment in 1961, Kuwait was keen on establishing the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development to enhance the development bases of developing countries, His Highness the Crown Prince told the summit.

Kuwait, since its independence in 1961, has provided 1,073 soft funding cases for varied development projects carried out in 105 countries, His Highness the Crown Prince noted. On the 94th anniversary of Saudi Arabia National Day falling on September 23, the Cabinet extended its congratulations to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and the

Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud on this occasion.

The Cabinet wished everlasting security and stability, as well as further progress and prosperity, to the Kingdom under the wise leadership, lauding its great role in serving Islam and Muslims, and renaissance. Being keen on maintaining the national identity, the Cabinet approved the draft decree amending the Amiri Decree No. 15 of 1959 regarding Kuwait's citizenship. Under the draft, a foreigner who gets Kuwaiti nationality does not mean that his wife becomes a Kuwaiti, and a foreign woman who gets married to a Kuwaiti man is not allowed to get Kuwaiti citizenship.

In addition, the aforementioned draft decree law allows withdrawing Kuwaiti nationality from a Kuwaiti who acquires it in some specific cases, like fraud or forgery, and also if convicted by a final ruling in crimes of honor or trust, or crimes related to Allah, prophets, or the Amir personality. The Cabinet also endorsed the minutes of the meeting of the Supreme Committee to Investigate the Kuwaiti Citizenship, which include some cases of the withdrawal and loss of Kuwaiti citizenship by fraud or forgery, in line with Law No. 15 of 1959.

Moreover, the Cabinet was briefed on a visual presentation by Minister of Finance, Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, and Acting Oil Minister Noura Al-Fassam on Kuwait's financial status on 31-3-2024. The ministers also saw another presentation by Minister of Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood Affairs Amthal Al-Huwailah and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abdullatif Al-Meshari on the issuance of the decree No. 696 of 2024 regarding amending the decree No. 206 of 2009.

Being keen on control, Al-Huwailah told the Cabinet about a study prepared on some public benefit associations that are inactive and violate the law No 24 of 1962 to issue a decree to dissolve them. Additionally, the Cabinet was presented with a visual presentation by Head of the Government Performance Follow-Up Agency Sheikh Ahmad Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on a report of building a government performance system to curb observations mentioned in the government regulatory agencies' reports and achieve the state's financial sustainability through adopting a financial policy and developing mechanisms of bonuses and assessment of all workers. — KUNA



Minister of Public Works Dr Noura Al-Mashaan at the Global Sustainable Transport Forum held in Beijing.



Kuwait's Minister of Public Works Dr Noura Al-Mashaan and her high-profile accompanying delegation visits Chinese firms. — KUNA photos



Kuwait commits to global sustainable transport

BEIJING: Kuwaiti Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan Wednesday restated her country's commitment to global sustainable transport involving infrastructure development and initiatives for promoting green transport and cutting emissions. The minister made the remarks while addressing the Global Sustainable Transport Forum (GSTF) 2024, held in Beijing with the theme Sustainable Transport Logistics Connecting the World," the Ministry of Public Works said in a press statement. She also expounded on Kuwait's 2035 Vision

that complies with the UN Agenda 2035 for Sustainable Development, saying that the Kuwaiti Public Authority for Roads and Transportation has a strategic plan including bids for new road projects.

The Kuwaiti minister, further, attended a ministerial session held on the sidelines of the forum on ways of sharing expertise and cooperation in the field of sustainable development. The gathering is mainly meant to promote global transport cooperation and construct a safe, convenient, efficient, green, economical, inclusive, and resilient sustainable transport system as an inherent requirement of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Many Arab and world transport ministers are participating in the forum.

Minister visits Chinese firms

Kuwait's Minister and her high-profile accompanying delegation visited on Tuesday a number of Chinese firms and institutions. Al-Mashaan will

participate in the Global Sustainable Transport Forum (GSTF) 2024 on Thursday. Speaking to KUNA, Al-Mashaan said she and her delegation paid a visit to the headquarters of the Chinese company tasked with carrying out and developing Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port project and the fully-automated Port of Tianjin, one of China's latest facilities.

The minister further paid a visit to Chinese governmental laboratories specialized in artificial waves and soil treatment, as she was briefed on the latest global techniques and equipment used in this field. During her participation in the forum tomorrow, she is set to meet with a host of senior Chinese officials and international organizations specialized in transport field to discuss means of enhancing cooperation and sharing expertise. Al-Mashaan's delegation includes Assistant Foreign Minister for Asia Affairs Ambassador Samih Jawhar Hayat and Kuwait's Ambassador to China Jassem Al-Najem, among others. — KUNA



CAP holds discussion, exhibition on women's mental health in war

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: CAP hosted a significant exhibition and discussion panel titled "Women, Peace, and Mental Health" on Tuesday, September 24, 2024, focusing on the theme of "Women in Times of War in Palestine." The event brought together distinguished speakers, including Sheikhha Intisar Salem Al-Sabah, founder of the Intisar Foundation, and Sheikhha Jawaher Ibrahim

Al-Duaij, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Human Rights, Dr Faisal Al-Hajri, a urology specialist, Dr Hussain Al-Mutairi, an orthopedic consultant, who is also a Former Chairman of the Health Committee in the National Assembly, and Maha Al-Barjas, Secretary-General of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society.

The event included multiple notable audience, highlighted by the presence of Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarah Jaber Al-Ahmad, Ambassadors, and other esteemed guests. The discussions focused on the critical role of women in fostering peace and addressing mental health challenges in conflict zones, underscoring the need for ongoing support and advocacy for women's rights in war-affected regions.



GCC reaffirms support for UNRWA

'World must halt Zionist violations in Gaza, Lebanon'



Secretary General of the GCC Jasem Al-Budaiwi and Commissioner-General of UNRWA Philippe Lazzarini during their meeting. — KUNA photos



Secretary General of the GCC Jasem Al-Budaiwi holds talks with US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Barbara Leaf.

NEW YORK: Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Jasem Al-Budaiwi, on Tuesday, praised the prominent humanitarian and relief role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). This came during his reception of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA Philippe Lazzarini on the sidelines of his participation in the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, at the GCC Mission to the United Nations.

During the meeting, the Commissioner-General emphasized the Council's ongoing support for the agency and its noble objectives that benefit the Palestinian people. Al-Budaiwi expressed his deep appreciation for

the significant efforts and contributions made by the GCC countries in supporting the agency in facing the increasing challenges faced by the Palestinian people. He affirmed that these contributions are fundamental pillars enabling UNRWA to continue providing health and relief services to Palestinian refugees.

Violations in Gaza, Lebanon

The Secretary General called on the international community to halt Zionist violations against the Gaza Strip and Lebanon to save lives and protect the innocent. In a statement by the GCC, Al-Budaiwi emphasized that the ongoing events in the region, particularly the serious violations of Palestinian and Lebanese territories,

required immediate and serious action from the international community and effective international powers to halt these violations, protect the lives of innocent civilians, and ensure respect for international laws, charters, and customs.

This was during his meeting with the US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Barbara Leaf on the sidelines of his participation in the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, at the GCC Mission to the United Nations. During the meeting, the GCC Secretary General stressed that the ongoing escalation poses a serious threat to security and stability in the region, warning of the dire consequences that may arise from

this explosive situation.

He called for urgent and effective action to stop the escalation and work towards an immediate ceasefire, while adhering to relevant international and UN resolutions. The meeting also discussed and reviewed the agenda for the upcoming joint ministerial meeting of the strategic partnership between the GCC and the United States, which will be held in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly's high-level week. This meeting will address bilateral topics and important regional issues such as the situation in Gaza, and explore ways to enhance the strategic partnership between the GCC and the United States, contributing to the achievement of mutual interests for both sides. — KUNA

In my view

The 'Al Irfan'



By Dr Nermin Yousuf Al-Houti

Today my long awaited realization of a dream became a reality, as I saw Madinat Al Irfan Theatre Center, when I was invited by Oman's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth to attend the 8th Omani Theatre Festival and critique a play shown during this festival. The design of Al Irfan theatre was inspired by the Late Sultan Qaboos Rose. The theatre has three levels with a capacity of 3,200 persons. It is equipped with state of the art acoustics that were developed to attract the most prominent artists, shows and entertainment events.

The theatre also has two halls for activities such as international conferences. The larger hall has a capacity of 2,688 persons with a flexible system that allows for dividing it into three or six separate hall fully equipped, while the smaller hall has a capacity of 1,026 persons and also can be divided into two halls. The center also has 19 separate meeting halls in addition to the auditorium that has a capacity of 456 persons.

Madinat Al Irfan is considered a shining Gulf Cultural icon. Thanks for the Sultanate of Oman for turning this dream, who many playwrights dreamt of into a tangible truth. I will not forget the late actor Abdulhusein Abdulredha when he sought the realization of this dream by constructing a cultural city, and today we are living what theatre actors be them late and alive dreamt of to have a cultural city that encompass all means of comfort.

Yes, the realization was not limited to a center and a theatre, rather we find that Madinat Al Irfan has many hotels that surround Al Irfan center and theatre. It is really an integrated project due to what it has in the form of comfort means for each visitor who loves the theatre and culture, not only the theatre and culture, not only the Omani, but the Arab, Gulf and International. Final word, may Allah protect the Sultanate of Oman under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq. May Allah protect the people of Oman, and thanks to the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth and all officials and organizers of the 8th Oman Theatre Festival.

GCC Undersecretaries discuss technological developments

DOHA: The 30th meeting of the Committee of Undersecretaries of Post and Telecommunications of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries was held in the Qatari capital Doha on Wednesday with the participation of Kuwait Chairman of the Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA). Eng Ahmed Al-Musalmani said in a speech at the meeting that cooperation in the fields of post and telecommunications has gained increasing importance in light of the rapid technological developments witnessed in our world today.

Al-Musalmani stressed the need to enhance coordination and exchange of expertise in the post and telecommunications sectors to support the process of development and economic integration among the GCC countries, noting that the meeting represents a valuable opportunity to discuss ways to enhance the level of cooperation, overcome obstacles, and come up with practical recommendations that contribute to achieving the desired goals.

For his part, Head of the Economic Affairs Sector at the General Secretariat of the Gulf Transport and Communications Cooperation Council, Dr Waleed Al-Hosani, congratulated the member states on the



The 30th Meeting of the Committee of Undersecretaries of the Ministries of Post and Telecommunications in GCC. — KUNA

qualitative leap they have achieved in the field of communications and post. He explained that the committee meeting discussed many topics that directly touch the Gulf citizen and contribute to driving the economy. The Kuwaiti delegation partici-

pating in the meeting includes Acting Chairman of the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority Abdullah Al-Ajmi and Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Communications, Eng Mishaal Al-Zaid. — KUNA

Greece Ambassador Ioannis Plotas

On the occasion of the 63rd Anniversary of Kuwait Times, I would like to express my warmest congratulations to its journalists, staff and the editorial team. For over six decades, Kuwait Times has been playing a significant role towards providing to the public genuine and reliable information, as well as an in depth analysis of the domestic and international affairs. At the same time, I would also like to emphasize the professionalism its journalists display within the media landscape, offering to the readers valuable and noteworthy coverage of the news, particu-

larly in these difficult times where uncertainty characterize the international political scene. Allow me to express my gratitude to the chief editor and the whole team of the Kuwait Times my gratitude for our constructive cooperation, wishing them, to proceed on the same path of objectiveness and professionalism, with success for the more years to come.



Czech Republic Charge d'Affaires Anna Otypkova

On behalf of the Embassy of the Czech Republic, I would like to convey our warmest wishes and congratulations to the administration and dedicated Kuwait Times' staff on the occasion of the publication's 63rd anniversary. As one of the major English news source in Kuwait and the GCC region, Kuwait Times has proven itself over the years to be a reliable, transparent and objective source of information, with a strong commitment to press freedom, which highlights

issues of key importance for Kuwait and the global community. We thank Kuwait Times team for years of excellent, working relations as we look forward to future opportunities for fruitful collaboration. As you celebrate this milestone, I wish you continued success and many more years to come.



India, Kuwait discuss ties

NEW DELHI: Ambassador of Kuwait to India Meshal Al-Shemali reviewed bilateral relations and ways to cement them with Indian Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh on Tuesday. In a statement to KUNA, Ambassador Al-Shemali said both sides hailed efforts made to strengthen bilateral cooperation in economic, trade and cultural fields. The Indian minister thanked the leadership and people of Kuwait for all support given to Indian expatriate community living in Kuwait. The Ambassador hailed the strong and historic ties between the two friend-



ly nations built on mutual respect and understanding. The Indian minister had visited Kuwait in wake of the death of 49 people, mainly Indians, and injuring dozens of others following a fire in a residential building in Kuwait's Mangaf city last June. — KUNA



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Zionist bombing displaces 90,000 people in Lebanon

Trump warned of 'big threats' on his life by Iran

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TYRE: A cloud of smoke erupts during Zionist air strikes on a village south of Tyre in southern Lebanon on September 25, 2024. — AFP

Palestinians in Gaza stunned by Zionist strikes on Lebanon

The Zionist entity say bombardment 'is against Hamas and Hezbollah, but on the ground it's people who die'

GAZA: As Zionist bombs flattened buildings and sent smoke billowing skywards over Lebanon this week, Gazans looked on with both empathy and fear over how the widening war might affect them. The Zionist entity carried out a third day of air strikes against Lebanon on Wednesday, saying it was targeting weapons caches and infrastructure belonging to the Lebanon-based Hezbollah group.

In a dramatic escalation after nearly a year of cross-border violence, Zionist air raids on Monday killed at least 558 people in Lebanon in the country's deadliest day since the 1975-1990 civil war. Hezbollah said it began striking the entity in solidarity with Hamas, whose fighters led a deadly attack on the Zionist entity on October 7, 2023. Chadi Nawfal, a 24-year-old resident of Gaza City who said he lost his home in a Zionist strike, told AFP on Wednesday that footage from Lebanon was hard to watch.

"The bloody scenes from Lebanon that we see on our television screens are very harsh images," he told AFP. "We people in the Gaza Strip are the only ones who can currently feel the pain that the Lebanese people are experiencing." The sustained Zionist aerial assault on Lebanon is the latest in a series of attacks that began last week with coordinated blasts of Hezbollah pagers and walkie-talkies. The explosions killed 39 people and wounded almost 3,000, and were followed by a deadly strike on Friday on south Beirut, with leading Hezbollah commander Ibrahim Aqil among the dead.

Zionist carnage moves north

Another strike on the Lebanese capital on Tuesday killed Hezbollah rocket forces commander Ibrahim Kobeissi. Taken together, the entity's onslaught confirmed its Defence Minister Yoav Gallant's claim a week ago that the war's "center

of gravity" was moving northward. The Hezbollah and Zionist exchange of fire has displaced tens of thousands of Zionists. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government has said it is determined to return them "to their homes" along the border with Lebanon.

Ayman Al-Amreiti, another displaced resident of Gaza City, said he was worried the fighting in Lebanon would mean the ongoing war in Gaza gets less global attention. "The military weight is now shifting to Lebanon, so even the media attention on the Gaza Strip has become secondary," the 42-year-old told AFP. "This encourages the appetite of the occupation to commit more crimes." The Zionist retaliatory military offensive has killed at least 41,495 people in Gaza, mostly civilians, according to figures provided by the territory's health ministry. The United Nations has described the figures as reliable.

'The victims are the people'

There are obvious differences in timeframe and scale, but Umm Munzir Naim, 52, told AFP she could not help but see similarities between the fighting in Lebanon and in Gaza. "The war against Lebanon and Hezbollah is a war like in Gaza. The victims are the people," she said. "The small, the big, the properties, everything is targeted — humans, trees... They say it's against Hamas and Hezbollah, but on the ground it's people who die."

Amreiti said he hoped the fighting would end soon in both places, and that their fates could even be linked given Hezbollah's past pledges to stop fighting once a Gaza ceasefire comes about. "The outcome, the hope is that any settlement with Hezbollah will also involve Gaza," he said. "Right now, that is the hope that the children of the Palestinian people are turning to." — AFP

Zionist entity sends scores of bodies without identification to Gaza

CAIRO: The Gaza health ministry has refused to receive the bodies of 88 Palestinians sent by the Zionist entity without prior coordination and without details about their identities. The bodies were brought into Gaza on Wednesday in a container loaded on a truck through a Zionist-controlled crossing, but, according to Palestinian officials, there was no information provided about the names or ages of the victims or locations where they died.

Health officials at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis refused to receive them and bury them, urging the International Committee of the Red Cross ICRC to seek details from the Zionist entity. "The health ministry halted the procedures to receive the container (carrying the bodies) until the completion of the full data and information about those bodies so their relatives can identify them," the ministry said in a statement.

According to Al-Jazeera, the bodies are unidentifiable because they are "mostly decomposed". "There are signs that those bodies have been in (Zionist entity) for a long time," said Al-Jazeera reporter Tareq Abu Azzoum from Deir El-Balah. "The Palestinian Health Ministry said that the (Zionist) military has deliberately concealed the identity of those Palestinian people. There is no information about their names, genders and the location they have been kidnapped from. The circumstances of their abduction from the Gaza Strip are also unclear," he added. The head of the Gaza government media office told Reuters that health ministry officials told the driver of the truck to bring the bodies of dead Palestinians back to the Zionist crossing from which he had arrived. The truck then left the hospital. "They must act according to the international humanitarian law and in a way that preserves the dignity of the martyrs and their families," Ismail Al-Thawabta told Reuters. The Red Cross said it wasn't involved in the transfer process. "We reiterate that all families have the right to receive news about their loved ones and bury them respectfully and in line with their traditions," said a statement issued by the ICRC.

Under International Humanitarian Law, those who have died during an armed conflict must be handled with dignity and be properly managed. The law requires that they be searched for, collected and evacuated, which helps ensure that people do not go missing, the ICRC statement added. The Civil Emergency Service tasked with finding people missing under rubble, on roads and in ruined buildings in Gaza says it has been notified of around 10,000 people missing during the near year-long Zionist assault on Gaza. — Agencies

UNRWA fears new 'tragedy' as Lebanon violence adds strain

UNITED NATIONS: The UN agency for Palestinian refugees is bracing for a triple crisis as Zionist strikes on Lebanon add to the strain it is facing in Gaza and the West Bank, its chief told AFP on Tuesday. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), founded in 1949, provides services, including education and healthcare, for Palestinian refugees in Gaza, the Zionist-occupied West Bank, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. With three of its area of operations turning into "active frontlines," the embattled agency already grappling with a severe financial shortfall is poised to come under even more pressure, said UNRWA's Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini.

"We already have Gaza, we already have the West Bank, so we have two fields of operation which have become active frontlines," he said. "We (now) also have Lebanon, which would mean that basically three ... contexts of operation will become humanitarian emergencies," he added, calling the situation a "triple tragedy." Faced with mounting Zionist strikes, UNRWA has paused some operations in Lebanon as it converts its schools into shelters for hundreds of people displaced from the

south of the country.

Displacement soared after the Zionist entity pummeled Hezbollah targets on Monday, killing at least 558 people in the deadliest day of violence in the country since its 1975-90 civil war, according to local authorities. "The fear is that ... we are going into a full-fledged war," Lazzarini told AFP as world leaders gathered at the United Nations for its annual diplomatic event. "Another concern is that parts of Lebanon becomes like Gaza."

'More strain'

The Zionist assault on Gaza, which followed the October 7 attack by Hamas on the Zionist entity, has piled threats on UNRWA, the only UN organization created to aid a specific refugee population. At least 222 UNRWA staff have been killed and two-thirds of the agency's facilities in Gaza have been damaged and destroyed since the start of the Gaza war. "Depending on how the war will be unfolding in Lebanon, we have thousands of staff there, it is not excluded ... that staff will also be killed," Lazzarini said.

A new front in Lebanon "will put much more strain on us. The needs will increase and we will also need more support from the donors," the UNRWA chief added. The agency saw a series of funding cuts earlier this year after the entity accused more than a dozen of its 13,000 Gaza employees of involvement in the October 7 attack by Hamas. Most donors have since resumed funding with the exception of the United States, UNRWA's largest



NAAMEH: People sit with their belongings in the back of a truck as they arrive in the coastal town of Naameh, south of Lebanon's capital Beirut on September 24, 2024, as they flee their homes in southern Lebanon. — AFP

financial backer. "UNRWA has enough funding until the end of October," Lazzarini said. With an \$80 million shortfall for 2024, Lazzarini is hosting a donor conference on the sidelines of this UN General Assembly this week to shore up pledges from donors. The main outcome the UNRWA chief is seeking is "to make sure that we can operate till the end of the year" but also to secure longer term commitments from donors. "I'm very concerned about 2025 because there is a certain number of traditional donors who will go through austerity measures and who will reduce their overseas budget," he said, without naming any state. — AFP

International

Trump warned of 'big threats' on his life by Iran

Iran denies accusations it was attempting to assassinate the former president

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump said Wednesday there were "big threats" on his life posed by Iran after the Republican presidential candidate's campaign team said US intelligence warned him of "real and specific" threats from Tehran. "Big threats on my life by Iran. The entire US Military is watching and waiting," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform. "Moves were already made by Iran that didn't work out, but they will try again. ... I am surrounded by more men, guns, and weapons than I have ever seen before," he said, following increased scrutiny of the US Secret Service since two attempts on Trump's life this year.

Trump's campaign team said in a statement Tuesday that US intelligence had warned the former president of "real and specific" threats from Iran to assassinate him. It was not immediately clear if the threats referred to by the campaign and Trump himself were new or threats that have previously been reported. "President Trump was briefed earlier today by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence regarding real and specific threats from Iran to assassinate him in an effort to destabilize and sow chaos in the United States," campaign communications director Steven Cheung said in the statement.

"Intelligence officials have identified that these continued and coordinated attacks have heightened in the past few months, and law enforcement officials across all agencies are working to ensure President Trump is protected and the election is free from interference," he added. The campaign did not elaborate on the claims.

Iran has rejected accusations that it is trying to kill Trump this summer, shortly after a gunman opened

fire at a rally in Pennsylvania, killing one person and wounding the presidential candidate. Days after the July 13 assassination attempt, US media reported that authorities had received intelligence on an alleged Iranian plot against the Republican, prompting his protection to be boosted. Iran rejected the "malicious" accusations. "If they do 'assassinate President Trump,' which is always a possibility, I hope that America obliterates Iran, wipes it off the face of the Earth — If that does not happen, American Leaders will be considered 'gutless' cowards!" Trump wrote on his social media platform, Truth Social, at the time.

Iranian cyberattackers

US intelligence agencies have also accused Iran of a hack targeting Trump's campaign, alleging Tehran is seeking to influence the 2024 election. A joint statement from the US Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency this month said Iranian cyberattackers had offered "stolen, non-public" material from Trump's campaign to staff for his then-White House rival, President Joe Biden.

"Foreign actors are increasing their election influence activities" as Election Day in November approaches, the statement said, singling out Russia, Iran and China as "trying by some measure to exacerbate divisions in US society for their own benefit."

The US agencies said the Iranian cyberattackers had also attempted to share the information stolen from the Trump campaign with US media



INDIANA: Former US President and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump gestures as he speaks during a campaign rally at Ed Fry Arena in Indiana, Pennsylvania, on September 23, 2024. — AFP

organizations. It did not name the outlets.

Iran has also vehemently denied those accusations. The campaign of Trump's presidential election rival, Democrat Kamala Harris, said on August 13 that it too had been targeted by foreign hackers, but did

not give an indication of which country was believed to be behind the attempt. Americans cast their ballots on November 5. Polls show Trump and Harris, who launched her campaign after Biden dropped out earlier this summer, are neck and neck. — AFP

Afghanistan wants to attend BRICS summit, says Taliban govt

KABUL: Afghanistan's Taliban government is keen to join the BRICS economic forum, a spokesman said on Tuesday ahead of the group's summit in Russia. The summit of emerging economies that includes Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa will meet on October 22-24 in the southwestern Russian city of Kazan. "Countries with major resources and the world's biggest economies are associated with the BRICS forum, especially Russia, India, and China," said Hamdullah Fitrat, a government deputy spokesman.

"Currently, we have good economic ties and commercial exchanges with them. We are keen to expand our relations and participate in the economic forums of the BRICS," he said. The Taliban authorities have not been officially recognized by any country, but they have growing relations with founding BRICS nations including China and Russia. The group, which has recently expanded by including Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Ethiopia, has not publicly reacted to the Taliban government's comments.

A spokesman for the Afghanistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs told AFP on Wednesday that they had "no information so far" about an invitation to the event. Both Moscow and Beijing have expressed their readiness to invest in commercial projects in Afghanistan and to cooperate with Taliban authorities in their fight against Islamic State Khorasan, the Islamic State group's Afghanistan branch. — AFP

Japan ruling party to hold 'toss-up' vote for next PM

TOKYO: Japan could get its first woman or youngest-ever prime minister on Friday when the ruling party holds a leadership vote described as the most "unpredictable" in many years. A record nine candidates are in the running after the long-powerful factions of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) disbanded earlier this year over a funding scandal. Because the conservative LDP holds a parliamentary majority, the winner is certain to become prime minister, and will likely call a snap election to shore up their mandate.

Three frontrunners have emerged in polling: former defense minister Shigeru Ishiba, 43-year-old Shinjiro Koizumi — the son of a popular ex-premier — and nationalist hardliner Sanae Takaichi, who would be the first woman in the job. Whoever wins must face down regional security threats, from an increasingly assertive China and its deepening defense ties with Russia to North Korea's banned missile tests. At home the leader will be tasked with breathing life into the economy, as the central bank moves away from decades of monetary easing that has slashed the value of the yen.

In debates and campaigning, many candidates "have claimed that 'I'm the one who can handle Trump' or 'I'm the one who can stand up to China'", Jeffrey J. Hall, a lecturer at Kanda University of International Studies, told AFP. But there are significant differences in their approach to such issues, and although some of the nine have "no hope whatsoever", the race remains "a toss-up". "This is the most unpredictable that an LDP election has been in many years," Hall said.

'Fair and square' Ishiba

LDP presidents are in office for three years and can serve up to three straight terms. Unpopular Prime Minister Fumio Kishida is not running for re-election. With the



TOKYO: This combination of file photos shows (from left) Economic Security Minister Sanae Takaichi, former defence minister Shigeru Ishiba and former environment minister Shinjiro Koizumi, three of the nine candidates running for Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) presidential election. — AFP

factions dissolved, it's unlikely that any one candidate will win enough votes - split between lawmakers and rank-and-file party members - to win outright. That makes a run-off between two top candidates the most likely scenario, with the winner announced Friday afternoon.

Ishiba, 67, has come close to the top job before, including in 2012 when he lost to arch-rival Shinzo Abe, Japan's longest serving leader who was later assassinated. The military model-maker with an affinity for 1970s pop idols once alienated party veterans with his "outspoken criticism of LDP policies under Abe", said Yu Uchiyama, a political science professor at the University of Tokyo. But this time, "with public discontent with the LDP rising, the tide is in favor of Ishiba and his 'fair and square' attitude," Uchiyama told AFP.

Economic Security Minister Takaichi, 63, is "the most conservative of the top three" and "not the candidate that feminists would want", Hall said. She is opposed to changing the law to allow separate surnames for married couples, and regularly visits Tokyo's Yasukuni war shrine — a flashpoint in relations with South Korea and China. However Naofumi Fujimura,

a professor at the Graduate School of Law at Kobe University, said that while for now she needs the support of the LDP's right wingers, she could perhaps be "more centrist, or more pragmatic" as prime minister.

Koizumi offers 'rejuvenation'

Photogenic former environment minister Koizumi would be Japan's youngest ever prime minister, but critics — including his own father, former premier Junichiro Koizumi — say he is too inexperienced to lead the country. Keen surfer Koizumi "best personifies the idea of rejuvenation and change for the LDP" among the frontrunners, but LDP voters could think he "lacks stability", Uchiyama said.

The other six candidates include reformist Taro Kono, 61, and Toshimitsu Motegi, dubbed the "Trump whisperer" for his handling of the former US president in tough trade talks. Also running are chief cabinet secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi and Takayuki Kobayashi, the only other candidate under 50 — seen as a wild card by some experts. Whoever emerges victorious on Friday will be formally elected by parliament on October 1. — AFP

Zionists eye entry into Lebanon as...

Continued from Page 1

injured 223, including in mountainous areas outside Hezbollah's traditional strongholds. Hezbollah said it had targeted the Zionist entity's Mossad spy agency on Tel Aviv's outskirts in the morning — the first time it has fired a ballistic missile in almost a year of cross-border clashes sparked by the Gaza war. In response, the Zionist entity said it hit 60 Hezbollah intelligence sites, among hundreds of the group's targets struck across Lebanon. It came amid escalating cross-border clashes, after Zionist raids on Monday killed at least 558 people in the deadliest day of violence since Lebanon's 1975-90 civil war.

Biden appeared to raise the possibility of a cease-

Curbs on wives' citizenship rights...

Continued from Page 1

acquiring it on false grounds and cheating. The Council of Ministers also approved the revoking of Kuwaiti citizenship from about 200 people, mainly for obtaining it on false grounds and having dual citizenship.

Meanwhile, the government has remained silent on reports that it was studying a plan to raise the price of fuel for expats. Under the move, reported by local media, the price of fuel will be raised on par with international prices, but Kuwaiti nationals will be compensated by the government, while expats will pay the full price, copying a model being implemented by the United Arab Emirates. Raising fuel prices in Kuwait would mean at least doubling the existing rates.

fire in Lebanon. "They have a possibility — I don't want to exaggerate it — there's a possibility if we can deal with a ceasefire in Lebanon that it can move into dealing with the West Bank as well," said Biden. The Zionist entity has been carrying out deadly raids in the occupied West Bank since late August.

Biden added however that "we also have Gaza to deal with", as efforts stall to get a ceasefire deal to end the Zionist war in Gaza. "But it's possible and I'm using every bit of energy with my team to get this done. There's a desire to see change in the region," he said.

The US president also pressed Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to drop his opposition to an independent Palestinian state to end the crisis. "I don't agree with his (Netanyahu's) position. There needs to be a two-state solution," Biden told the show's all-women panel, led by US comedian Whoopi Goldberg.

Nour Hamad, a 22-year-old student in the eastern Lebanese city of Baalbek, described living "in a state of terror" all week. "We spent four or five days without sleep, not knowing if we will wake up in the morning," she said. In Tel Aviv, sirens sounded following Hezbollah's unprecedented missile launch. Tel Aviv resident Hedva Fadlon, 61, told AFP: "The situation is difficult. We feel the pressure and the tension... I don't think anyone in the world would like to live like this."

US National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said Hezbollah's attack on Tel Aviv was "deeply concerning" but added there was "still time and space for a diplomatic solution here to de-escalate the tensions and to prevent an all-out war". The Zionist military said "over 280 Hezbollah" targets had been struck across Lebanon on Wednesday, adding the strikes were ongoing.

The United Nations Security Council said it would hold an emergency meeting on the crisis in New York, while UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned the situation was critical. The UN's International Organization for Migration on Wednesday said 90,000 people had been displaced in Lebanon since Monday. Among them, "many of the more than 111,000 people displaced since Octo-



KHIAM, Lebanon: Smoke rises from the site of a Zionist airstrike that targeted this southern Lebanese village on Sept 25, 2024. — AFP

ber... are likely to have been secondarily displaced", a statement from the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs added.

Hezbollah on Tuesday confirmed a Zionist claim that it had killed their rocket forces commander Ibrahim Kobeissi in a strike on the Lebanese capital. At the UN General Assembly in New York, Secretary-General Guterres issued a stark warning. "We should all be alarmed by the escalation. Lebanon is at the brink," he said, while cautioning against "the possibility of transforming Lebanon (into) another Gaza".

Netanyahu delayed his departure for New York until Thursday, where he too is due to speak at the

General Assembly. "During the day, the prime minister will hold consultations to discuss the continuation of the attacks in Lebanon," his office said. Netanyahu defied international calls for restraint, vowing on Tuesday to keep up the Zionist entity's campaign against Hezbollah.

Iran, Hezbollah's main backer, condemned the Zionist raids, with supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei saying the recent killing of Hezbollah commanders would not crush the group. "Some of the effective and valuable forces of Hezbollah were martyred, which undoubtedly caused damage to Hezbollah, but this was not the sort of damage that could bring the group to its knees," he said. — Agencies

International

Zionist bombing displaces 90,000 people in Lebanon

Some take refuge in shelters, others sleep on the streets after long trips fleeing attacks



SIDON: A traffic jam clogs up a street in the Lebanese city of Sidon on September 23, 2024, as people flee their homes in southern Lebanon. — AFP photos

BEIRUT: Ali Berri never imagined it would take almost 14 hours to reach Beirut from his home in south Lebanon after he and his family decided to flee heavy Zionist air strikes. It took "from 10:00 am until midnight — the traffic was totally jammed", said Berri, 55, who fled with his wife, son and elderly neighbor from the Tyre area on Monday. The trip would normally take a couple of hours at most. "We hope that the war will ease so we can return to our homes because what me and my family went through yesterday is really war," he told AFP.

The United Nations said Wednesday that some 90,000 people had been displaced in Lebanon this week, as the Zionist entity pounds what it says are Hezbollah targets across the country. Since Monday, the UN's International Organization for Migration has recorded "90,530 newly displaced persons", a statement said. Among them, "many of the more than 111,000 people displaced since October ... are likely to have been secondarily displaced", a statement from the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs added, referring to the start of the cross-border hostilities between the Zionist entity and Hezbollah.

Zionist raids on Lebanon on Monday killed at least 558 people, in the deadliest day of violence

since Lebanon's 1975-90 civil war, sending people fleeing for their lives. Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib said Tuesday that the number of displaced in Lebanon was "now probably ... approaching half a million".

Hundreds of families woke up Tuesday morning in a hospitality training institute turned shelter in the Bir Hassan area of Beirut's southern suburbs after arduous journeys from the country's south the day before. An AFP photographer saw hundreds of vehicles crawling along the highway that links southern Lebanon with the capital Beirut. Many carried families with children and the elderly, along with whatever belongings they could take. Berri, a farmer and garbage truck driver, expressed hope that "associations, the state and anyone else" would help. "There is real suffering," he said, putting aside a bag of bread and canned food for the family.

'A year of war'

Some people "spent the night on the streets, like my sisters and my wife's sisters", he added. It was not the first he and his family have fled their homes, but this time was different, he said. "I was displaced for around 20 days" in 2006 when the Zionist entity and Hezbollah last went to war, he said, "but that war



BEIRUT: An elderly woman, who fled her village in southern Lebanon, takes refuge at a school turned temporary shelter in the capital Beirut on September 24, 2024.

was short, while now it is long." Hezbollah has been trading near daily fire with Zionist forces in support of Hamas since the Palestinian group's October 7 attack on the Zionist entity. "We've had a year of war and we don't know now when it will end," Berri said.

The Bir Hassan institute is the largest of a number of educational facilities that have opened their doors in Beirut and its surroundings to receive the displaced. AFP saw families spread across three floors of one of the institute's buildings, with people resting in some rooms, while one woman was busy cleaning dust off the ground. Others sat near windows looking out over the building's courtyard, or in the corners of long dark corridors. Many appeared exhausted and refused to speak to journalists. "The bombing intensified on Monday ... everyone was leaving," said Abbas Mohammed, a football coach from the southern village of Harouf, as his young daughter played nearby.

Hopes to return

"After they bombed a place nearby we decided to do the same thing and we had no choice except to get on the motorbike with my wife and daughter," he told AFP, adding that the trip took seven hours. Dozens of meals and bottles of water began to arrive,

with scouts and volunteers from the Amal movement, a Hezbollah ally, handing them out to families. Rami Najem, an Amal media official who is also with the group's emergency committee, was watching as people registered the names and needs of the displaced. "Around 6,000 people came to this center between 6:00 pm last night and 6:00 am this morning," he told AFP.

The displaced, some of whom had simply gathered in the streets or squares, were being distributed across several centers and given mattresses, said Najem, adding that the needs were enormous. He described "basic needs just so people can sit down and sleep — like pillows, blankets, medicine, babies' milk, nappies, food and water".

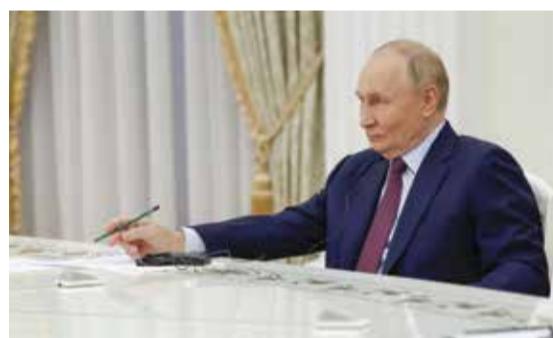
Zeinab Diab, 32, from the Nabatiyeh area, said she fled with her husband and four children, the youngest of whom is under a year old, from the village of Ebba "for the children's sake". "Almost all the village was damaged, we didn't know where the bombing was coming from. We feel as if they are more brutal this time," she said, referring to the Zionist military. "I hope at this moment to return to my village even if my home is flattened. I'll live in a tent, it's better than being displaced," she said. "When you leave your home, you feel as if you are leaving your soul." — AFP

Putin issues nuclear warning to the West over Ukraine

MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday that Russia could use nuclear weapons if it was attacked by any state and that any conventional attack on Russia that was supported by a nuclear power would be considered to be a joint attack. The warning came hours after Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky accused Russia on Wednesday of plotting potentially catastrophic attacks on Ukrainian nuclear plants, in a defiant UN address in which he denounced bids to impose peace from the outside.

Speaking from the UN rostrum in a black polo jacket, Zelensky said that Ukrainian intelligence has found that Russia is scanning the country's nuclear infrastructure by satellite. Russian President Vladimir Putin "does seem to be planning attacks on our nuclear power plants and the infrastructure, aiming to disconnect the plants from the power grid," Zelensky said. "Any critical incident in the energy system could lead to a nuclear disaster, a day like that must never come," Zelensky said. "Moscow needs to understand this, and this depends in part on your determination to put pressure on the aggressor," he told the General Assembly.

Russia captured the giant Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant soon after its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Russia in recent weeks has been pounding Ukraine's electricity grid, in what Western and Ukrainian officials describe as an attempt to leave the country shivering during the winter. Putin, opening a meeting of Russia's Security Council attended by top officials on Wednesday, said that proposals had been made to change Russia's nu-



MOSCOW: Russia's President Vladimir Putin attends a meeting at the Kremlin on September 25, 2024. — AFP

clear doctrine and said he would like to underscore one of the proposed key changes.

"It is proposed that aggression against Russia by any non-nuclear state, but with the participation or support of a nuclear state, be considered as their joint attack on the Russian Federation," Putin said. "The conditions for Russia's transition to the use of nuclear weapons are also clearly fixed," Putin said, adding that Moscow would consider such a move if it detected the start of a massive launch of missiles, aircraft, or drones against it. Russia, Putin said, also reserved the right to use nuclear weapons if it or Belarus were the subject of aggression, including by conventional weapons. Putin said the clarifications were carefully calibrated and commensurate with the modern military threats facing Russia.

'Never accept' deal from outside

Zelensky on Thursday will head to the White House to see President Joe Biden and present what he describes as a "victory plan" that shows a path forward for Ukraine. In his UN address, Zelensky singled out

istry said in a statement. An analyst told AFP such tests were very rare. "This is extremely unusual and likely the first time in decades that we've seen a test like this," said Ankit Panda, Stanton Senior Fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "(The test) likely speaks to China's ongoing nuclear modernization manifesting in new requirements for testing," he added.

'Serious concern'

However, China's defense ministry called the firing a "routine arrangement in our annual training plan". "It is in line with international law and international practice and is not directed against any country or target," it said. Japan, however, said it was given "no notice from the Chinese side in advance", with a government spokesman adding that Beijing's military build-up was a "serious concern". Australia said it was seeking "an explanation" over the launch, adding it was "concerned by any action that is destabilizing and raises the risk of miscalculation in the region". New Zealand also said the launch of the missile, which landed in the South Pacific, was "an unwelcome and concerning development". A spokesman for Wellington's foreign minister vowed to consult with Pacific allies further as details became clear. Beijing

China and Brazil as he questioned the "true interest" of countries that have been pressing Ukraine to negotiate with Russia. Employing the language of the Global South, Zelensky said: "You will not boost your power at Ukraine's expense, and the world has already been through colonial wars and conspiracies of great powers at the expense of those who are small." "Ukrainians will never accept — will never accept — why anyone in the world believes that such a brutal colonial past, which suits no one today, can be imposed on Ukraine now," Zelensky said.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told a Security Council session on Tuesday that diplomacy was the only solution. Zelensky last year flew to the General Assembly in a dramatic first wartime appearance and, while he maintains star power, the political landscape has changed. Donald Trump, running again for president, on Wednesday called Zelensky the "greatest salesman on Earth." "Every time Zelensky comes to the United States, he walks away with \$100 billion," Trump said, claiming "we're stuck in that war unless I'm president."

The United States has provided around \$175 billion in both military and economic assistance to Ukraine since Russia invaded in February 2022, and Biden has ruled out sending troops. Trump in the past has voiced admiration for Putin and, during his 2017-2021 presidency, was impeached for the first time over delaying aid to Ukraine to press Zelensky to dig up dirt on Biden. Zelensky said he hoped to see Trump while in the United States and explain that the war is more complicated. Zelensky has sharply criticized Trump's running mate, J.D. Vance, who has said bluntly that he does not care about Ukraine and that the United States should focus instead on confronting China. "Let Mr Vance read up on the history of the Second World War, when a country was forced to give part of its territory to one particular person," Zelensky told The New Yorker. — Agencies

first test-fired an ICBM into the South Pacific in the 1980s. But since then, Panda told AFP, it has typically conducted such tests in its own airspace. The United States said in 2021 it was "very concerned" about reported hypersonic missile testing by China.

Third-largest stockpile

The United States and China held rare talks on nuclear arms control in November, part of a bid to ease mistrust ahead of a summit between leaders Joe Biden and Xi Jinping. But in July, Beijing said it had suspended negotiations with the United States on nuclear non-proliferation and arms control in response to Washington's weapons sales to Taiwan. In an annual report, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute listed China as having the world's third-largest stockpile of nuclear warheads, after Russia and the United States. Beijing announced this year it would increase its defense budget — the world's second-largest — by 7.2 percent. The boost comes as China increasingly squares off with the United States and its regional partners from the South China Sea to Taiwan. Senior military officials from China and the United States held "in-depth" talks this month as part of a bid by the powers to avoid wider tensions escalating into conflict. — AFP

US state executes man despite conviction doubts

MISSOURI: A Missouri man was executed on Tuesday, according to the state's Department of Corrections, even though the prosecutor's office that secured his murder conviction 21 years ago expressed doubts about the integrity of the case and the victim's family said he should be spared. The US Supreme Court, the last body that could have halted the execution, declined to intervene in the case hours before Marcellus Williams, 55, was put to death by lethal injection shortly after 6 pm local time at a prison in Bonne Terre.

His death came a day after both Missouri Governor Mike Parson and the state's highest court also rejected his last-ditch bids to avoid execution. Williams was found guilty in 2003 of killing Felicia "Lisha" Gayle, a former newspaper reporter who was stabbed to death in her home. Williams was a devout Muslim, according to his public defenders and adopted the name Khalifah ibn Rayford Daniels after converting to Islam. The corrections department released his handwritten final statement in which he said: "All praise be to Allah in every situation!!!" He had maintained his innocence until his death.

St Louis County prosecuting attorney Wesley Bell, whose office handled the original prosecution, had sought to block the execution due to questions about the original trial. Bell said in a written statement after the execution that "if there is even the shadow of a doubt of innocence, the death penalty should never be an option." Tricia Rojo Bushnell, a lawyer with the Innocence Project who helped represent Williams, wrote in a statement that "the execution of an innocent person is the most extreme manifestation of Missouri's obsession with 'finality' over truth, justice, and humanity, at any cost." Williams, who had previous convictions for burglary and robbery, was convicted on the testimony of a former jail cellmate and an ex-girlfriend, though his DNA was not found on the knife or at the crime scene. In court papers, Bell questioned the reliability of the two main trial witnesses, concluded that prosecutors improperly excluded Black jurors on the basis of race and noted that new testing found no trace of Williams' DNA on the murder weapon. Williams was African American.

Subsequent tests revealed DNA on the knife from a prosecutor and an investigator who worked on the case and handled the weapon without gloves. The contamination of the knife led prosecutors and Williams' attorneys to reach an agreement in August calling for him to enter a no-contest plea and receive a sentence of life in prison. The state Supreme Court blocked the deal at the request of Missouri Attorney General Andrew Bailey. A state judge upheld the conviction earlier this month, finding that the lack of evidence on the knife was not enough to establish his innocence.

The Missouri Supreme Court affirmed that decision on Monday. Governor Parson, a Republican, also turned down Williams' request for clemency on Monday. "We hope this gives finality to a case that has languished for decades, revictimizing Ms Gayle's family over and over again," Parson said in a statement after the execution. "No juror nor judge has ever found Williams' innocence claim to be credible." — Agencies

China launches intercontinental missile into Pacific in rare test

BEIJING: China said it test-launched an intercontinental ballistic missile on Wednesday, firing it into the Pacific Ocean in its first such exercise in decades. The launch sparked protests from other countries in the region, with China's neighbor Japan saying it had not been given advance notice and expressing "serious concern" about Beijing's military build-up. Beijing has stepped up its nuclear development and boosted defense spending in recent years, with the Pentagon warning last October China was developing its arsenal more quickly than the United States had anticipated.

China held more than 500 operational nuclear warheads as of May 2023 and is likely to have more than 1,000 by 2030, it said. The Chinese military's Rocket Force "launched an ICBM ... carrying a dummy warhead to the high seas in the Pacific Ocean at 08:44 on September 25, and the missile fell into expected sea areas" on Wednesday, the defense min-

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2024

World leaders call for more investment in clean energy

Africa receives insufficient funds despite solar opportunities: Kenya



NEW YORK: (Left to right) Julia Souder, Chair, Global Renewables Alliance; Shemara Wikramanayake, CEO, Macquarie; Selwin Hart, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Climate and Just Transition and Francesco La Camera, Director-General, International Renewable Energy Agency at the Global Renewables Summit on Sept 24, 2024 in New York City. — AFP

NEW YORK: World leaders on Tuesday called for far more investment in renewable energy to tackle climate change, with developing nations saying they need financial support to make the transition. Speaking at a Global Renewables Summit, Kenyan President William Ruto made the case for investing in renewables in Africa as part of the global pledge made at last year's COP28 summit to triple clean energy capacity by 2030. "Africa receives less than 50 percent of global investment in renewable energy despite being home to 60 percent of the world's best solar opportunities," Ruto told the summit, which is being held on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

The continent is rich in resources needed for development, he said, but can't always access those resources

due to the current mix of "unreliable or expensive energy." Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley said that fossil fuel subsidies outnumber renewable energy subsidies, which makes it more expensive for small states to develop clean energy projects.

"Small states face the reality that the cost of renewable energy ... will probably be higher than traditionally fossil fuels," she said. Recent reports, including one by the International Energy Agency, suggest that tripling the world's renewable capacity is feasible within this decade. But the effort will require robust regulation including strong rules for issuing project permits as well as investments in building out transmission and battery storage.

Azerbaijan, which is hosting this year's COP29 climate summit in November, said it was planning to rally

governments to make a new global pledge to increase electricity storage sixfold. Earlier in the day, a coalition of some of the world's biggest companies, finance houses and cities called Mission 2025 urged governments to adopt policies that they said could unleash up to \$1 trillion in clean energy investments by 2030. The policies include setting new capacity targets and offering tax credits or long-term electricity contracts that would encourage investment.

Giving his final major speech on climate change at a forum attended by clean energy business leaders, US President Joe Biden celebrated his \$369 billion signature climate law. "We were told it couldn't get done and we did it," he said of passing the Inflation Reduction Act in 2022, adding that the legislation has since

encouraged innovation and created hundreds of thousands of jobs.

"Private companies have announced investments of over \$1 trillion in clean manufacturing," he told the event. "We are just getting started." Some companies and investors are looking at artificial intelligence technologies with excitement for the solutions they might bring but there is also concern about the energy-intensive data centers that are needed to power them.

AI is "a problem, and it's part of the solution," Andres Gluski, the chief executive officer of US power firm AES Corporation told Reuters in an interview. "With AI, we could come up with new materials that are better for batteries, that are better than copper," he said. "If we have labor shortages, AI will help us. If we have to do demand management, AI will help us." — Reuters

US shippers brace for workarounds ahead of port strike

LOS ANGELES/NEW YORK: US companies that rely on East and Gulf Coast seaports have been importing early, shifting goods to the West Coast, and even putting cargo on pricey flights to hedge against a threatened Oct 1 strike that could jam supply chains and reignite inflation ahead of the US presidential election. "This is just another headache after everything else we've been dealing with," said Kenneth Sanchez, CEO of Chesapeake Specialty Products, which sends goods like metallic abrasives and foundry sand additives used to make engine blocks and transmissions to customers around the world.

His main port is in Baltimore, one of three dozen covered by an expiring contract between the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) union representing 45,000 port workers and the United States Maritime Alliance employer group, whose renewal talks are at an impasse over pay.

The threatened walkout would come just five weeks before a presidential election between Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris and Republican former President Donald Trump that is likely to turn

on pocketbook issues. A prolonged strike, alongside an ongoing strike by 30,000 machinists at Boeing that has already started to ripple through the aircraft maker's supplier network, could put a dent in the US job market next month at a critical moment. Economists at Oxford Economics last week estimated the two labor actions could reduce payrolls growth by 100,000 jobs if they stretch into mid-October.

For Sanchez, it would be the second big supply chain setback after a bridge collapse cut off most access to the Baltimore port from late March through mid-June. "Things were just starting to get back to normal," he said. Now, he is working on a plan to put shipments on trains to West Coast ports - should the ILA's members go on a prolonged strike at ports that stretch from Maine to Texas and handle about half of US ocean trade.

German chain saw manufacturer STIHL said it is also developing contingency plans to keep exports flowing from its factory near the Port of Virginia, but didn't elaborate. STIHL's US plant ships products to over 80 countries. Retailers, manufacturers and other importers, meanwhile, have been rushing in apparel, home goods, machine parts and other items ahead of the strike deadline to avoid having cargo stuck. That sent US imports to multi-year highs in July and August - exacerbating a shipping price increase tied to rerouting vessels around Africa to avoid rebel attacks on ships near the key Suez Canal trade shortcut. Ronnie Robinson, chief

supply chain officer at DSW parent company Designer Brands, normally routes about 20 percent of the company's shoe imports through the East Coast. He shifted about half of those goods to the West Coast. And, he paid ten times more than a typical ocean transit to fly in a small shipment of leather boots and dress shoes from Brazil.

"People are paying whatever they can to make sure they're in the front of the queue," said Robinson, who added his company cannot risk late deliveries to clients like Macy's, Nordstrom and Dillard's department stores. Still, Robinson has 10,000 to 20,000 units in transit via East Coast-bound ships "that we're worried about." — Reuters



A container ship anchored in Vancouver harbor with Vancouver city skyline in the background.

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OECD calls for higher property taxes to fight debt

PARIS: The OECD on Wednesday slightly raised its world economic growth forecast for 2024 but called for higher property and environmental taxes to combat soaring debt in many countries.

In its twice-yearly economic outlook report titled "Turning the Corner", the Paris-based organization said global gross domestic product would expand by 3.2 percent, compared to 3.1 percent in its previous forecast. "The global economy is starting to turn the corner, with declining inflation and robust trade growth," OECD Secretary-General Mathias Cormann said. "At 3.2 percent, we expect global growth to remain resilient both in 2024 and 2025," said the head of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Central banks in the United States and Europe

have started to cut interest rates as inflation, which soared after the COVID pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, is finally cooling.

The OECD cited "relatively robust" growth in the United States, Brazil, Britain, India and Indonesia. And it raised Russia's GDP growth forecast by 1.1 percentage points to 3.7 percent. But the OECD slightly lowered the outlook for Germany, Europe's biggest economy, to 0.1 percent growth and said Japan's GDP would shrink by 0.1 percent. Argentina's economy would have a deeper contraction of four percent.

While it raised the world GDP outlook, the OECD sounded the alarm on rising debt, urging governments to make "stronger efforts" to contain spending and raise revenue. "Decisive fiscal actions are needed to ensure debt sustainability, preserve room for governments to react to future shocks and generate resources to help meet future spending pressures," it said. "Governments face significant fiscal challenges from higher debt and the additional spending pressures arising from ageing populations, climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, plans to raise defence spending, and the



PARIS: A participant stands at the OECD headquarters in Paris. — AFP

need to finance new reforms," it added.

Global public debt rose to a record \$97 trillion last year, doubling since 2010, according to a United Nations report published in June. Cormann said at a news conference that countries need "to do more to better control" spending and optimize tax revenue, noting that debt in G20 countries amounted to 113 percent of GDP last year, compared to 73 percent in 2007. — AFP



Google files EU complaint over Microsoft cloud

PARIS: Google said Wednesday that it had filed a complaint against Microsoft at the European Commission, accusing its rival of "anticompetitive" licensing practices to force customers to use its cloud service. Google said Microsoft had exploited business customers' reliance on "must have" software products such as Windows Server to compel them to use its Azure cloud platform.

Microsoft has made it cost-prohibitive for clients to use Windows Server or other products on rival services, such as Google Cloud or Amazon's AWS, by marking up the price by 400 percent, Google charged. "Microsoft's licensing terms restrict European customers from moving their current Microsoft workloads to competitors' clouds — despite there being no technical barriers to doing so," Google Cloud vice president Amit Zavery said in a blog post co-signed by Google Cloud's Europe region president Tara Brady.

For businesses that use rival cloud platforms despite the cost, "Microsoft introduced additional obstacles over the last few years, such as limiting security patches and creating other interoperability barriers", Google said. At a news conference, Zavery said Google wanted restrictions removed so that customers could use the cloud platform of their choice.

"We believe this regulatory action is the only way to end Microsoft vendor lock-in and for customers to have a choice and create a level playing field for competitors," Zavery said.

Google said Microsoft adopted the new licensing terms in 2019. "What Microsoft introduced in 2019 basically created this idea of not allowing choice to customers," Zavery said. A spokesperson at the European Commission, the EU's antitrust watchdog, confirmed that the complaint was received, adding that "We will assess under our standard procedures". The complaint was filed on Tuesday.

A Microsoft spokesperson said the company "settled amicably similar concerns raised by European cloud providers, even after Google hoped they would keep litigating". "Having failed to persuade European companies, we expect Google similarly will fail to persuade the European Commission," the spokesperson added.

Google and Microsoft have feuded for years over antitrust issues. Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella last year testified against Google in a US federal court alleging that its business practices had stymied the rise of rival search engines. Microsoft was also involved in the original complaints in the EU against Google in the 2010s over its search dominance, which resulted in major fines against Google. — AFP

Business

Gulf Bank Marathon reaches milestone 10th year, set to begin on November 30

Registration is now open for Kuwait's only internationally accredited race

Najla Aleisa: The Gulf Bank 642 Marathon is an annual call to action, inspiring us to adopt healthier lifestyles in the face of growing rates of diabetes, obesity, and heart disease in Kuwait.

Ahmad Al-Huzami: We value the opportunity to partner with Gulf Bank in delivering this esteemed sports and social occasion.



Najla Aleisa and Ahmad Al-Huzami during the signing of the partnership renewal agreement.



A group photo of the Gulf Bank and Suffix teams with Najla Aleisa and Ahmad Al-Huzami.

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank reaffirms its commitment to promoting sustainability within the community and encouraging widespread participation in sports through its continued collaboration with Suffix Event Management Company. Together, they are sponsoring the 10th edition of the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon, scheduled for November 30, 2024.

Najla Aleisa, Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) at Gulf Bank, stated, "This year marks a decade of our partnership with Suffix Event Management Company in sponsoring the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon, which has established itself as Kuwait's most significant sports and social event, and remains the only marathon in the country with international accreditation."

She added, "We are eagerly preparing for another successful edition of the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon. This event transcends being a mere race; it serves as an invitation to incorporate exercise and walking into our daily routines. In light of the rising rates of diabetes, obesity, and heart disease in our local community, it is imperative to prioritize physical activity and embrace healthier lifestyles."

Aleisa also emphasized Gulf Bank's role as the title sponsor of the marathon, underscoring the Bank's unwavering dedication to sustainability through social, economic, and environmental initiatives aimed at fostering positive change. She highlighted that the marathon stands as both a social and athletic event, uniting individuals and families from diverse backgrounds—an objective that aligns with Gulf Bank's broader mission in all its initiatives.

Ahmad Al-Huzami, CEO of Suffix Event Management, expressed his pride in this enduring partnership, noting, "We are pleased to work alongside Gulf Bank to organize this outstanding sports and social event, which continues to gain popularity and participation each year, both locally and regionally."



The previous edition of the GB Marathon.

The Gulf Bank 642 Marathon draws thousands of athletes and running enthusiasts from all around the world, set against a lively atmosphere and a scenic route featuring iconic landmarks such as the Kuwait Towers, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre, the Grand Mosque, Souq Al-Mubarakiya, and Gulf Bank's historical headquarters, among others. The Gulf Bank 642 Marathon offers four categories to cater to participants of all abilities: a 5K walk or run, a 10K run, a half marathon (21K), and a full marathon (42K). Entry is open to participants aged 11 and above for the 5K, 16 and above for the 10K, and 18 and above for the half marathon. Runners, both beginners and professionals, can register for the event

by visiting the official website at www.gulfbank-642marathon.com

As part of its mission to be Kuwait's leading Bank, Gulf Bank is dedicated to fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace that delivers exceptional customer service while contributing to sustainable community development. With an expansive branch network and innovative digital services, the bank empowers customers to manage their banking needs conveniently and efficiently.

Aligned with Kuwait Vision 2035, "New Kuwait," and its focus on fostering collaborative partnerships, Gulf Bank is actively engaged in driving comprehensive sustainability initiatives across environmental,



An open invitation to everyone to participate in a special sports day.



Distinguished participation of people with disabilities in the previous edition.

social, and governance (ESG) dimensions. The Bank remains committed to implementing strategically selected sustainability programs both internally and externally to advance these objectives.

Volkswagen workers threaten strikes to fight plant closures

HANOVER: Union leaders threatened strikes and warned Volkswagen on Wednesday against an "historic mistake" as the two sides started pay talks that will likely determine how aggressively Europe's biggest automaker pursues layoffs and plant closures in Germany.

Tensions at the carmaking giant are running high as the specter of factory closures, which would be a first for the company in Germany, has set it on a collision course with the IG Metall union, which has vowed to fight any such moves. IG Metall must also negotiate new labor deals for the core VW brand's 130,000 workers in Germany, after the group earlier this month ended agreements that had safeguarded employment at six of its plants in western Germany since the mid-1990s.

Worker representatives have vowed to wage a bitter resistance against job cuts, blaming top management and the government's faltering support for Volkswagen's ills. IG Metall threatened strikes, which are possible from the start of December, and insisted on a 7 percent pay rise.

"A good shepherd looks after his sheep and keeps them together. Volkswagen's shepherd is threatening to rip the skin off their bodies and then throw them out in a hurricane," Thorsten Groeger, IG Metall's chief negotiator with Volkswagen, told workers outside the talks venue in Hanover. Works council chief



HANOVER: Daniela Cavallo, chairwoman of the General and Group Works Council of the Volkswagen Group, addresses members of the IG Metall metalworkers union as they demonstrate on Sept 25, 2024 in Hanover. — AFP

Daniela Cavallo went back into Volkswagen's 87-year history, referencing the expropriation of trade union funds during the Third Reich.

"With an average interest rate, this capital, which the Nazis had robbed from the labor movement at the time, would have generated billions of euros over the decades. This money, our money, is in the Volkswagen Group today," she said. She stressed a preparedness to compromise, but added that it was now up to management to find a solution. Some workers held up signs saying "Shortage of skilled workers on the board - we are looking for experts."

Volkswagen argues that high energy and labor costs in Germany, Europe's top economy, put it at a

disadvantage to European peers as well as Chinese rivals that have set their sights on a big slice of the region's electric vehicle market.

Reinforcing that message at the start of the talks, the VW brand's personnel chief said the division must cut costs to stay competitive. "Germany is falling behind the competition. Our core brand Volkswagen is particularly affected by this. International competition is threatening to overtake us," Arne Meiswinkel said. "We must work together to restructure our company. The situation is serious." The task was to find viable solutions, said Meiswinkel, the mention of whose name was greeted with boos during Groeger's speech. — Reuters

France could reduce deficit to EU limit in five years: BoF chief

PARIS: France cannot realistically lower its budget deficit to an EU limit in three years but it could be possible within five years with the right course of action, Bank of France head Francois Villeroy de Galhau on Wednesday. The previous government had planned to cut the fiscal shortfall to 3 percent of GDP by 2027, but weak tax revenues and budget overruns have put that target all but out of reach, leaving a hole for the new cabinet that took office this month.

"Three years is not realistic, not economically or with regards to growth. But to do it in five years is possible," Villeroy, who is also a policymaker at the European Central Bank, told France 2 TV. Earlier this week, Finance Minister Antoine Armand said the budget deficit was one of the worst in French history. The last government had hoped to limit the 2024 budget deficit to 5.1 percent of GDP, but the latest estimates suggest it may spiral towards 6 percent. The overshoot puts huge pressure on new Prime Minister Michel Barnier to come up with billions of euros in budget cuts as well as a some targeted tax increases as it races to finalize the 2025 budget.

Barnier has suggested he would be open to raising taxes on the wealthy and some corporations. Spending cuts are also expected, which Villeroy said in the interview that he supported. Time is running out for the government to finalize its 2025 budget

and hand it over to lawmakers, with mid-October the very latest if it is to be passed by parliament before the end of the year, the head of the Cour des Comptes public audit office Pierre Moscovici said. He added that parliament could pass special emergency laws to ensure taxes are in place by the start of the year, allowing for the overall budget bill to be dealt with later. "That would be rather unorthodox, to say the least," Moscovici told journalists. In rare good news for the new government, consumer confidence improved for the third straight month in September, topping analysts' expectations, official INSEE data showed. An increase in the proportion of households feeling that the present is a good time to make big purchases, as well as easing concern about unemployment, helped drive the index up two points to 95, still below the long-term average but at its highest level since February 2022. — Reuters

VW labor clash spotlights Europe's car factory crisis

BERLIN: Volkswagen's showdown with powerful labor leaders over how to tackle spiraling costs at underused German factories has triggered intense soul-searching about the root causes of the carmaker's problems. Complex governance structures, misjudged investments in EVs, poor management decisions, sliding revenues from China and Germany's crippling bureaucracy have all variously been blamed for the challenges facing the world's second-biggest automaker.

Yet a Reuters review of factory capacity utilization data across Europe for six carmakers shows that Volkswagen is hardly an outlier and it may be in a better place than some of its major rivals when it comes to underused plants.

Renault and Stellantis, for example, both have lower average capacity utilization rates in Europe than VW, according to the figures compiled for Reuters by GlobalData, which included numbers for BMW, Ford and Mercedes-Benz as well.

Reuters also sourced data for all automakers in eight major European car-making countries: four in higher-cost states - France, Germany, Italy and the UK - and four in lower-cost countries - Czech Republic, Slovakia, Spain and Turkey. That data showed that there was a clear tendency towards higher factory utilization rates in central and eastern Europe, where costs are lower, suggesting the problems most of the big automakers face are mainly in their home markets. Across Europe, the capacity utilization of factories making light vehicles such as passenger cars was 60 percent in 2023, down from 70 percent in 2019, the data showed. In the lower-cost countries, the average utilization rate slipped only slightly to 79 percent from 83 percent, but in the higher cost countries, plant use dropped to just 54 percent from 65 percent.

Volkswagen, Stellantis and Mercedes-Benz said they don't comment on capacity utilization data. Renault said it uses a different benchmark that shows a higher number for its plants. BMW also said the data may underestimate its actual levels. For Volkswagen, pressure by German unions and politicians to make its EVs at home - a move designed to future-proof jobs - has become a "poisoned chalice", said Justin Cox, director of global autos production at GlobalData, a data analytics provider based in London. — Reuters

ADB says AI investments to drive developing Asia growth

Developing Asia to grow 5% this year, China must boost stimulus: Economist

MANILA: Surging global investments in artificial intelligence and easing inflation give developing Asia a launch pad for sustained economic growth in 2024 and 2025, the Asian Development Bank said Wednesday. With goods exports jumping 8.0 percent in July, the Manila-based lender slightly raised its 2024 economic growth forecast for the region to 5.0 percent this year, up from 4.9 percent projected in April.

It kept its 2025 forecast unchanged at 4.9 percent. Developing Asia refers to the multilateral lender's 46 emerging member economies, stretching from Kazakhstan in Central Asia to the Cook Islands in the Pacific.

"High-income technology exporters benefited as global sales of semiconductors rose amid strong demand for artificial intelligence products" from China, Taiwan and South Korea, ADB chief economist Albert Park said. The bank lowered its inflation forecast for the region this year to 2.8 percent, from 3.2 percent in April, as food prices bottom out more slowly than expected in China.

Developing Asia is on track to grow 5 percent this year, supported by strong consumption and high demand for tech exports, the ADB forecast and said China was expected to roll out more economic support measures. In an update to its Asian Development Outlook report, the

ADB left most growth projections for economies in the region unchanged from its July report, maintaining its growth outlook for developing Asia at 5.0 percent this year and 4.9 percent next year.

The inflation forecast for 2025 is also revised down to 2.9 percent, from 3.0 percent earlier this year, "creating conditions for eventual monetary policy easing" to support economic activity. Retreating inflation, increased global demand for electronics as well as cars and ships from China and South Korea, and an improved growth outlook for major advanced economies are helping Asia's prospects, the bank said in a report. Non-electronic exports are also growing, though more moderately, according to the Asian Development Outlook report, which the lender publishes biannually.

The ADB however said Beijing would fall short of its target of five percent growth for 2024, forecasting expansion of 4.8 percent. After 5.2 percent growth last year, the Chinese economy is expected to expand by 4.5 percent in 2025 according to the new report.

"Protracted property sector weakness weighed on consumer sentiment and household spending, although higher investment supported by monetary and fiscal stimulus partially offset it," it added.

Beijing on Tuesday announced what analysts described as its most significant

The ADB growth outlook for developing Asia

GDP GROWTH	2023	2024	2024	2024	2025	2025	2025
		APR	JULY	SEPT	APR	JULY	SEPT
Caucasus and Central Asia	5.3	4.3	4.5	4.7	5.0	5.1	5.2
East Asia	4.7	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.2	4.2	4.2
China	5.2	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.5	4.5	4.5
South Asia	6.9	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.6	6.5	6.5
India	8.2	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.2	7.2	7.2
Southeast Asia	4.1	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.7	4.7	4.7
Indonesia	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Malaysia	3.7	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.6
Myanmar	0.8	1.2	n/a	0.8	2.2	n/a	1.7
Philippines	5.5	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.2	6.2	6.2
Singapore	1.1	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6
Thailand	1.9	2.6	2.6	2.3	3.0	3.0	2.7
Vietnam	5.1	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.2	6.2	6.2
The Pacific	3.5	3.3	3.3	3.4	4.0	4.0	4.1
Developing Asia	5.1	4.9	5.0	5.0	4.9	4.9	4.9

stimulus package in years to boost the struggling economy.

ADB's chief economist told a news conference the package was "good to

see", but "whether that will work I think remains to be seen". The lender also warned of a possible rise in protectionism, depending on the outcome of the US

presidential election in November.

There may be "higher blanket tariffs by the US on all global imports" and reciprocal hikes on duties imposed by Beijing, with potential spillovers across developing Asia. South Asia will be the fastest-growing part of the region this year, the bank said, even after India's expansion slowed in the first half.

Helped by government spending and private consumption, India's economy is forecast to grow by 7.0 percent this year and 7.2 percent in 2025. The figures follow growth of 8.2 percent last year.

Park also said the ADB was not so concerned about deflation in China as it sees prices recovering. Last week, the US Federal Reserve kicked off its own easing cycle with a hefty half-percentage-point rate cut. "With the Fed's 50 basis point rate cut, central banks have more space to ease, and we expect more of them to do so," Park said.

The ADB kept its 2024 growth forecast for China at 4.8 percent, below the government's official target of about 5 percent. Growth for 2025 is still forecast at 4.5 percent. "The PRC (People's Republic of China) growth forecast is retained despite the prolonged downturn in the property sector, on the assumption that further fiscal and monetary easing will help sustain the economy," Park said. — Agencies

Diversification drive in Kuwait

By Salem Al-Fassam

Kuwait has long been famous for its oil resources and now finds itself in a situation where diversifying its economy is crucially important due to the unpredictable fluctuations in oil prices and the worldwide trend, towards sustainable energy sources.

Kuwait is taking to diversify its economy and considers the different sectors that could contribute to building a stronger and more adaptable future.

The Importance of having a variety

Kuwait heavily depends on oil as it makes up over 90 percent of government income and more than half of its output which brings about major risks for the country's financial stability and growth prospects. The General Reserve Fund of Kuwait has experienced a decline in recent years as oil revenue has not kept pace with government spending despite accumulating budget surpluses exceeding KD 50 billion. As 2024 comes to an end, uncertainties loom around oil prices and global economic changes continue to highlight the need for implementation of economic reforms in Kuwait. Policies of the government

The government of Kuwait has taken action by introducing plans focused on broadening the economy's scope and opportunities for growth in various sectors such as finance and commerce within the region by setting forth the New Kuwait Vision 2035 initiative as a key strategy to uplift Kuwait's status as a financial and business center in the region.

The government is planning to make significant investments in improving infrastructure facilities along with advancements, in education and healthcare sectors while also promoting innovation and entrepreneurial endeavors. Kuwait plans to build new infrastructure projects like Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port and expand Kuwait International Airport to enhance transportation and trade.

Money and banking institutions

Kuwait is striving to position itself as a financial hub in the Gulf region by improving regulations and drawing in global banks and financial institutions to build a strong financial environment. Financial regulations are being updated to simplify procedures such as licensing to make Kuwait more investment-friendly.

Exploring the world through travel

Kuwait holds promise for enhancing its tourism industry by capitalizing on its diverse cultural legacy and up to date infrastructure assets. The primary objective of the Kuwait National Tourism Strategy is to boost visitor numbers and establish Kuwait as a top tier travel hotspot. Recent advancements such, as the inauguration of hotels and the growth of Kuwait International Airport underscore these initiatives. Kuwait is simplifying its visa processes, including offering e-visas and visas on arrival, to attract a larger number of tourists. The development and marketing of heritage sites like Faiilaka Island and Kuwait Towers are part of efforts to boost cultural tourism in the country.

Wellness

Kuwait is making investments in the healthcare industry to offer top-notch medical services globally by establishing new hospitals and healthcare facilities with the goal of becoming a leading healthcare destination in the Middle East and attracting visitors seeking medical treatment, from neighboring countries. The government is investing in healthcare by constructing new hospitals, such as the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital, to improve medical services and attract medical tourists.

Exploring in academia

Investment in education and research plays a role in fostering a knowledge based economy with Kuwait prioritizing the improvement of its educational institutions and the advancement of research and development to stimulate innovation efforts, such as forming collaborations with leading international universities and setting up research facilities. Kuwait aims to partner with top international universities to enhance education quality and foster research and innovation. More funding is being provided to universities for research, encouraging innovation through grants and partnerships with leading institutions.

The advancements in technology and fostering innovation

Kuwait's diversification strategy places an emphasis on technology and innovation with a focus investing in digital infrastructure and supporting startups and tech companies to set up operations in order to cultivate a thriving technology ecosystem exemplified by the recent establishment of Kuwait Tech Hub. The launch of initiatives like the Kuwait Tech Hub will provide funding and resources for tech entrepreneurs and startups, supporting the growth of the tech sector.

Sustainable energy

Kuwait is currently looking into energy sources to lessen its reliance on oil resources. The country is working towards developing solar and wind energy initiatives to support environmental conservation efforts. One notable project is the Shagaya Renewable Energy Park which is anticipated to play a role in diversifying Kuwait's energy resources. New regulations are being introduced to reduce energy consumption in buildings, appliances, and vehicles as part of Kuwait's energy efficiency drive.

Challenges

While there are signs of progress in diversification efforts, various hurdles such as bureaucratic red tape, regulatory limitations and the necessity for cultural change still stand in the way. Nevertheless these obstacles offer chances for changes and enhancements. Simplifying regulations encouraging openness and fostering an atmosphere for businesses are vital strides to move ahead. Partnerships between the private sectors will play a key role in advancing these endeavors. Ensuring a thriving future for Kuwait necessitates the implementation of economic diversification strategies as a priority task. Investment in areas such as finance, tourism, healthcare, education technology and renewable energy will play a pivotal role in decreasing reliance on oil and establishing a robust economy. Achieving this vision of a vibrant economy entails collaborative endeavors, from governmental bodies, private enterprises and the wider community. By acting effectively Kuwait can maintain its economic strength and progress towards its future goals. This will guarantee a quality of life for future generations and promote peaceful relations in the region positioning Kuwait as a role model for economic development in the Middle East.

China's monetary volleys miss threat to economic growth

BEIJING/HONG KONG: China's central bank has shifted to a more aggressive easing stance, but its policy weapons don't have the key enemy to economic growth in their line of sight: the persistently weak consumer demand. The liquidity injections and the lower borrowing costs flagged by the People's Bank of China on Tuesday have lifted market sentiment, but mainly because they raised expectations authorities will follow soon with a fiscal package to complement the monetary and financial measures.

The world's second-largest economy faces strong deflationary pressures and risks missing this year's roughly 5 percent growth target due to a sharp property downturn and frail consumer confidence, which analysts say only fiscal policies that put money into consumer pockets through higher pensions and other social benefits can address. "The central bank policies exceeded expectations, but the main problem in the economy today is not the lack of liquidity," said Shuang Ding, chief economist for Greater China and North Asia at Standard Chartered.

"In terms of helping the real economy, I think there will be another policy package, especially fiscal policies," HSBC chief Asia economist Fred Neumann concurred, saying authorities must boost demand which could be "done through other policy measures like fiscal policy."

While the PBOC is unleashing its boldest set of measures since the pandemic, the total size of the stimulus remains small and analysts doubt its overall effectiveness. Given weak credit demand from households and businesses, the 1 trillion yuan (\$142 billion) that would be released into the financial system through a cut in bank reserve requirements may spur more sovereign bond buying than real economy lending.

Firms "have been unwilling for years to borrow no matter what credit conditions are because corporate sentiment is so poor," China Beige Book said in a note. "And households are not going to respond to worse re-

Abenomics still clouds BoJ's rate hike path

TOKYO: Political uncertainty and the surprise prominence of a reflationist-minded candidate in Japan's ruling party leadership race may add pressure on the central bank to go slow on raising interest rates further away from historic lows. Already, the Bank of Japan (BoJ) has toned down some of its signaling around future rate hikes as US recession risks and jittery financial markets cloud the economic outlook. Now, a fresh complication comes from politics as Friday's race to choose the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) new leader, who in turn becomes next prime minister, heats up.

Sanae Takaichi, a 63-year-old advocate of deceased former premier Shinzo Abe's "Abenomics" stimulus policies, is emerging as among three of the nine candidates likely to make it to the run-off.

The once dark-horse candidate, who could become Japan's first female leader, is a sole but vocal opponent of further interest rate hikes. "What we're seeing now is cost-push inflation. We must keep monetary policy accommodative until real wages stably turn positive," Takaichi told reporters on Sept 19.

"I think it would be stupid to raise interest rates now," she said in an interview streamed online on Monday, warning that doing so could push Japan back into deflation. Opinion polls show Takaichi and two other candidates, former defense minister Shigeru Ishiba and former environment minister Shinjiro Koizumi, as frontrunners. Some analysts see Ishiba and Koizumi as having an edge over Takaichi, though the polls show the race is too close to call.

"If Takaichi wins, the initial market reaction would be a yen fall as markets price in the chance of delay in future rate hikes," said Naomi Muguruma, chief bond strategist at Mitsubishi UFJ Morgan Stanley Securities.



A worker polishes newly-produced gas cylinders at a factory in Ruichang, in central China's Jiangxi province on September 25, 2024. — AFP

turns on savings by becoming suddenly more optimistic."

Cuts in the existing mortgage rates will release an extra 150 billion yuan annually to households. But that's equivalent to only 0.12 percent of annual economic output, and some of it may be saved for early mortgage repayments.

Chinese consumers spend just 35 yuan of any extra 100 yuan they receive, estimates Raymond Yeung, chief Greater China economist at ANZ. The key interest rate cut by 20 basis points is larger than usual, but smaller than what most central banks typically do. The U.S. Federal Reserve cut rates by 50 bps last week. "Each of the main monetary-policy measures announced by the PBOC has already been used in the past, and had minimal economic impact before," Gavekal Dragonomics analysts said in a note, describing the scale of the package as "modest." "The significance of this package is thus mostly in whether it opens the door to other moves."

By injecting liquidity, the PBOC provides more room for the government to issue debt for any extra stimulus, Neumann said. "What the market is hoping for is that the liquidity injections signal a potential announcement in the coming weeks for a big bond issuance program," he added.



Bank of Japan (BoJ) governor Kazuo Ueda leaves a press conference at BoJ headquarters after a monetary policy meeting in central Tokyo. — AFP

Under pressure from then premier Abe, the BoJ in 2013 deployed radical stimulus that morphed into a complex policy package to lift anemic inflation up towards the bank's 2 percent target.

As rising raw material costs and a tight job market pushed up inflation and wages, the BOJ exited the policy in March and raised rates to 0.25 percent in July under governor Kazuo Ueda. The departure of Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, who appointed Ueda and has broadly supported phasing out the massive monetary stimulus, alone is a blow to the bank's exit strategy, analysts say.

"Things won't get any better for the BoJ than when Kishida was prime minister, regardless of who wins the LDP race," said former BoJ board member Takahide Kiuchi, who is currently an economist at Nomura Research Institute. "The BOJ will find it really difficult to hike rates if Takaichi wins." Even if Takaichi does not become prime minister, a strong performance in the race could help her land a key cabinet post and yield pressure on the next premier, some analysts say. Currently economic security minister, Takaichi has the backing of reflationist-minded lawmakers and academics who played a key role in Abenomics such as Etsuro Honda, who was Abe's economic aide. —Reuters

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2024

AI RESEARCH UNCOVERS 300 ANCIENT ETCHINGS IN PERU'S NAZCA DESERT

Japanese scientists have used artificial intelligence to uncover 303 new etchings in Peru's Nazca desert – doubling the amount of known geoglyphs made some 2,000 years ago by a pre-Inca civilization. The fabled Nazca lines, a series of massive incisions on the desert floor depicting animals, plants, imaginary beings and geometric figures, have fascinated scientists ever since they were first discovered around a century ago. Best viewed from the air, the lines situated some 220 miles (350 kilometers) south of Lima are one of Peru's top tourist attractions.

Announcing the new discoveries in Lima on Monday, archaeologist Masato Sakai, from Yamagata University, said: "The use of AI in research has allowed us to map the distribution of geoglyphs in a faster and more precise way." He said the findings were the fruit of collaboration between his university's Nazca Institute and the research division of the technology company IBM.

"The traditional method of study, which consisted of visually identifying the geoglyphs from high-resolution images of this vast area, was slow and carried the risk of overlooking



A combination of undated handout picture released by the Yamagata University Institute of Nasca shows 10 of 303 new geoglyphs discovered by scientists at Yamagata University in Japan, where a team of researchers applied AI-assisted image analysis of aerial photographs, which accelerated the pace of geoglyph discovery during a 6-month fieldwork in the Nazca Pampas. — AFP

some of them," he added. The study was also published on Monday in the prestigious Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) journal,

describing how AI can be used to accelerate discoveries in archeology even in well-known sites.

The paper said it had taken nearly a century to

discover 430 figurative Nazca geoglyphs. Using AI, scientists found 303 more during only six months of field surveys. The AI model was particularly good at picking up smaller relief-type geoglyphs which are harder to spot with the naked eye. Among the new figures discovered were giant linear-type geoglyphs, mainly representing wild animals, but also smaller ones with motifs of abstract humanoids and domesticated camels, a mammal from the camel family.

The people that formed the Nazca civilization lived in the area of southwestern Peru from 200 BC to 700 AD. What drove them to create the lines, designated a UNESCO World Heritage site, is a mystery. Some scientists believe they have astrological and religious significance. The first geoglyphs were discovered in 1927. —AFP

Hefty Australian penguin chick 'Pesto' becomes star

Pesto the penguin towers over the colony at his Australian aquarium home, a fluffy brown furball impossible to miss as he waddles across the ice. The nine-month-old king penguin chick has shot to fame for his 23.5-kilogram (51.8-pound) heft -- the weight of an overstuffed suitcase. Pesto already weighs more than his parents Tango and Hudson combined. They tip the scales at about 11 kilograms each.

And with a healthy diet of up to 25 fish a day, Pesto's rotund frame will only continue to grow, senior penguin keeper Emily Thornton told AFP. The feathered unit is well-behaved, curious and confident, Thornton said, often interacting with other penguins and his keepers. Despite the human faces and cameras pressed against Pesto's enclosure, he remains fairly "humble" about his newfound fame, she added.

And, because he is so "food orientated", just keeping him still on the scales to clock his weight can be challenging. He is already the largest penguin that the Sea Life Melbourne aquarium has seen and has a sizable social media fandom to match. One TikTok video posted by the aquarium of two employees performing a dance routine behind an impassive Pesto has racked up four million views.

Hefty and healthy

Pesto's coat is mostly "dense" feathers, Thornton said, which penguin chicks require to keep warm against freezing Antarctic temperatures. His big size is also an advantage because smaller chicks are at risk of being eaten by predatory birds in the wild. Genetics also play a part -- his ancestors were some of the biggest and oldest penguins the aquarium has housed. "He is really healthy," Thornton



A handout photo taken by Sea Life Melbourne and released on September 25, 2024 shows Pesto, a nine-month-old penguin chick, in Melbourne. — AFP

said, adding that "chicks can get bigger than him" in the wild.

Despite his fish diet, his feathers smell like corn chips, Thornton added. Pesto will soon shed his fluffy down as he develops his adult feathers, giving him a burst of yellow on his head and cheeks and a black-and-white tuxedo. "That process is energy draining and his appetite will reduce a lot," Thornton said. King penguins are found in Antarctica and their population remains fairly stable, with about 1.6 million breeding pairs. Thornton said

climate change has badly affected the habitats of some penguin species but has not yet hit the king penguins' domain. During the 19th and 20th centuries, king penguin populations were almost wiped out because they were heavily hunted for their meat, oil and blubber. —AFP

Lady Gaga plants lipstick smile on 'Mona Lisa' in Louvre clip

Lady Gaga comes face to face with the "Mona Lisa" in the Louvre and plants a lipstick smile on her face in a new video clip released Wednesday by the singer and the French museum. The American diva who stars in the new "Joker" movie, channeled her Harley Quinn character to do a little bit of lipstick "vandalism" to Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece to promote the Louvre's new exhibition, "Figures of the Fool", which like the movie, opens next month.

Lady Gaga creeps through the Paris Museum at night in a red wig singing a song composed specially for the video, which was released on her Instagram and TikTok accounts. She ends up nose-to-nose with the Mona Lisa before painting a clownish smile in lipstick on the pro-



Actress and singer Lady Gaga attends the red carpet of the movie 'Joker: Folie a deux' presented in competition during the 81st International Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido. — AFP

tective glass in front of it. As she stands back, a black mascara tear drops from the star's eye.

Asked about the wisdom of encouraging such gestures at a time when paintings are regularly being attacked in museums by climate activists, the Louvre insisted the video was "purely fictional", and was a homage to Leonardo, who was obsessed by the smile. The museum insisted that an additional screen had been

put up for the video in front of the 3.8-centimetre-thick (1.5-inch) bulletproof one that protects the canvas.

Source of inspiration

The lipstick smile is an echo of a key scene in "The Joker: Folie a Deux", when Harley Quinn visits The Joker, her criminal soulmate, in jail. The Louvre said they worked with Warner Bros Pictures, the Hollywood studio who made the movie, who shot the video in the museum. Is not the first time the Louvre has been a playground of the stars.

Rapper and producer Will.i.am famously put himself into some of the museum's best-known paintings for his 2016 animated video for "Mona Lisa Smile", including taking the reins of Napoleon's white charger. Two years later Beyonce and Jay-Z filmed their clip "Apheshit", using Gericault's iconic "The Raft of the Medusa", the "Mona Lisa" and the coronation of Napoleon to make some pithy points about black people's place, and the lack of it, in classical art history. More recently the Louvre, the world's most visited museum, created a buzz with its images of a private visit given to singer Celine Dion before she sang at the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics in July. —AFP

Film legend Bardot, nearing 90, enjoys her 'silent solitude'

Bridgette Bardot, the 1960s French cinema icon who left the silver screen behind her a half-century ago, says as her 90th birthday approaches that she now "flees humanity" in favour of "silent solitude". Dedicating most of her time to animal rights activism through her foundation, Bardot still regularly makes headlines, including with statements of support for France's far right. She told AFP in a telephone interview from her home in Saint-Tropez that she hopes to see a ban on eating horse meat in her home country before she dies.

Q: Saturday September 28 is a special day, you'll be celebrating your 90th birthday...

A: "That's kind of you, but I'm fed up with this birthday! I've had enough of it, because it's harassing, people are asking things of me from all sides. Luckily I don't turn 90 every day!"

Q: A lot of people are thinking of you!

A: "That's lovely, but after a while there's no end to it! I've been saying to myself for some time that I'd rather be turning 20."

Q: If you were 20, we'd see you in the cinema again.

A: "No, that's all finished with! I'm very happy to have reached such a venerable age!"

Q: What does that age feel like to you?

A: "I really don't think about it. Every day is the same to me... it comes just as easily as before... I watch the time pass and I think I'm doing very well!"

Q: What has you doing well?

A: "I'd sooner say what's got me doing badly... For example, animals don't have it easy every day, things aren't getting better. What does me good is my way of seeing life, being interested in nature, fleeing humanity. I flee humanity and I have a silent solitude that's just right for me."

Q: What would be the nicest birthday present for you?

A: "The nicest present I could have been given, after 50 years of begging governments, different presidents, would be the abolition of eating horses. When I gave up cinema it was the first thing I asked for. For us not to keep killing and eating horses in France. And look, I haven't got anything! That would have been a wonderful present for me."

Q: Do you think you'll see a ban in your lifetime?

A: "I've been shouting for 50 years and haven't got any-

Finnish zoo to return pandas to China early

Finland will return two giant pandas on loan from China more than eight years ahead of schedule because of financial problems at the zoo where they are housed, its chair told AFP on Wednesday. The giant pandas named Jin Bao Bao (Lumi, or "Snow" in Finnish) and Hua Bao (Pyr, or "Blizzard"), which arrived in Finland in 2018, will be returned by the end of this year. The pandas were to be returned after 15 years but "our economical situation does not allow us to keep the pandas anymore" Ahtari Zoo's board chairman Risto Sivonen said.

An agreement to loan the animals to Finland was sealed during a visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2017. "At that time we were very sure this was the right decision," Sivonen said. But declining visitor numbers because of the Covid pandemic, and higher interest rates and inflation following Russia's war in Ukraine, have impacted the zoo's finances. "The cost for the panda house was 8.5 million euros (\$9.5 million) and the annual cost for keeping the pandas is 1.5 million euros," he said. The agreement to return the pair was reached with the zoo's partners in China on September 20.

Sean 'Diddy' Combs sued for alleged 2001 rape

A woman who alleges Sean "Diddy" Combs drugged and violently raped her, filming the assault so he could sell it for the titillation of others, said Tuesday she was suing the rapper. Thalia Graves held a tearful press conference in Los Angeles, in which she said the emotional and mental pain from the 2001 attack remains with her. The 54-year-old Combs was indicted last week on three criminal counts that allege he sexually abused women and coerced them into drug-fueled sex parties using threats and violence.

A spate of separate lawsuits, now including Graves's, in the last year have painted the picture of a serial predator, sparking a massive fall from grace for the hip hop star. "It goes beyond just physical harm caused by and during the assault. It's a pain that reaches into your very core of who you are, and leaves emotional scars that will never be fully healed," she told reporters.



Sean "Diddy" Combs

thing. I don't have time to wait another 50 years."

Q: Are you disappointed by politics?

A: "I'm disappointed that no-one has at least had the idea of doing something. It's been swept under the carpet... I would have liked to achieve a result before leaving you all for good. I deserve it!"

Q: The French public's view of animals is changing...

A: "Among the public, it's marvelous. They've got it, they've supported me. They're wonderful. They write me letters that do me such good. I can't thank them enough for the courage they've lent me."

Q: For them, you're still the cinema icon of the 1960s. What do you remember from that time?

A: "I turned that page more than 50 years ago. I'm very proud of the first chapter in my life, which I made a success of and now grants me the global fame that helps me a lot with protecting animals."

Dior's arrows and Amazons as Saint Laurent revives its master



Models walk on the catwalk after the presentation by Dior for the Women Ready-to-wear Spring-Summer 2025 collection as part of the Paris Fashion Week, in Paris. — AFP photos



Dior gave Paris Fashion Week a shot of Olympic adrenaline on Tuesday with a troop of athletic Amazons striding down its runway amid whizzing arrows. Not for the first time, Italian designer Maria Grazia Chiuri dipped into her feminist quiver to deliver modern, technological looks for strong women taking on the world. Almost entirely in black and white, her spring-summer collection was inspired by the Amazon dress created by the fabled French brand's founder, Christian Dior, in 1951.

To hammer the mythological point home, Chiuri had the London-based Neapolitan artist SAGG Napoli — an archer — fire off arrow after arrow at a target in the middle of the runway as her models marched steely down either side. A plexiglass screen ensured no one was skewered but still the heartbeat quickened, helped on by thundering Italian techno. Chiuri, who loves to use stirring quotes on her creations, cited her fellow Italian after a summer of Olympic and Paralympic triumphs in the French capital: "May the building of a strong mind and a strong body be the greatest work I have ever made." As for the clothes, asymmetry was almost the rule with one shoulder bare on many dresses, blouses and tops — all very early 2000s, leaning into younger clients' love of the look.

Flats and straps

The sportswear — heavy on bomber jackets and parachute trousers — dripped with elaborate zips and straps, with Chiuri stretching out the omnipresent "Miss Dior" logo to its extremes on the clothes until it almost seemed to become a series of abstract lines. Chiuri said she had tried to show the work put into "each garment so that each piece almost tells you how it was constructed". A few evening dresses in veiled pearl and skin hues also

harked back to the Amazons, the matriarchal tribe of women warriors from Greek mythology.

Such powerful women have no need of stilettos, with Chiuri instead opting for supple flat Hoplite thigh-high boots, or laced up boxing ones — although the odd kitten heel did slip through. Dior was a major player at the Paris Games, dressing Celine Dion, Lady Gaga and Aya Nakamura for their star turns in the opening ceremony show. Clearly, Chiuri wanted to prolong that Olympic afterglow by bringing in SAGG Napoli and her bow, even if the archer-artist is usually an unashamed devotee of very unDior maximalist southern European bling.

Yves Saint Laurent lives

In the day's other big show at Saint Laurent, Anthony Vaccarello turned the clock back to the early 1980s — shoulder pads and all — by summoning the ghost of the brand's founder, Yves Saint Laurent himself.

Bella Hadid led a battalion of female models dressed as the designer—trademark specs, double breasted suits, trenchcoats — parading in oversized variations of his classic male cuts from way back in the day. Saint Laurent was the man who changed women's fashion forever in 1966 by putting women in his black men's "smoking" tuxedo jackets, and Vaccarello seemed to be trying to repeat the trick through an 80s timewarp.

For a designer who often takes delight in showing as much flesh as possible, this was a decidedly demure collection of long trailing coats, silk brocade jackets, and aristo ruffs and cuffs. Our old 80s friends, the leather and suede bomber jackets, made an appearance too, all cut with a run of interesting miniskirts with contrasting underskirts. It all seemed to be lapped up by a hugely glamorous — and fur-festooned — front row that included Gwyneth Paltrow, Kate Moss, K pop stars Rose of Blackpink and singer Cha Eun-woo, Lenny Kravitz, Charlotte Gainsbourg and Carla Bruni. — AFP

Week

Paris Fashion



Fashion's fun 'Frankenstein' flies after Olympic triumph



Models present creations by Germanier for the Women Ready-to-wear Spring-Summer 2025 collection as part of the Paris Fashion Week in Paris on September 24, 2024. — AFP photos



in black has turned the color up full tilt.

'We're not trying to cure cancer'

"It's funny," he laughed. "It's important to have a sense of humor and be able to step back a bit in this job." "We are not setting out to cure cancer. We make dresses with sequins and plumes." Dresses now worn by Lady Gaga and Taylor Swift, it turns out. But Germanier can still send himself up, saying that "like all Swiss I keep a close eye on the figures." "Fashion is first of all a business, and you have to find the product that is going to sell like hot cakes... be that a perfume, a little bag or a scarf," he said. His bestseller is a very pop little baguette bag in multicolored pearls.

But Germanier's ambitions extend far beyond accessories. Hired by fashion giant LVMH for a "secret" project to make the best of its waste, he dreams one day of taking the reins at a house like Dior, where "you can really change things". But nor does he want to be typecast for transforming cast-offs into things of beauty, even if he gets a kick out of it. "I don't know if it is my destiny, but as long as I am creating, it will be part of what I do. But if ever it becomes less fun, I will stop." — AFP



"The fashion world likes everything to be slick, but I'm a bit like Dr. Frankenstein, experimenting all the time with little bits and bobs," said Kevin Germanier, the young Swiss designer who created the Golden Voyager costume for the closing ceremony of the Paris Olympics. That glittering outfit was made from reels and reels of recycled video tape from his childhood, along with hundreds of Germanier's favorite plaything — pearls.

Even before his Olympic triumph, the 32-year-old was already a darling of the fashion front rows for his playful, retro style and mastery of haute couture's sparkly box of tricks. But coming up with that costume for the dancer Arthur Cadre — and having to keep it all secret for nine months — was "the experience of a lifetime", Germanier said as he showed his spring-summer collection at Paris Fashion Week on Tuesday. "It was the biggest platform I



have ever been given," he told AFP, still wide-eyed about it six weeks later.

The fashion bible Vogue hailed his otherworldly creation as "the most impressive costume of the ceremony", and the strange flying creature, part wasp, part mosquito, part firework, set social media alight. Like many of his generation, Germanier has made upcycling — using offcuts, unused or unsold cloth — an article of faith, as much from conviction as financial necessity.

Rubies in the dust

It all started for him when he was doing an internship in Hong Kong, with bags of pearls "that were too close to the window and had discolored in the sun", he recalled. "Upcycling is not about going to a vintage shop and doing something with a T-shirt, it's really about creating something from rubbish," he said. This make-or-make-do attitude began early at his mother and grandmother's feet at home in the village of Granges in southern Switzerland, where they would "embroider a flower over a hole in their clothes rather than go buying something new".

Encouraged by his family, he landed a place at London's most prestigious fashion and design school, Central Saint Martins. At the time, "All my work was either black, grey or beige," said the designer, who has since made his name for his eye-poppingly colorful palette. "Because I had nothing to lose in my last exam — I already had a job waiting at Louis Vuitton — I said to myself, 'You've got to make it glitter.' And since then this Swiss who dresses head-to-toe



Sports

Hundred hero Brook keeps England alive in Australia ODI series

Victory in third ODI left England 2-1 down with two to play

News in Brief

London Marathon raises \$98m

LONDON: The London Marathon raised a record 73.5 million pounds (\$98.28 million) for charity, race organizers said on Wednesday in what they described as the world's largest annual one-day fundraising event. The collection surpassed the previous world record of 66.4 million pounds, set in 2019, on April 21 when more than 53,000 runners completed the 44th London Marathon. London Marathon said in their final report that they raised 73.5 million pounds after the 2024 event, bringing the cumulative total to more than 1.3 billion pounds since the first edition in 1981. "We salute every single participant who has contributed to this world record-breaking total of 73.5 million pounds for the thousands of charities which provide essential services to so many," London Marathon Events' CEO Hugh Brasher said in a statement. The London Marathon's official online fundraising partner Enthuse also raised a record 30 million pounds on its platform. The next London Marathon will be held on April 27.

Mbappe suffers muscle injury

PARIS: Real Madrid forward Kylian Mbappe has suffered a muscle injury, the LaLiga club said on Wednesday, casting doubt over the French international's participation in the weekend derby against Atletico Madrid. Mbappe, signed from Paris St Germain this year, has been in fine form this season, scoring seven goals for Real in nine matches across all competitions. The 25-year-old was substituted in the 80th minute of the 3-2 home win over Deportivo Alaves in LaLiga on Tuesday and gestured to his thigh while leaving the pitch. "Following tests carried out today by Real Madrid's Medical Services on our player Kylian Mbappe, he has been diagnosed with an injury to the biceps femoris in his left leg," Real said in a statement. "His progress will be monitored." Spanish media reported that Mbappe will be ruled out of Sunday's match against Atletico. Real are second in the LaLiga standings on 17 points, one behind Barcelona who have a game in hand and host second-bottom Getafe later on Wednesday.

Varane announces retirement

PARIS: France's World Cup-winning defender Raphael Varane announced his retirement from football at the age of 31 on Wednesday, bringing down the curtain on his successful career after suffering a serious knee injury. Varane made 93 appearances for France from 2013-22, playing a key role in their victory at the 2018 World Cup in Russia, as well as their runners-up finish four years later in Qatar. He retired from international football in 2023. He began his club career at Ligue 1 side Lens, before joining Real Madrid in 2011, where he played 360 times and won three La Liga titles and four Champions League trophies in a trophy-laden spell. Varane joined United in 2021, making 95 appearances in all competitions for the English side and helping them win the League Cup in 2023 and FA Cup in 2024, before moving to Serie A club Como in July where he suffered a knee injury on his debut. "I have fallen and risen a thousand times, and this time, it's the moment to stop and hang my boots up with my final game winning a trophy at Wembley," Varane wrote in a post on Instagram, referencing United's FA Cup win in May. "I have no regrets, I wouldn't change a thing. I have won more than I could have even dreamed of, but beyond the accolades and trophies, I am proud that no matter what, I have stuck to my principles of being sincere and have tried to leave everywhere better than I found it." Varane added that he would remain at Como in a non-playing role. — Reuters

Shakib available for second India Test, says coach

KANPUR: Star Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan has no injury concerns and remains in line to play the second Test against India, coach Chandika Hathurusinghe said on Wednesday. Media reports suggested Shakib played the first of two Tests with a finger injury when India handed Bangladesh a 280-run thrashing in Chennai.

Former Sri Lanka all-rounder Hathurusinghe said "there was no doubt" over Shakib's participation in the second Test, which begins on Friday. "At the moment I have not heard anything about any sort of injury—neither from the physio nor from anyone else," Hathurusinghe told reporters in Kanpur, where the Test will be played.

"And he is eligible for selection. If there are any changes (in the team) then it's depending on the surface." The heat has been on Shakib, a 37-year-old former lawmaker who faces a case of alleged murder back home after Bangladesh was plunged into political crisis by student-led protests that led to the ouster of autocratic former leader Sheikh Hasina.

The left-hander, who bats in the middle-order and bowls spin, played a key role in his team's historic Test series sweep in Pakistan. He then went back to England to play county cricket for

CHESTER-LE-STREET: England captain Harry Brook's maiden one-day international century revived his side's series hopes against Australia as they beat the world champions by 46 runs at Chester-le-Street on Tuesday. Victory in the third ODI left England 2-1 down with two to play.

England slumped to 11-2, chasing 305 to win, after Mitchell Starc removed openers Phil Salt (nought) and Ben Duckett (eight) in the space of four balls. But Will Jacks (84) and Brook (110 not out) then added 156 in a third-wicket partnership of good judgement as well as shot-making skill.

Rain stopped play with England 254-4 off 37.4 overs. But they were 46 runs ahead of where they needed to be under the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern method for weather-affected matches. And, with a downpour preventing any further play, England had ended Australia's run of 14 consecutive ODI wins.

Player-of-the-match Brook was understandably elated by a first century in his 18 ODIs, with the 25-year-old Yorkshireman saying at the presentation ceremony: "It's nice to get the first one on the board and hopefully plenty more to come."

"We just have to keep doing what we said we are going to do (in Friday's fourth ODI at Lord's) and keep being positive, take the game to them (Australia)." Jacks missed out on a maiden century when he uppercut a Cameron Green bouncer to backward point to end an 82-ball innings featuring nine fours and a six. Brook, however, went to 99 by driving Starc back over his head for four before a single off the paceman saw him to an 87-ball hundred including 12 fours and two sixes.

'Hard work'

England fans would have feared the worst when Salt clipped Starc straight to midwicket before Duckett, aiming across the line, edged the left-arm fast bowler to backward point. But against an Australia attack missing key leg-spinner Adam Zampa through illness, Jacks and Brook turned the tide.

Earlier, Australia made 304-7 after Brook won the

N Zealand aim to bounce back after first Test defeat

GALLE: New Zealand must adapt to the tricky Galle surface if they are to avenge their hard-fought Test loss to Sri Lanka this week, coach Gary Stead said on Wednesday. Despite not having played a warm-up match, the Kiwis showed resilience by taking a first-innings lead, but Sri Lanka's experience in home conditions ultimately helped them secure a close victory on the final morning.

"For the most part, it was a very evenly contested match, with small moments shifting the game's momentum," New Zealand coach Gary Stead told reporters ahead of Thursday's second Test. "These conditions are vastly different from what we experience in New Zealand. It's about adapting and adjusting."

"We need to focus on one session at a time. There are crucial World Test Championship points at stake, and we are keen to put up our best game," Stead added. New Zealand's preparation for the second Test was interrupted by rain on Wednesday. The visitors are likely to make a few changes in an effort to level the series and maintain their unbeaten streak against Sri Lanka, which dates back to 2009.

Left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner, who managed just one wicket and scored four runs in the first Test, is likely to be replaced by off-spinner Michael Bracewell. Opening batsman Devon Conway, who has failed to score a half-century in his last 10 Test innings, could be left out in favor of Will Young. Young has had a productive county season with Nottinghamshire and is in contention for a spot at the top of the order.

Sri Lanka moving up

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka have moved up to third place in the World Test Championship standings after their win in the first Test. A win in the second Test could significantly boost their chances of se-

Surrey instead of returning home ahead of the India tour. Shakib made 32 and 25 with the bat in the first Test but went wicketless with the ball. "I'm not upset about his performance, but our overall performance. I am sure he also thinks he can perform better. We all know what he is capable of," Hathurusinghe said. "I think he batted really well in the second innings. He couldn't go on, not because of lack of pride but for the sheer quality of the opposition." Bangladesh were bowled out for 149 and then 234 to lose the match inside four days.

'No pressure'

India, led by Rohit Sharma, will be looking to extend their advantage at the top of the World Test Championship rankings after their emphatic first Test performance. They will host New Zealand for three Tests starting next month before their high-profile tour of Australia, where they will play five matches.

But Rookie Akash Deep—a new addition to India's fast bowling riches of Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj—said he was focused on the task at hand. "As a player, you need to understand yourself and know your strengths," said Deep, who took two wickets in the previous match, which was just his second Test.

"What can we add to the bowling? Just simple stuff and no added pressure about going to Australia and all that." "It is a huge responsibility to deliver the goods like the bowlers who have contributed for India before you," he said.

The pitch at Kanpur's Green Park stadium is



CHESTER-LE-STREET: England's Matthew Potts (L) catches the ball to take the wicket of Australia's Aaron Hardie during the third One Day International (ODI) cricket match between England and Australia, at Chester-le-Street in County Durham, northern England on September 24, 2024. — AFP

loss. Alex Carey was 77 not out, off 65 balls, with star batsman Steven Smith making 60. England paceman Jofra Archer took 2-67. "I thought we did extremely well to get the 300 with conditions early on, a lot of seam and it was hard work," said Australia captain Mitchell Marsh.

He added: "In one-day cricket with a big partnership you can set the game up for yourself, fair play to them (England)." As for Zampa's absence, he added: "Whenever you're missing someone like him it's hard work. But we'll hopefully welcome him back in a few days."

Earlier, wicketkeeper Carey followed his 74 in the second ODI at Leeds, with another fine innings after England reduced Australia to 132-4 on Tuesday. All-rounder Green, in for the injured Travis Head, had previously fallen for 42 and next over Australia's 131-3 became 132-4 when Marnus Labuschagne was out for a duck after a miscued paddle-sweep off spinner Jacks lobbed gently to wicketkeeper Jamie Smith. Australia's Smith was out when a fierce pull off Archer was superbly caught by a diving Brydon Carse on the boundary. — AFP



GALLE: Sri Lanka's head coach Sanath Jayasuriya (4L) along with players inspect the pitch during a practice session on the eve of their second Test cricket match against New Zealand at the Galle International Cricket Stadium in Galle on September 25, 2024. — AFP

curing a spot in the final at Lord's next June.

Sri Lanka batting coach Thilina Kandamby said his team had to work on scoring big in the first innings. "Recently, we've often been playing catch-up because we haven't posted strong enough totals up-front. Another concern is getting more contributions from the lower order." Sri Lanka have confirmed that all-rounder Milan Rathnayake will return to the side, replacing Lahiru Kumara.

Rathnayake's inclusion is expected to strengthen Sri Lanka's tail-end batting. Additionally, Sri Lanka will hand a Test cap to off-spinner Nishan Peiris, who will replace Ramesh Mendis, who took six wickets in the game but struggled with consistency

in his lengths. Peiris, 27, has been knocking on the door after a solid performance with Sri Lanka A on their tour of South Africa this month.

Despite left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel claiming six wickets in the second innings, it was New Zealand's rookie pacer William O'Rourke who caused Sri Lanka the most trouble with his awkward bounce. "He really surprised us with the amount of bounce he generated. We've never seen anyone extract that much bounce in Galle," Kandamby said.

"We handled the short ball well in England, but here it was the inconsistent bounce that gave us trouble. We've identified ways to counter him, and we're ready for the challenge." — AFP

Surprise start for Libbok as Etzebeth set for record

MBOMBELA: Fly-half Manie Libbok was a surprise choice as South Africa made nine changes for a Rugby Championship title decider against Argentina in Mbombela on Saturday. The final round showdown will see lock Eben Etzebeth win a record 128th Springboks cap, overtaking fellow forward Victor Matfield.

Libbok and Etzebeth are promoted after coming off the bench last Saturday when South Africa lost 29-28 to Argentina after a thriller in Santiago del Estero. The other changes include three in the backline with wing Cheslin Kolbe, centre Damian de Allende and scrum-half Jaden Hendrikse chosen.

Captain Siya Kolisi, who will play with a fractured nose, fellow flanker Pieter-Steph du Toit, prop Frans Malherbe and hooker Bongani Mbonambi are recalled to the pack. Coach Rassie Erasmus gambled last weekend by fielding an experimental team and it would have paid off had Libbok not missed a 35-metre penalty from a slight angle in the last minute.

A talented player with ball in hand, Libbok has often failed from the tee at Test level, though, and vastly experienced playmaker Handre Pollard was expected to start against Los Pumas. Erasmus backed Libbok, saying "the general play of Manie is fantastic, and he brings a lot of energy and play-making abilities to the backline. He dictates play well, so we back him fully to do the job for us at fly-half." — AFP



KANPUR: India's Virat Kohli (L) arrives for a practice session at the Green Park Cricket Stadium in Kanpur on September 25, 2024, ahead of their second cricket Test match against Bangladesh. — AFP

expected to be slow and low, with spin expected to play a part by day three. Irrespective of the surface, Deep said his job would be to "keep the ball in good areas and get wickets". — AFP

Sports

Triple play sends Padres to postseason

Masyn Winn drives in 4, powers Cardinals past Rockies

LOS ANGELES: Jake Cronenworth hit a two-run home run and helped turn an around-the-horn triple play to end the game as the visiting San Diego Padres clinched a spot in the National League playoffs with a 4-2 victory over the Los Angeles Dodgers on Tuesday. Cronenworth had two hits and three RBIs as the Padres secured their eighth playoff appearance all time and third since 2020. San Diego moved two games behind Los Angeles in the chase for the NL West title, with two games remaining in the series and five in the season. San Diego starter Michael King (13-9) gave up just an unearned run on three hits in five innings and Suarez ended up with his 35th save as the Padres improved to 8-3 against the Dodgers this year. Shohei Ohtani doubled, walked and scored a run for the Dodgers, whose magic number for clinching their 11th division title in 12 seasons remained at four. Los Angeles clinched a playoff spot on Friday. Rookie right-hander Landon Knack (3-5) gave up four runs on five hits over four innings.

Cardinals 7, Rockies 3

Masyn Winn hit a two-run homer and drove in two more with a double in St. Louis' four-run eighth inning, leading the Cardinals past Colorado in Denver. Lars Nootbaar walked three times and scored twice and Andrew Kittredge (5-5) tossed a scoreless inning of relief for the Cardinals, who earned their third win in a row. Aaron Schunk homered and singled while Charlie Blackmon tripled and doubled for Colorado. The Rockies fell for the fourth time in five games.

Astros 4, Mariners 3

Jason Heyward delivered a go-ahead two-run homer in the fifth inning and Houston clinched a fourth straight American League West title, beating visiting Seattle. Josh Hader notched a four-out save for Houston, which captured its seventh division crown in the past eight years. Alex Bregman and Kyle Tucker also homered for the Astros, who got 5 2/3 innings of three-run ball from Framber Valdez (15-7). Mariners starter Logan Gilbert (8-12) surrendered four runs on five hits, including three home runs, over six innings.

Orioles 5, Yankees 3

Anthony Santander, Ramon Urias and Colton Cowser homered as visiting Baltimore held off

New York, which was unable to clinch the American League East title. A short time later, the Orioles clinched their second straight postseason berth when the Minnesota Twins lost to the Miami Marlins. The Orioles hold a four-game lead for the top AL wild card with five games to play. Aaron Judge hit his major-league-leading 56th homer, but the Yankees had their magic number to clinch a second division title in three seasons remain at one.

Guardians 6, Reds 1

Tanner Bibee allowed one run over seven strong innings, Kyle Manzardo hit a solo homer and Lane Thomas added a two-run shot as Cleveland clinched a first-round bye in the playoffs with a win over visiting Cincinnati. Thomas totaled three RBIs, and Josh Naylor had two hits and two RBIs for the American League Central champion Guardians. Spencer Steer had an RBI single for the Reds in their first game since manager David Bell was fired near the end of his sixth season with the club.

Braves 5, Mets 1

Michael Harris II had three hits and two RBIs to support right-hander Spencer Schwellenbach and help host Atlanta beat New York in the opener of a three-game series. The win pulled the Braves within a game of the Mets in the race for the second wild-card spot in the National League and a half-game of the Arizona Diamondbacks for the final NL wild-card spot. Schwellenbach (8-7) yielded one run on three hits in seven innings. New York starter Luis Severino (11-7) lasted only four innings, giving up four runs on seven hits.

White Sox 3, Angels 2

Andrew Benintendi capped a three-run eighth inning with a go-ahead single as host Chicago edged Los Angeles to end a five-game losing streak. Handcuffed by Angels rookie right-hander Jack Kochanowicz for seven innings, Chicago rallied to remain tied with the 1962 New York Mets for the most losses in a single season in modern major league history. It was Chicago's first win this year when trailing after seven innings. Kochanowicz limited the White Sox to three singles and no runs. Angels second baseman Jack Lopez hit his first major league homer.



LOS ANGELES: Jake Cronenworth #9 of the San Diego Padres celebrates his two run home run with teammate Jackson Merrill #3 during the second inning against the Los Angeles Dodgers. — AFP

Red Sox 6, Blue Jays 5 (10 innings)

Trevor Story's RBI double broke a 3-3 tie and ignited a three-run 10th inning, and visiting Boston beat Toronto. Vaughn Grissom had three hits, including an RBI single in the 10th, for the Red Sox. Chris Martin (3-1) earned the win, and Chase Shugart got the last two outs for his first major league save. Vladimir Guerrero Jr. hit a two-run double and Davis Schneider scored twice for the Blue Jays. Bowden Francis allowed three hits in five scoreless innings.

Giants 11, Diamondbacks 0

Michael Conforto and Brett Wisely slugged three-run homers and San Francisco scored 10 runs on five homers while blasting Arizona in Phoenix. Tyler Fitzgerald hit a two-run homer and Patrick Bailey and Heliot Ramos added solo shots as San Francisco won its fifth straight game. Logan Webb (13-10) gave up four hits and one walk in six innings for the Giants. Corbin Carroll and Lourdes Gurriel Jr. each had two hits for Arizona, which lost its third straight game. Diamondbacks starter Brandon Pfaadt (10-10) served up two homers and lasted just 2 2/3 innings.

Marlins 4, Twins 1

Xavier Edwards went 2-for-4 with a double and two RBIs, and Miami held on to beat Minnesota in Minneapolis. Jonah Bride finished 3-for-5 with a solo homer for the Marlins, who won the opener of a three-game series. Nick Fortes went 2-for-4 with a double and an RBI. Royce Lewis drove in the lone run for Minnesota. The Twins have lost three games in a row and five of their past six to fall two games behind the Detroit Tigers and the Kansas City Royals for the final two American League wild-card spots.

A's 5, Rangers 4

Jacob Wilson singled home Zack Gelof from second base in the bottom of the ninth inning as Oakland opened its three-day going-away party with a victory over defending champion Texas. After closer Mason Miller (2-2) worked out of a first-and-third, one-out jam to preserve a tie in the top of the inning, Gelof led off the bottom of the ninth with a single off Josh Sborz (2-2). Gelof stole second as Seth Brown was striking out before Wilson drilled Sborz's next pitch into center field to complete the walk-off win. — Reuters

Asylum seeker lifts S Korea hopes at Homeless WCup

SEOUL: Fleeing civil war in his home country Cameroon, Fossi Wandji found himself stuck in Incheon airport terminal for a year when his attempt at obtaining asylum from South Korea was rejected. But the Asian nation is now counting on him to boost its chances at the Homeless World Cup tournament—something that could in turn bolster his bid at winning the right to stay in South Korea.

Wandji, 27, is playing on a squad with seven other South Korean players in the tournament, which showcases national teams made up of young, unsheltered people, refugees, and those who have battled substance abuse.

The tournament, newly backed by global football body FIFA, is hosted by Asia for the first time this year since it began in 2003. The event bills itself as helping participants change their lives for the better through football and has already sparked a feel-good documentary starring Bill Nighy, plus a 2023 Korean movie called "Dream".

But Wandji's experience is also reminiscent of another movie, Tom Hanks' "The Terminal", in which the protagonist was forced to live in an airport as he was denied entry to the United States but unable to return to his own country because of a military coup.

Ramyeon for privacy

"I left Cameroon because Cameroon had a war," Wandji told AFP on the sidelines of the football field at Seoul's Hanyang University. While he was trying to flee, a contact who was helping him suggested South Korea could be a good place to seek refuge. So, in October 2022, Wandji boarded a plane to Seoul.

But South Korea's Justice Ministry immediately rejected his claim on his arrival at the airport, blocking him from leaving the terminal while he sought a reversal of the decision. While he waited, the Terminal 2 transit area became his temporary home.



SEOUL: Cameroon refugee Fossi Wandji (C, #99) controls the ball during the men's group stage 4x4 football match between South Korea and Switzerland at the 2024 Homeless World Cup in Seoul. — AFP

"I had some place where you can put a blanket," he said, describing how he shared the space with around ten other people, including Russian asylum seekers, who had fled to avoid military conscription in the ongoing war with

Ukraine. Photos published by South Korean media Hankyoreh showed Wandji making a makeshift bed with a blanket, using boxes of noodles to separate himself from other asylum seekers sleeping nearby. — AFP

IOC should reinstate Russia as soon it obeys rules: Samaranch

BUDAPEST: The International Olympic Committee should start work on ending Russia's suspension from the organisation "the minute" Moscow obeys the rules again, IOC vice-president Juan Antonio Samaranch Junior said on Tuesday.

The 64-year-old Spaniard, whose father of the same name was IOC president from 1980-2001 and transformed it into a commercial powerhouse, is one of the seven candidates vying to succeed current IOC leader Thomas Bach.

The Russian Olympic Committee (NOC) is "today still in clear and flagrant breach of the Olympic Charter by taking over responsibilities of a fellow national Olympic committee in certain territories," Samaranch

told AFP in Budapest on the sidelines of a conference.

The IOC had excluded the NOC after it had placed several sports organisations from occupied Ukrainian regions under its authority. "The minute the reasons for suspension and non-recognition disappear, we have the obligation to start working very hard to bring them back," said Samaranch. He stressed that Russia had not been suspended for invading Ukraine, but "because it had not respected the Olympic truce" by starting the war in 2022, just as the Beijing Olympics ended and before the Paralympic Games.

"We didn't take sides... The minute we take sides, you are excluding the other side, a part of the world," Samaranch said. He promised to fight for the Olympic movement's "independence and universality" without which the IOC "would not serve" its purpose to "unite despite differences, despite controversies, despite fights, despite war". Russia was banned from world sport following the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. A tiny squad of 15 neutral athletes represented Russia for the Paris Olympics this summer. Comment-



BUDAPEST: Spanish sports executive and financial analyst, the vice president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Juan Antonio Samaranch Junior gives an interview to AFP in Budapest. — AFP

ing on the fast-paced AI development, Samaranch expressed the hope that it can help "reduce the gap" between rich and poorer countries and that IOC must "make the most of technological evolution". — AFP

Naomi Osaka wants 'no regrets' after hiring Serena's coach

BEIJING: Four-time major champion Naomi Osaka said on Wednesday she "didn't want to have regrets" after confirming she has teamed up with Serena Williams' renowned former coach Patrick Mouratoglou.

Former world number one Osaka, now ranked 73, defeated Lucia Bronzetti of Italy 6-3, 6-2 in the first round of the WTA 1000 China Open with the Frenchman Mouratoglou in her players' box. The 26-year-old Osaka split from Belgian coach Wim Fissette this month as she attempts to return to the form that propelled her to the top of the women's game. Japan's Osaka said she "felt like I needed a change" and described Mouratoglou, who is best known as Williams' long-time former coach, as "a big persona".

"I like the way he coaches. I think it's going to be really interesting," she said in Beijing after setting up a second-round meeting with 21st seed Yulia Putintseva of Kazakhstan. "I think I'm at a stage in my life that I don't want to have regrets. I'd rather pull the trigger on something and I don't want to say 'fail', but I feel like I really need to learn as much as possible in this stage of my career."

"Patrick seemed like the guy with I guess the information that I wanted to learn from." Fissette had two stints coaching Osaka, from 2019 to the summer of 2022 and again when they reunited last year as Osaka launched her return to tennis after the birth of her daughter Shai in July 2023.

Osaka has struggled to put together victories since she returned to the WTA Tour in January. She bowed out in the second round of the recent US Open and her best results since returning to action have been two quarter-final appearances.

Osaka, who won the China Open in 2019, admitted being a little wary initially about Mouratoglou, given the 54-year-old's long and successful association with the legendary Williams. "I think the fact that he was Serena's coach for me made me want to avoid him just because his persona is so big," she said. "Then I met him, talked to him, worked with him on the court. He absolutely is a really good coach. I'm really glad that he's taking this project on as well." Osaka said she was "still a little nervous around him". "I kind of look to the floor when he looks at me. I think I do need a lot more time to spend together with him," she said. "I'm getting a little more comfortable day by day." — AFP

Classifieds

Change of Name

I, **Mabel** Malcolm Fernandes, holder of Passport No. R8131312 do hereby change my name to Malcolm Fernandes for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name Malcolm Fernandes and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents.
(#6169 26/09/2024)

I, **Mahamadali** Saudagar Sardar, holder of Indian Passport No. Y3681670, having permanent

address Hill Mist Residency, Plot No. 82, Mantri Chandak Vihar, Flat No. 6 Hotgi road, Solapur-413003, Maharashtra, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) Sardar Ali Mohammed Ali and (surname) Saudagar.
(#6174 26/09/2024)

I, **Gurbhej** Singh, holder of Indian Passport No. X3277300, having permanent address

143401, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) Gurbhej Singh and (surname) Sidhu.
(#6172 26/09/2024)

I, **Tasneem**, holder of Indian Passport No. M6103113, having permanent address of Dungarpur, Rajasthan, India, residing in Kuwait at present, I hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given

name) Tasneem and (surname) Tekriwala.
(# 6173 26/09/2024)

I, **Abbas** Ali, Father Moiz Hussain, Caste Bohra, resident of house number 44, KH Bohra Gali, Near Bohra Masjid, Tehsil Jeeran, District Neemuch, Madhya Pradesh, Pin code-458336. That earlier I was known as Abbas Ali Bohra S/o Moiz Hussain Bohra and currently I have changed my name to Abbas Ali S/o Moiz Hussain and

now I will be known and recognized as Abbas Ali S/o Moiz Hussein.
(# 6171 25/09/2024)

I, **Fakhruddin**, holder of Passport No. Z3200987 do hereby change my name to Fakhruddin Ali Mohammed (as given name) Sultan (as surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name Fakhruddin Ali Mohammed Sultan and I also undertake to carry out this name change all my documents.
(# 6170 24/09/2024)

Nkunku hits Chelsea hat-trick

Manchester City edge into League Cup last 16



MANCHESTER: Manchester City's English defender #82 Rico Lewis vies for the ball with Watford's Swedish midfielder #12 Ken Sema during the English League Cup third round football match between Manchester City and Watford. — AFP

MANCHESTER: Christopher Nkunku scored a hat-trick as Chelsea thrashed fourth tier Barrow 5-0 to reach the last 16 of the League Cup on Tuesday as a much-changed Manchester City edged out Watford 2-1. Nkunku now has six goals in seven appearances this season, but the Frenchman has still been unable to nail down a regular place in Enzo Maresca's side.

Maresca made 11 changes from the team that beat West Ham 3-0 on Saturday but could still start around £400 million (\$533 million) worth of talent. Joao

Felix was another of the Blues' big money signings to shine. His scooped pass set up Nkunku for opener.

Nkunku then flicked home a second before Felix's free-kick hit the post and rebounded in off Barrow goalkeeper Paul Farman. Pedro Neto tapped in Mykhailo Mudryk's cross for his first Chelsea goal. Nkunku sealed his first hat-trick for the club when he dispossessed Farman and rolled into an empty net.

City began what is likely to be many months without key midfielder Rodri after he suffered suspected knee liga-

ment damage in a fiery 2-2 draw against Arsenal in the Premier League on Sunday. Little over 48 hours on from that top-of-the-table clash, City were in action again and Pep Guardiola made nine changes, including a debut for 16-year-old Kaden Braithwaite.

Jeremy Doku, one of the two to retain his place, fired in the opening goal from Jack Grealish's pass after five minutes. Rodri's absence could mean a more prominent role for Matheus Nunes and the Portugal international blasted in his first goal since joining

City for £53 million a year ago.

Tom Ince, son of former Manchester United midfielder Paul Ince, pulled a late goal back for Watford, but it was too little, too late for the Championship side. Aston Villa's second string were also pushed by lower-league opposition but Emi Buendia's header and Jhon Duran's penalty were enough to win 2-1 at Wycombe.

Fourth-tier Walsall came closest to an upset as they forced Leicester to penalties after a 0-0 draw. However, the Premier League side won the shoot-out 3-0.

Newcastle's trip to AFC Wimbledon was postponed after a sinkhole appeared on the League Two side's pitch following heavy flooding in London this week.

The match has been switched to Newcastle's St. James Park on October 1. Newcastle have contributed £15,000 to a fund to help repair the pitch at Cherry Red Records Stadium. Manchester United and Tottenham were among the sides to progress to round four last week. Liverpool take on West Ham and Arsenal host Bolton in the remaining two ties on Wednesday. — AFP



ALMATY: The winners at the Asian Shotgun Cup 2024.

Kuwait shooters win 5 gold, 2 silver at Asian Shotgun Cup

KUWAIT: Kuwait Shooting National team won two new gold medals at the Asian Shotgun Cup 2024, being held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in the double trap event raising the total medals won by Kuwait shooters to (7) medals 5 gold and two silver.

President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federa-

tions, Secretary General of Asian Shooting Confederation Engineer Duaij Khalaf Al-Otaibi said this achievement was made as shooter Ahmad Al-Afasi winning the singles event while the team Nasser Al-Mialid, Talal Al-Torqi and Ahmad Al-Afasi won the team contest.

Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi said the outstanding achievements by Kuwait shooters in this event makes us proud and is a proof of Kuwait shooters' prominence in the world.

He said Kuwait Shooting Federation pays great attention to shooters of both genders, and provide them with training camps in order to further develop their technical standards. — KUNA

Mbappe strikes again as Madrid hold off Alaves

MADRID: Kylian Mbappe struck for the fourth consecutive game as Real Madrid survived a late scare to beat Alaves 3-2 in La Liga on Tuesday. Real Madrid, second, cut the gap on Barcelona to one point before the leaders host Getafe on Wednesday.

Madrid dismantled Alaves with goals from Lucas Vazquez, Mbappe and Rodrygo before a late salvo from the visitors rocked Carlo Ancelotti's side. Carlos Protosoni and Kike Garcia scored two goals in two minutes in the final stages but Madrid held on.

"This is football, you can think the game has finished, (then there's) a small slip and they score the first, they get confidence and you lose it, this is what happens," Ancelotti told reporters. "Obviously we don't want this to happen, but it can."

"We have to highlight that for an hour the team played well and that gives us confidence." Los Blancos overpowered Alaves from the start in what was a hugely uneven contest for most of the game, despite the Basque side's solid start to the season.

Ancelotti brought Vinicius Junior back into the starting line-up and gave Vazquez a rare start and the pair combined inside the first minute. The Brazilian winger surged in from the left flank and cut the ball back for a simple finish from Vazquez.

Ancelotti said Monday he wanted more intensity at the outset of matches after Madrid had scored just one first half goal this season in La Liga or the Champions League, and his demand was swiftly met. Los Blancos dominated with Alaves barely reaching Thibaut Courtois' penalty

box. Despite that Madrid's second goal only came five minutes before the interval, when Mbappe and Jude Bellingham combined beautifully.

Fifth league goal for Mbappe

France captain Mbappe conjured a clever flicked pass to the England international, who completed a one-two by sending his team-mate through on goal. Mbappe took two deft touches to shake his marker and get a sight of goal, before stroking home clinically for his fifth league goal.

Rodrygo expanded Madrid's lead soon after the interval, roaming in with freedom from the right and firing through Alaves goalkeeper Antonio Sivera's legs. Teenage Brazilian striker Endrick hit the post with a deflected effort and Abde Rebbach also struck the woodwork as Alaves made a rare foray forward.

Madrid substitute Endrick, 18, was fortunate not to be dismissed when he kicked out at Alaves defender Santiago Mourino. Mbappe was taken off after 80 minutes and appeared to be suffering some discomfort, holding the back of his thigh.

"He's fine, he's fine, a little overloaded, he asked me for the change to avoid problems," explained Ancelotti. The visitors pulled one back after 85 minutes when Protosoni curled home a sweet strike from the edge of the box.

Protosoni then turned provider with a fine ball over the top which Kike Garcia fired home well. Madrid hung on for the victory, their 39th consecutive league game unbeaten in Ancelotti's 300th game at the helm across two spells at the club, ahead of Sunday's derby clash with Atletico Madrid at the Metropolitano.

The Rojiblancos' stadium was where they last tasted defeat in the top flight, exactly a year ago. "I'm happy for the win," Vazquez told Real Madrid TV. "I think we had a great game until the 80th minute, when two mistakes cost us two goals against us, and we had to suffer more than we should have. — AFP