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## IRAN ATTACKS ZIONIST ENTITY

Zionist forces enter Lebanon • Hezb targets Mossad HQ • 4 killed in Tel Aviv • 37 martyred in Gaza



TEL AVIV: Zionists take cover behind vehicles under a bridge along the side of a highway on Oct 1, 2024. — AFP

**JERUSALEM/BEIRUT:** Iran fired a salvo of ballistic missiles at the Zionist entity on Tuesday in retaliation for the Zionist entity's campaign against Tehran's Hezbollah allies in Lebanon. Alarms sounded across the Zionist entity and explosions could be heard in Jerusalem and the Jordan River valley after Zionists piled into bomb shelters. Reporters on state television lay flat on the ground during live broadcasts.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said Iran had launched tens of missiles at the Zionist entity, and that if the Zionist entity retaliated Tehran's response would be "more crushing and ruinous". A senior Iranian official later told Reuters that the order to launch missiles at the Zionist entity was made by the country's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Khamenei remains in a secure location, the senior official added. The Zionist army said the Zionist entity's airspace was closed following the Iranian attack.

Iraq and Jordan closed their airspace too. Reuters journalists saw missiles intercepted in the airspace of neighboring Jordan. Zionist army radio said nearly 200 missiles had been launched into the Zionist entity from Iran. Earlier, the military had announced that any ballistic missile strike from Iran was expected to be widespread and told the public to shelter in safe rooms in the event of an attack. At least four people were shot

dead Tuesday in a suspected attack in Tel Aviv, police said, adding that the two assailants had been "neutralized".

Iran has vowed to retaliate following attacks that killed the top leadership of its Hezbollah allies in Lebanon. The firing of missiles came after the Zionist entity said its troops had launched ground raids into Lebanon, though it described the forays as limited. The Zionist campaign in Lebanon is the biggest escalation of regional warfare since fighting erupted in Gaza a year ago.

In Washington, US President Joe Biden said the United States was prepared to help the Zionist entity defend itself from Iranian missile attacks. "We discussed how the United States is prepared to help (the Zionist entity) defend against these attacks, and protect American personnel in the region," Biden said on X about a meeting held with Vice President Kamala Harris and the White House national security team earlier in the day. The Pentagon said the United States was boosting its forces in the Middle East by a "few thousand" troops.

The Iranian missile launches came after Zionist ground troops launched raids into Lebanon and its warplanes bombed from the skies. Though so far characterized by the Zionist entity as limited, the first ground campaign into

Continued on Page 6

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Houthis target 3 ships off Yemen

**DUBAI:** Two ships were damaged in separate attacks off Yemen by Houthi rebels on Tuesday. In the first attack, a port-side ballast tank was holed by a sea drone. The same ship, sailing 118 km northwest of Hodeida, had come under threat earlier, reporting four splashes nearby. The second ship was damaged by a missile strike 179 km off Hodeida. A third ship was targeted in the Indian Ocean with a drone and a winged missile. — Agencies

#### Saudi projects deficit through 2027

**RIYADH:** The Arab world's biggest economy Saudi Arabia announced Monday it anticipates a budget deficit of 2.3 percent of GDP in 2025, projected to continue over the following two years. It cited increased government spending and lower oil revenues for the budget outlook. The deficit is projected to hit 2.9 percent of Saudi GDP in 2026 and 3.0 percent in 2027. — AFP (See Page 8)

#### Gamers hit by PlayStation outage

**PARIS:** The online services of Sony's PlayStation consoles went down for several hours on Tuesday, the Japanese firm said, affecting gamers around the world. The conglomerate apologized in a social media post without providing a reason for the outage. PlayStation's online services allow owners of consoles such as the PS4 and PS5 to play games such as "Fortnite" or "Call of Duty". — AFP

### Erdogan: Zionists will be stopped 'sooner or later'

**ANKARA:** Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Tuesday condemned the Zionist entity's ground operation in Lebanon and urged the United Nations and other international organizations to stop the Zionist entity without "wasting any more time". "Whatever it does, (the Zionist entity) will be stopped sooner or later," Erdogan told the Turkish

parliament at the opening of the legislative year. "All state and international organizations, especially the UN, must stop (the Zionist entity) without wasting any more time," he said.

Erdogan said "the terror and genocide" the Zionist entity had carried out in Gaza had reached Lebanon and warned if not stopped, the Zionist leadership would set its sights on Turkey. "I openly say that the (Zionist) leadership, acting with the delirium of the promised land and with a purely religious fanaticism, will set its sights on our homeland after Palestine and Lebanon," Erdogan said, again comparing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Nazi Germany's Adolf Hitler. "Just as Hitler, who saw himself in a giant mirror, was stopped, Net-

anyahu will be stopped in the same way," he said.

Turkey's foreign ministry said it had drawn up contingency plans to evacuate its citizens from Lebanon because "the security situation is likely to deteriorate". "In coordination with relevant institutions, alternative plans have been prepared for the evacuation of our citizens by sea or air from Lebanon," the ministry said.

Turkey is estimated to have 14,000 citizens registered with its consulate in Lebanon. The ministry also said guidelines for the evacuation of third countries' citizens via Turkey have also been determined, adding that necessary preparations were underway in cooperation with nearly 20 countries that have requested support. — AFP

### Former US president Jimmy Carter turns 100

**PLAINS, Georgia:** Jimmy Carter celebrated his 100th birthday on Tuesday — the first ever US president to reach the century mark and another extraordinary milestone for the onetime peanut farmer who found his way to the White House. Carter's longevity — he began hospice care at his home in Plains, Georgia, more than 19 months ago — has defied all expectations.

No longer regularly appearing in public, the Democratic ex-president will spend his birthday in the home he and his late wife Rosalynn had built in Plains in the 1960s. It will include a lunch with some 20 members of his extended family, according to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. President Joe Biden, in a video posted on his official X account, hailed Carter as a "beloved friend" and "one of the most influential statesmen" in US history.

"Your hopeful vision of our country, your commitment to a better world and your unwavering belief in the power of human goodness continues to be a guiding light for all of us," he said.

Continued on Page 6



WASHINGTON: A sign on the North Lawn of the White House wishes a "Happy Birthday" to former US President Jimmy Carter as he turns 100 on Oct 1, 2024. — AFP

### Small exoplanet discovered in 'our cosmic backyard'

**PARIS:** A rare exoplanet smaller than Earth has been discovered orbiting one of the closest stars to the Sun, although its surface is far too hot to sustain life, astronomers said on Tuesday. The planet orbits Barnard's Star, which is just six light years away, according to observations made over five years by the Very Large Telescope in the Chilean desert.

The astronomers were looking for planets outside our Solar System which are in the "Goldilocks zone" — where it is neither too hot nor too cold for liquid water, which is considered an essential ingredient for extra-terrestrial life. The newly discovered exoplanet, dubbed Barnard b, is not in this habitable zone. It is 20 times closer to its red dwarf star than Mercury is to our Sun. A year on the planet lasts just three Earth days. Its surface temperature is a sizzling 125 degrees Celsius, according to a new study describing the discovery.

"Barnard b is one of the lowest-mass exoplanets known and one of the few known with a mass less than that of Earth," said Jonay Gonzalez Hernandez, Continued on Page 6



This handout artist's impression obtained on Oct 1, 2024 shows Barnard b, a sub-Earth-mass planet that was discovered orbiting Barnard's star. — AFP





## Local



Khaled Al-Ajmi distributes gifts to the older people attending the event.



KUWAIT: Officials attend an event held by Ministry of Social Affairs to mark the International Day of Older Person on Monday, October 1, 2024.

# Kuwait reaffirms commitment to protecting elderly rights

## Mobile care unit, elderly Diwaniyas some of social affairs ministry's recently launched services

By Passant Hisham

KUWAIT: Kuwait is committed to upholding human rights, particularly the rights of older people, said Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Khaled Al-Ajmi. His remarks were made during an event on Monday, marking International Day of Older Persons, which falls on October 1 of every year. The event was held under the patronage of Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr Amthal Al-Huwailah.

"Kuwait recognizes the vital role that older people play and the importance of developing our laws to protect their rights, preserve their dignity, and encourage their integration into society while benefiting from their wealth of experiences," he said in a speech on behalf of Minister Al-Huwailah. He referenced the laws concerning the social care of the elderly, including Article 11 of the Kuwaiti Constitution and Law No 18 of 2016.

He also highlighted the ministry's role in providing comprehensive health, social, psychological and living care for older people without family support. This includes home care services and various support options delivered by specialized technical staff, as well as daycare services offered at dedicated clubs and centers, which aim to increase the elderly's engagement with society during their free time.

In a statement to KUNA, Minister Al-Huwailah noted one of this year's significant achievements:



An elderly man entertains attendees during a performance at the event.

the launch of a mobile elderly care unit based in Hawally governorate, which facilitates transportation for older individuals to services like physiotherapy and health clubs. She also mentioned the establishment of elderly Diwaniyas (gathering halls) in the West Abdullah Mubarak and Al-Firdous areas, along with other services aimed at integrating the elderly into wider society.

Abdelrahman Al-Enezi, Director of the ministry's elderly care department, highlighted the Farah Specialized Center for the Care and Rehabilitation of the Elderly, as an example of care services provided for older people. The center,



Director of the elderly care department Abdelrahman Al-Enezi

which currently hosts 17 people, offers various activities to keep residents entertained, including group breakfasts and family visits. "We encourage visits from individuals, civil society organizations, and government entities. These interactions bring immense joy to our elderly residents," he stated.

Recognizing that many of the older people prefer to receive care at home, surrounded by their families, he added that the ministry operates six mobile centers across all governorates. Currently, these mobile service centers serve 3,888 elderly individuals, which has contributed to lower admissions at the Farah Specialized Center, said Enezi.



Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Khaled Al-Ajmi

In addition to that, he said that the number of beneficiaries from the "Awlawiya" cards provided by the government to facilitate seniors' government transactions stands at 34,787, while the number of beneficiaries from the elderly parking permit program is 6,279.

According to him, to be eligible for these services, individuals must be Kuwaiti citizens aged 65 and older, whether they seek home care or care within the center. Additionally, when applying to the Farah Specialized Center, certain medical examinations should be conducted to ensure residents are free from infectious diseases.

## Senior parking permits can now be obtained via Sahel App

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Social Affairs announced Tuesday that it has launched a new service for issuing parking permits for seniors through the government app (Sahel).

In a post on its official social media account on X, the ministry said this service aims to simplify and speed up the issuance of parking permits. It also allows direct communication with users via the app, enabling them to track the status of their permit applications until they are fully processed. To qualify for this service, applicants must be Kuwaiti nationals aged 65 or older and must obtain approval from a designated medical committee. Beneficiaries need to provide a copy of their Awlawiya Card, a copy of their civil ID, and a medical report approved by the medical committee. The Awlawiya card provides elderly individuals, aged 65 and above, with priority service in all state institutions and facilitates their government transactions. A sub category of the card is designated for low-income seniors who meet conditions specified by the government and exempts them from paying for transportation services, vehicle registration fees, and other public service fees. It also exempts assistive devices and specially equipped vehicles for the elderly from customs duties. According to government officials, 34,787 people are registered for an Awlawiya card in Kuwait and 6,279 have a seniors parking permit.

## 47,445 citizens miss biometric scan deadline: MoI

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Interior said Tuesday that 10,326 citizens completed their biometric fingerprinting on the last day of the designated period at the biometric centers. The total number of citizens who have undergone biometric fingerprinting across all centers is 928,684, leaving about 47,445 citizens yet to complete the process.

Biometric fingerprinting services at shopping malls have now been suspended, said the ministry, and the equipment will be relocated to support eight interior ministry centers responsible for identity verification already operating across various governorates. The centers will continue to offer services daily from 8 am to 8 pm. Citizens whose government and banking transactions have been suspended can visit the centers to complete their biometric fingerprinting, which will automatically lift the restrictions on their transactions.

The Ministry of Interior has temporarily exempted students studying abroad on government scholarships and their companions, patients sent for treatment overseas, and diplomatic staff from the bio-



KUWAIT: A woman registers her biometrics at a designated interior ministry center in this file photo. — KUNA

metric scans until their return to Kuwait. Temporary exemption requests will also apply to citizens currently abroad for study or medical treatment at their own expense, but they must provide proof to Kuwaiti embassies for approval. Upon their return, those ex-

empted will be allowed to register their biometrics at the airport or at the designated fingerprinting centers. This comes in line with the ministry's commitment to facilitate transactions for citizens abroad while adhering to security standards. — KUNA

## stc sponsors TEDxSafat Square, fostering innovation

KUWAIT: Kuwait Telecommunications Company stc — a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait — sponsored the TEDxSafat Square event, which took place under the theme "Growth: Embracing Endless Possibilities". The sponsorship comes as part of stc's ongoing efforts to foster innovation and entrepreneurship within the community, aligning with its core CSR strategy.

The TEDxSafat Square event, held at the National Library, brought together over 100 participants, including industry leaders, entrepreneurs, and students, to engage with more than 10 prominent speakers who shared their experiences and expertise. The platform provided meaningful connections and encouraged attendees to engage with ideas that challenged their perspectives, ignited curiosity, and transformed the way they perceive growth. The theme as well as the concept behind the platform strongly align with the objectives set under stc's CSR framework, especially under its 'weyakh' initiative which aims to stimulate the economy through the innovative work of entrepreneurs and startups.

Among the notable speakers at the TEDxSafat Square event were Bader Al-Essa (Bonabil), Founder of EMCAN, a digital platform for entrepreneurs,

and Yarub Bourahmah, an acclaimed director and trainer. Their presentations highlighted the importance of embracing digital transformation and leveraging technology to unlock new avenues for personal and professional development.

Aside from stc's role, the event was supported by several esteemed sponsors, including Rapture, M2R Group as the exclusive media partner, Fohgah, Astroshot, and Insync. Their contributions played a pivotal role in the success of TEDxSafat Square, further emphasizing the collaborative spirit that drives growth and innovation in the community.

Commenting on the sponsorship, Danah AlJasem, General Manager of Corporate Communications at stc, said: "We believe in the power of knowledge and innovation as key drivers of growth and development in the community. Our sponsorship of TEDxSafat Square reflects our dedication to supporting initiatives that empower young minds and aspiring entrepreneurs to turn their visions into reality. We are proud to have been part of an event that fostered creativity and opened the door to endless entrepreneurial possibilities for the youth in Kuwait."

stc's participation in TEDxSafat Square was part of its broader "weyakh" initiative, which focuses on nurturing talent, supporting innovative projects, and promoting the spirit of entrepreneurship across Kuwait. Through such initiatives, stc continues to reinforce its role as a key enabler of digital transformation and a strong supporter of empowering the younger generation for the betterment of the community.

AlJasem added: "Through partnering with platforms like TEDx, we aim to inspire and support the next generation by linking them with the tools and



A participant gives a lecture as part of TEDxSafat Square.

confidence needed to navigate the ever-evolving digital world. This aligns with our vision to be a catalyst for digital transformation and a leading supporter of national initiatives that contribute to Kuwait's sustainable development."

TEDxSafat Square, an independently organized TED event, is known for bringing together a powerful blend of pre-recorded TED Talks and inspiring



KUWAIT: stc team members pose for a photo with winners of the first edition of InspireU.

live speakers to ignite change and foster deep discussions within an intimate audience in Kuwait. This year's theme, "Growth," explored various aspects of development, from personal growth to societal evolution. Attendees experienced a thought-provoking journey, delving into topics ranging from resilience and overcoming adversity to visionary ideas that push the boundaries of what is possible.



# Kuwait continues to seek stronger relations with world

Guided by HH the Amir, Kuwait leads ambitious strategy to solidify global status



RIYADH: His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is seen with Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, during the Amir's visit to Saudi Arabia in early 2024. — KUNA photos



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan honors HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with the State Order after a welcoming ceremony at the Presidential Palace on May 7, 2024.

KUWAIT: Since the beginning of 2024, Kuwait has continued its efforts to enhance its international relations on both bilateral and multilateral levels, guided by Amiri directives and an ambitious strategic vision aimed at solidifying its status on the global stage and achieving tangible accomplishments across various fields, particularly in diplomacy and politics. On December 16, 2023, following the announcement of His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as the new Amir, Kuwait adopted an ambitious approach to strengthen its cooperation with international partners and global organizations while also developing its relationships with friendly and brotherly nations. The visits made by His Highness the Amir to Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries at the end of January 2024 were a cornerstone in this diplomatic endeavor, especially as they marked his first official trips since assuming power. These visits underscored the commitment to enhancing Gulf integration and advancing joint cooperation to new horizons.

The prominent Gulf tour, which took place approximately 45 days after His Highness assumed leadership, carried significant temporal, strategic, and geopolitical implications both regionally and internationally. Statements issued at the conclusion of the tour highlighted Kuwait's strategic position within the Gulf region and emphasized the strong historical ties and relationships between Kuwait and other GCC countries, as well as the commitment to expanding cooperation and developing partnerships across all fields. His Highness the Amir's visit to the Arab Republic of Egypt at the end of April provided an ideal opportunity to dis-

cut ways to enhance cooperation in various areas. The joint Kuwaiti-Egyptian statement issued at the end of the visit affirmed the depth of bilateral relations between the two nations.

His Highness the Amir's visit to the Republic of Turkey on May 7-8, 2024, which coincided with the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries, saw the signing of six agreements and memoranda of understanding. The memoranda aimed to strengthen Kuwaiti-Turkish relations in areas such as disaster management, housing and infrastructure.

In addition to these visits, there were high-level directives to the Kuwaiti government to enhance diplomatic relations with brotherly and friendly countries, elevating cooperation frameworks across various sectors to new heights and reinforcing Kuwait's humanitarian role. In line with these directives, Kuwait has been actively engaging in various international activities to foster close collaboration with global partners. The ministerial meetings for strategic dialogue between the GCC and countries like Russia, Brazil, and India, held on September 9 at the GCC's headquarters in Riyadh, have bolstered relations with these nations in political, economic, investment, and cultural areas.

Additionally, during the 162nd session of the Arab League Council at the ministerial level last month, Kuwait, represented by Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya, engaged in multiple consultations and meetings with foreign ministers and international officials to discuss various areas of cooperation and frameworks for enhancing bilateral relations. At the fifth session of the Kuwait-UAE

Joint Higher Committee held in Abu Dhabi at the beginning of September, the bilateral relationship with the UAE took a new turn with the signing of several memoranda of understanding and executive programs in vital developmental sectors, including infrastructure, telecommunications, information technology, and cybersecurity, as well as defense procurement. In the fields of social affairs, charity, and humanitarian work, Kuwait signed memoranda of understanding with Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

Kuwait's participation in the high-level general debate of the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York marked a significant moment in strengthening its efforts to build robust international relations. During this event, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah held 44 meetings with heads of states, prime ministers, and senior officials, discussing ways to support and enhance bilateral relations and strong partnerships, as well as addressing key regional and international developments.

The discussions held by the Crown Prince in New York reflected Kuwait's deep commitment to political, military, security, economic, investment, and sports issues, alongside its dedication to collaborative efforts in addressing development challenges and climate change. In parallel, Kuwait is preparing to participate in the first summit between the GCC and the European Union scheduled for this October in Brussels, which is seen as a historic milestone in Gulf-European relations. Kuwait aims to further develop its ties with the EU in strategic areas and maximize the outcomes of joint cooperation across various sectors.

Kuwait is also set to continue strengthening Gulf ties through its upcoming hosting of the GCC summit scheduled for December, where its contributions to the council's work are recognized as vital to elevating the GCC to one of the most successful and effective regional unions. Kuwait believes in intensifying efforts to achieve further accomplishments that enable member states to tackle changing regional and international challenges while meeting the aspirations of their citizens and maximizing the shared strategic and economic benefits among member countries. Kuwait's doctrine emphasizes the concept of collective security among GCC states, viewing it as an indivisible whole. Protecting the Gulf peoples from the prevailing tensions in the region requires fostering continuous cooperation with friendly nations and influential international organizations to benefit from their vast resources and expertise in enhancing development capacities and safeguarding nations and peoples.

Kuwait's diplomatic initiatives have positioned the country strategically and effectively in regional and global issues, acting as a neutral mediator in conflicts, forming effective strategic alliances, and supporting international development initiatives. Kuwait continuously strives to amplify the impact of its diplomatic efforts, rooted in the principle of preventive diplomacy, which is a cornerstone of its foreign policy. By hosting over 100 diplomatic missions and regional international organizations affiliated with the United Nations, Kuwait has significantly enhanced active communication with these entities, deepening and enriching Kuwait's international relations. — KUNA

## Kuwait officially launches Sahel app in English

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of State for Communication Affairs Omar Al-Omar announced on Tuesday the launch of the English version of "Sahel" app, as part of government's efforts to digitalize and facilitate services. The announcement was made during the Cabinet's weekly meeting held at Bayan Palace, under the chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Providing the app in English will allow non-Arabic speakers to utilize services in an easy and efficient way, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shareeda Al-Maousherji said in a statement after the meeting.

### Crown Prince UNGA speech

Cabinet commended the speech delivered by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah at the 79th session of the UN General Assembly in New York late last month. During the speech, His Highness the Crown Prince reaffirmed Kuwait's principle of good neighborliness, and its commitment to backing Iraq's recovery and helping it restore its status on regional and international levels, Minister Al-Maousherji noted. His Highness the Crown Prince called on Iraq to take tangible steps to address all pending issues between

Kuwait and Iraq, stressing the importance of the demarcation of the maritime boundary with Iraq, in accordance with international laws and charters. His Highness the Crown Prince also stressed the need of addressing the files of Kuwaiti Prisoners of War and missing persons, and the national archives based on the principle of good neighborliness. His Highness the Crown Prince also asked Iraq to abide by bilateral agreements related to security and technical aspects of Khor Abdullah issue.

His Highness the Crown Prince referred to the military operations launched by the Zionist occupation against Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip and the remaining parts of the occupied Palestinian territories, including the West Bank. His Highness denounced the collective punishment of Palestinians and the targeting of civilians by continued airstrikes that claimed the lives of more than 41,000 people, most of whom children and women.

### Anti-money laundering efforts

The Cabinet saw a visual presentation by Minister of Finance, Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs and Acting Minister of Oil Noura Al-Fassam along with the National Committee of Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism on reviewing Kuwait's achievements and future plans of Kuwait's efforts in the field over the period from October 2024 until October 2025. The Cabinet decided to task the committee with intensifying efforts and enhancing cooperation with governmental concerned bodies to meet international requirements of assessment in a manner that maintains Kuwait's position internationally. — KUNA



Government officials pose for a group photo during the D-ISIS Ministerial Meeting at the State Department.

## Kuwait FM: Global coalition resolute in combat against ISIS

WASHINGTON: Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya commended the outcomes of the 10th Ministerial Meeting of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, held in Washington on Monday. The meeting reaffirmed the commitment of the coalition members to coordination of the international actions against the terrorist organization of the so-called Islamic State (ISIS or Daesh), he said in post-event statements to KUNA. "The meeting, convened under a call from US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, reaffirmed joint resolute action by the coalition members to dismantle the international networks of the ISIS and stem their future risks," Minister Al-Yahya said.

"During the meeting, we have discussed with Iraq the progress of the Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve in Iraq, to be phased out in September of next year," the Kuwaiti minister disclosed.

The United States had announced last month that the coalition mission in Iraq will come to a close in September 2025, but emphasized that troops will stay in the country and that the counter-ISIS mission will continue. The US and Iraq agreed on a two-phase transition plan for operations in Iraq with the first phase beginning in September and ending the same month next year. The second phase involves



WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken (left) meets with Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya at the Department of State in Washington, DC, September 30, 2024. — AFP photos

an "understanding to allow the coalition to continue to support counter-ISIS operations in Syria from Iraq ... until at least September 2026," a US official had told reporters last month.

Minister Al-Yahya noted that he held talks on the fringes of the meeting with Secretary Blinken on a range of main topics of common concern. In his inaugural speech to the ministerial meeting, Secretary Blinken announced that the United States earmarked \$148 million to strengthening border security and counter-terrorism operations in the Sub-Saharan Africa and Central Asia, in addition to \$168 million allocated to the stabilization of Iraq and Syria. — Agencies



KUWAIT: Government officials during Kuwait's weekly Cabinet meeting. — KUNA



## Local

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Kuwaiti Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi (center right) and Saudi Minister of Culture Prince Badr bin Abdullah (center left) pose at a pavilion for a Kuwaiti publishing house at the book fair.



Kuwaiti and Saudi ministers browse the Riyadh International Book Fair with officials.

# Kuwait, Saudi Arabia to deepen cultural cooperation

## New agreement to foster collaboration in art, literature, heritage preservation



KUWAIT: Public Awqaf Foundation officials pose for a photo. — KUNA

### Registration ongoing for Kuwait's 27th Quran memorization contest

KUWAIT: The Public Awqaf Foundation launched on Tuesday the 27th edition of the Kuwait's Quran Memorization and Tajweed Grand Competition under the esteemed patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The competition aims to promote the memorization and recitation of the Quran and encourage people to engage with the Islam's holy book. Since its inception, the competition has seen 4,185 winners from 43,686 participants. Acting Secretary-General of the Public Awqaf Foundation Nasser Al-Hamad told KUNA on Tuesday. The foundation aims to encourage participation from all age groups in the competition, which includes categories for individuals with special needs, inmates, and care home residents. The competition is open only for Kuwaitis.

Registration for Kuwait's Quran Memorization and Tajweed Grand Competition began on September 29 and will continue until October 31. The final phase of the competition is scheduled to start on November 24 at the Grand Mosque, lasting for two weeks, with the first week designated for men and the second for women. The authority will be available to answer inquiries at the media booth in Assima mall and 360 mall during the registration period, providing information on the competition and participation procedures.

### EU embassy, NCCAL mark International Translation Day

KUWAIT: The European Union (EU) embassy in the State of Kuwait, in collaboration with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), organized a special seminar on Monday, to mark the



RIYADH: Kuwaiti Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi (right) and Saudi Minister of Culture Prince Badr bin Abdullah are seen during the signing of the memorandum. — KUNA photos

RIYADH: Kuwaiti Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi and Saudi Minister of Culture Prince Badr bin Abdullah signed a memorandum of understanding on Monday aimed at strengthening bilateral cooperation in the cultural sector. This initiative marks a significant step in enhancing cultural ties between the two nations and reflects the close relations between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

The agreement will foster cultural exchange in various areas, including heritage, architecture and design, museums, visual arts, performing arts, literature, publishing, translation, fashion, culinary arts, and film.

It also outlines cooperation in sharing expertise

"International Translation Day," celebrated annually on September 30. Established by the United Nations in 2017, the day highlights the vital role of translators and interpreters in fostering global communication and cultural exchange.

The lecture addressed the importance of translation in cultural exchange, its various forms, and the skills required for translators to do their jobs. The lecturer, Majdi Al-Musaeed, a media officer at the EU embassy, emphasized that translation, whether literary, scientific, or legal, requires a diligent and well-informed translator who understands the context before translating.

related to cultural regulations and policies, as well as participation in cultural festivals and events. The deal will facilitate the exchange of knowledge regarding the implementation of UNESCO agreements, to which both countries are signatories, along with strategic joint projects across different cultural domains.

The memorandum emphasizes enhancing collaboration in artist residency programs between governmental and private institutions in both countries and streamlining procedures to promote cultural affairs. It also covers projects related to preserving the countries' heritage.

Kuwait and Saudi Arabia will implement the mem-

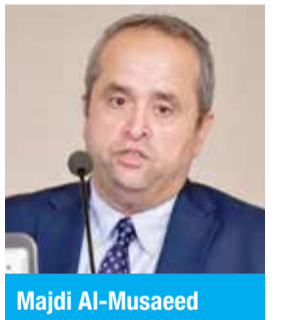
The theme for International Translation Day 2024 is "Translation for a Better Future." This theme emphasizes the crucial role that translation plays in fostering understanding and collaboration across cultures, particularly in addressing global challenges and promoting sustainable development. It encourages translators to reflect on their impact and the potential of their work to contribute to a better, more interconnected world.

During the seminar, Musaeed emphasized that translators should avoid literal translation to ensure the text retains its intended meaning, KUNA reported. Translators should master typing skills in both Arabic and English to

orandum through the exchange of official delegations and experts in diverse cultural fields, training programs, workshops, capacity-building initiatives, and seminars for specialists, intellectuals, and artists from both sides.

This agreement illustrates the commitment of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to strengthen cultural ties and develop joint projects that support art and culture, reflecting their shared history and future aspirations. Following the signing, Minister Al-Mutairi was given a tour of the Riyadh International Book Fair, where he was introduced to the various booths featuring nearly 2,000 publishing houses participating this year. — KUNA

enhance their efficiency, he added. He also discussed the need for interpreters to be confident, especially when facing cameras, and to be well-informed about the topics being discussed at the press conference where they are interpreting by preparing in advance to ensure the accurate and reliable delivery. — KUNA



Majdi Al-Musaeed



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti and Saudi officials are seen during their meetings to discuss cooperation in housing, public works projects. — KUNA photos

### Kuwait, Saudi Arabia study potential for cooperation in housing

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Housing in Kuwait emphasized on Monday the importance of sharing expertise in housing and investment projects with Saudi Arabia. In a statement to KUNA, the authority praised the depth of Kuwaiti-Saudi relations and said fostering strategic partnerships between the two countries will benefit both sides. The statement followed a two-day joint meeting with a visiting delegation from the Saudi Export Development Authority, during which both sides exchanged views on potential collaborative frameworks for upcoming housing and investment initiatives.

The Saudi delegation's visit was part of a tour it held in Kuwait aimed at promoting service exports and attracting local investors from both the public and private sectors, particularly in housing and investment.

In its statement, the authority also commended the efforts of the Saudi Export Development Authority in providing necessary support to the authority, reiterating its commitment to assist in achieving the objectives of the delegation's visit to Kuwait.

#### Opening doors for Saudi firms

During the visit, the delegation also explored opportunities for Saudi companies to enter the Kuwaiti market during a meeting with Eid Al-Rashidi, Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Public Works.

In a statement to KUNA, Rashidi emphasized efforts to simplify procedures and remove obstacles for Saudi firms, stating that the conditions are favorable for collaboration. He expressed commitment to this partnership and mentioned that future meetings will include workshops where engineers and officials will help the delegation understand key project details.

"We are dedicated to removing any hurdles for companies looking to enter the Kuwaiti market, and this will be coordinated through meetings between officials from both countries," said Rashidi. He said the first step is for Saudi companies to register with the Central Agency for Public Tenders and the Direct Investment Promotion Authority.



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S Korean president warns North of 'regime end' if it uses nukes

## Japan's new PM Ishiba unveils cabinet ahead of snap election

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BANGKOK: A relative of a student covers the eyes of a girl as they walk past the wreckage of the bus on the outskirts of Bangkok on Oct 1, 2024. (Right) A police officer inspects the wreckage of the burnt-out bus. — AFP

# Thai school bus inferno kills 23

## Rescuers pull children's bodies from the charred wreckage on Bangkok highway

**BANGKOK:** A devastating fire on a Thai school bus killed at least 23 people, police said Tuesday after rescuers pulled children's bodies from the charred wreckage of the vehicle.

The inferno engulfed the coach on a highway in a northern Bangkok suburb as it carried 38 children—ranging from kindergarten age to young teenagers—and six teachers on a school trip. It is believed to be the deadliest road accident in a decade in Thailand, which has one of the world's worst traffic safety records with around 20,000 fatalities a year.

"We found 23 bodies inside the bus," Trairong Phiwan, head of the police forensic science office, told reporters. The victims' bodies were so badly burned that Trairong said it was not yet possible to confirm how many were adults and how many children. DNA testing would be needed to identify the remains, police said. Rescue workers put up

screens around the wreckage to shield firefighters and investigators as they recovered bodies from the blackened shell of the bus. "Some of the bodies we rescued were very, very small. They must have been very young in age," Piyalak Thinkaew, who led the search, told reporters at the scene, adding that the fire started at the front of the bus.

"The kids' instinct was to escape to the back so the bodies were there," he said. Police are hunting the coach driver after he fled the scene, acting national police chief Kitrat Phanphet told reporters.

"The driver is on the run, we will not wait for him to turn himself in—we will send a team to find him," Kitrat said. Some of the children who survived suffered horrific burns to their faces, mouths and eyes, doctors treating them told local media. The bus was one of three carrying children from Wat Khao Phraya Sangkharam school in the northern province of Uthai Thani on a field trip to a science museum in

northern Bangkok. A video posted on the school's Facebook page just hours before the tragedy shows the group of youngsters in orange uniform shirts stopping off at the ancient Thai capital of Ayutthaya. The disaster is believed to have begun when one of the bus tyres burst on the highway around 12.30 pm (0530 GMT), sending it crashing into a barrier and triggering the inferno, officials said. Video footage from the scene showed flames engulfing the bus as it burned under an overpass, huge clouds of dense black smoke billowing into the sky.

Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra visited survivors in hospital and said the government would pay for medical treatment and compensate the victims' families. "As a mother, I would like to express my deepest condolences to the families of the injured and deceased," she wrote on social media platform X. Meechai Sa-ard, a motorbike taxi driver, heard the noise of the incident from a ki-

lometre away. "There was smoke everywhere. Poor children, I heard they were very little," he told AFP. "I was hoping that god would be kind so that the rain could put the fire out and the kids would survive."

Thailand has one of the worst road safety records in the world, with unsafe vehicles and poor driving contributing to the high annual death toll. Around 20,000 people are killed every year on the kingdom's roads, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) -- more than 50 a day on average.

A similar bus fire killed 20 Myanmar migrant workers in March 2018, while at least 30 people died when a bus careered off a mountain road into a ravine four years earlier. The economic losses caused by traffic deaths and injuries amounted to around \$15.5 billion in 2022 -- more than three percent of GDP—the WHO says. — AFP

## As Zionist jets hit Beirut, people flee to sleep on beach

**BEIRUT:** The repeated blasts in Beirut's southern suburbs where Zionist entity has been carrying out airstrikes this week have driven Zeina Nazha and her young daughter to camp on a city beach seeking safety from the war in Lebanon. She and some others from those suburbs, known as Dahiyeh, a stronghold of Zionist entity's foe Hezbollah, are sleeping on blankets either under the open sky or in tents and other makeshift shelters with no safer place to go.

Zionist entity's stepped-up military campaign in Lebanon over the past two weeks has driven a million people from their homes in the south, in Beirut and in the Bekaa valley in the east, according to the Lebanese government. Zionist entity says its campaign is necessary to make its own northern regions safe from Hezbollah rocket fire and allow thousands of its citizens home.

"There was bombing in Al-Salleem neighborhood. We stayed for a while there and my family fled," said Nazha. "The situation we're living in is very difficult... people are dying," she added.

She and her daughter spent a night sleeping on the corniche, the seaside walk around central areas of Beirut that in peaceful times is a hub of



BEIRUT: Displaced people gather on Beirut's Ramleith Al Baida beach turned into a makeshift refugee camp, on Oct 1, 2024. — AFP

city life, filled with families strolling or sitting and eating. The government and private or charitable bodies have set up numerous shelters in schools and other facilities to accommodate people displaced by the fighting. But Nazha said all those she had visited were full up.

Nearby, Mohamed Terkmene, a Syrian man living

in Lebanon who has also been displaced by the conflict, said he had been sleeping at the beach for four days. He said soldiers had come to tell him and his neighbors to evacuate their Dahiyeh homes. "We are not able to sleep and we don't know for how long we will stay here. A month, two months, a week or two, until this war is resolved," he said. — Reuters

## With 130 dead from Helene, Biden defends government response

**VALDOSTA, US:** The death toll from a devastating storm that battered the southeastern United States climbed to at least 130 on Monday, as the disaster became a hot topic in an already bitter election campaign, with the White House angrily refuting claims it had been slow to respond.

With hundreds still unaccounted for across several southeastern US states and the death toll climbing, President Joe Biden announced he would travel to storm-ravaged North Carolina Wednesday to monitor rescue efforts. Biden also accused former president Donald Trump of spreading lies, after the Republican presidential candidate charged, without evidence, that the federal government was ignoring the disaster brought on by Hurricane Helene and denying help to his supporters.

"He's lying," Biden told reporters in the Oval Office, adding that he had spoken to North Carolina governor Roy Cooper "and he told him he's lying. I don't know why he does it... that's simply not true, and it's irresponsible." Later on CNN, Cooper, a Democrat, said when asked about Trump's accusations of Republican victims being ignored: "It makes no difference who you are. If you need help, we are going to provide it. "And if there is ever a time where we all need to come together and put politics aside, it is now."

At least 130 people were killed by the storm and associated flooding -- 57 in North Carolina, 29 in South Carolina, 25 in Georgia, 14 in Florida, four in Tennessee and one in Virginia, according to tallies from local authorities and media reports compiled by AFP. Emergency workers continued a grim search for hundreds of people still unaccounted for across the affected states, where torrential rains brought widespread havoc. They also worked to restore water and power supply to the affected areas as well as cell phone service, remove fallen trees, deliver supplies and register people for disaster assistance.

With Biden preparing to head to North Carolina, Trump on Monday visited Georgia, another epicenter of the destruction—and both are among the key swing states where the US election will be decided in just five weeks' time. In the city of Valdosta, Trump vowed to "bring lots of relief material, including fuel, equipment, water, and other things" to those in need.

"The federal government is not being responsive," he told reporters. "The vice president, she's out someplace, campaigning, looking for money," he said, referring to his election rival, Vice President Kamala Harris. "We're not talking about politics now," he said later, wearing a bright red "Make America Great Again" hat while standing in the rubble of a furniture store. — AFP

## US boosting forces in Middle East

**WASHINGTON:** The United States is boosting its forces in the Middle East by a "few thousand" troops, by bringing in new units while extending others that are already there, the Pentagon said. The increase in Washington's military presence in the Middle East comes as the growing Zionist entity-Hezbollah conflict—which saw Zionist entity kill the Lebanese militant group's leader Hassan Nasrallah last week—raises fears of a wider regional war.

"A certain number of units already deployed to the Middle East region... will be extended, and the forces due to rotate into theater to replace them will now instead augment" those that are already there, Deputy Pentagon Press



BEIRUT: A displaced girl sleeps on the side walk in downtown Beirut on Oct 1, 2024. — AFP

Secretary Sabrina Singh told journalists on Monday. "These augmented forces include F-16, F-15E, A-10, F-22 fighter aircraft and associated person-

nel," Singh said, later adding that there will be "an additional few thousand" personnel in the region as a result.

The US Central Command an-

nounced Tuesday that three additional squadrons of warplanes were arriving in the region, while one was already present. Zionist entity announced Tuesday that Defense Minister Yoav Gallant had briefed US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on "localized and targeted" ground operations targeting Hezbollah positions in South Lebanon—a further escalation of the conflict after a week of intense air strikes that killed hundreds.

Austin said the previous evening that he had offered support to Gallant for "dismantling attack infrastructure" belonging to Hezbollah along the border with Lebanon. He also warned Iran of "serious consequences" should it directly strike Zionist entity in response to its attacks on the Tehran-backed militant group. Meanwhile, China said on Tuesday it opposed "infringements on Lebanon's sovereignty" after Zionist entity said it had launched a ground offensive there, and that Beijing was "highly concerned" about growing tensions. — AFP



## International

# Japan's new PM Ishiba unveils cabinet ahead of snap election

## Ishiba adds allies and rivals to his cabinet amid discontent over rising costs

**TOKYO:** Japan's new Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba on Tuesday unveiled his cabinet as he seeks to heal party divisions and secure a national mandate with an Oct 27 snap election. The 67-year-old former defense minister, who last week won a close-fought contest to lead the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), was confirmed earlier in the day as prime minister by parliament. He is scheduled to hold his first press conference later in the day in Tokyo.

The Ishiba administration's approach to diplomacy with Japan's closest ally, the United States, will be in focus, as he has repeatedly called for a more balanced relationship with Washington. He has also proposed creating an Asian version of the collective security group NATO to deter China, an idea that could draw ire from Beijing and has already been dismissed by a senior US official as hasty.

Ishiba must quell simmering anger at home over rising living costs and a sluggish economy, and navigate a volatile security environment in East Asia fuelled by an increasingly assertive China and nuclear-armed North Korea. The veteran lawmaker, seen as somewhat of a party

outsider who failed at four previous leadership bids, has named a mix of rivals and allies and to a cabinet of 20 ministers that includes only two women, fewer than half the previous administration.

Among the men are two leadership rivals in key positions, Katsunobu Kato as finance minister and Yoshimasa Hayashi to stay on as chief cabinet secretary, a post that includes the role of top government spokesman, the government announced. The appointment of Kato, a proponent of former premier Shinzo Abe's "Abenomics" expansionary fiscal and monetary policies, appears to be a balancing act to alleviate concerns over the next cabinet's economic strategy.

The Nikkei stock index fell nearly 5 percent on Monday in reaction to a surging yen following Ishiba's win over Sanae Takaichi, a monetary dove and fiscal expansionist, in Friday's leadership contest. The index recovered ground on Tuesday. A close Ishiba ally, Takeshi Iwaya, a former defence chief, will take over as foreign minister, while Gen Nakatani will return to the defence ministry, a position he held in 2016. Yoichi Muto, a former junior minister, will take charge at the economy, trade and industry

ministry. In his victory speech on Friday, he spoke about the need to beef up Japan's security after recent territorial incursions by Chinese and Russian military vessels.

Five of the lawmakers who contested the leadership race with him have not been included in his government nor given key party jobs.

Among them is Takaichi, a hardline conservative he beat by 215 votes to 194 on Friday in the closest leadership election in almost seven decades. Local media reported she had declined a senior party post. That could make it difficult for Ishiba, a perennial favorite in public opinion polls, to manage a fractious ruling group roiled by scandals including unrecorded donations at fundraising parties.

Yoshihiko Noda, the leader of the largest opposition party the Constitutional Democratic party of Japan, said it planned to attack the LDP over its scandals in the upcoming election. "We cannot establish proper governance through a pseudo-regime change," Noda said on public broadcaster NHK.

But despite its troubles, the party which has ruled Japan for most of the post-war



Japan's new Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba speaks during a press conference at the prime minister's office in Tokyo on Oct 1, 2024. — AFP

era remains likely to hold on to power in the upcoming election given Japan's weak opposition. A third of respondents to a weekend poll by the Mainichi newspaper said they supported the LDP, versus 15 percent

for the main opposition Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan. More than half of the respondents, including those who supported opposition parties, said they were optimistic about Ishiba's appointment. — Reuters

## New NATO chief Rutte dismisses Trump fears, vows Ukraine support

**BRUSSELS:** NATO's new chief Mark Rutte voiced strong support for Ukraine on Tuesday and said he was not worried about the upcoming US election as he could work with former President Donald Trump or Vice President Kamala Harris. Rutte, a former Dutch prime minister, took over from Jens Stoltenberg as NATO secretary general just weeks before the Nov 5 US presidential vote that pits Democrat Harris against Republican Trump, who has been highly critical of NATO.

Trump has also declined to say whether he wants Ukraine to win the war against Russia's invasion. But Rutte played down concerns within the transatlantic alliance about the vote in NATO's predominant power, telling reporters at NATO headquarters: "I'm not worried. I worked for four years with Donald Trump. He was the one pushing us to spend more (on defense), and he achieved - because ... we are now at a much higher spending level than we were when he took office," Rutte said. NATO estimates that 23 of its 32 members will meet its target of spending at least 2 percent of GDP on defence this year, compared to just three countries a decade ago. Officials say some of that is down to Trump but much of it was propelled by Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Rutte said Trump had also been right to push NATO to focus more on China. He repeated a NATO assertion that China has become a "decisive enabler" of Moscow's war effort in Ukraine by supplying Russia with important technology. — Reuters

## Assange says 'pleaded guilty to journalism' to gain freedom

**STRASBOURG, France:** Wikileaks founder Julian Assange said on Tuesday he was released after years of incarceration only because he pleaded guilty to doing "journalism", warning freedom of expression was now at a "dark crossroads". "I am not free today because the system worked. I am free today after years of incarceration because I pleaded guilty to journalism," Assange said. He was addressing the Council of Europe rights body at its Strasbourg headquarters in his first public comments since his release. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) had issued a report expressing alarm at Assange's treatment, saying it had a "chilling effect on human rights".

Assange spent most of the last 14 years either holed up in the Ecuadorian embassy in London to avoid arrest, or locked up at Belmarsh Prison. He was released under a plea bargain in June, after serving a sentence for publishing hundreds of thousands of confidential US government documents. The trove included searingly frank US State Department descriptions of foreign leaders, accounts of extrajudicial killings and intelligence gathering against allies. Assange returned to Australia and since then had not publicly commented on his legal woes or his years behind bars. Facing a potential 175-year sentence, "I eventually chose freedom over unrealizable justice... Justice for me is now precluded," Assange said, referring to the conditions of his plea bargain.

Speaking calmly and flanked by his wife Stella, who fought for his release, he added: "Journalism is

not a crime, it is a pillar of a free and informed society." "The fundamental issue is simple. Journalists should not be prosecuted for doing their jobs," said Assange. The Wikileaks chief said that he could have lost years more of his life had he tried to fight his case all the way. "Perhaps, ultimately, if it had gotten to the Supreme Court of the United States and I was still alive... I might have won," Assange said.

"But in the meantime I had lost 14 years under house arrest, embassy, siege, and maximum security prison." "Ground has been lost" during his incarceration, Assange said, regretting that he now sees "more impunity, more secrecy and more retaliation for telling the truth." "Freedom of expression and all that flows from it is at a dark crossroads," he told the hearing of the PACE legal committee. "Let us all commit to doing our part to ensure the light of freedom never dims and the pursuit of truth will live on and the voices of many are not silenced by the interests of the few," he said.

Assange was still visibly affected by his experiences, tiring towards the end of the session even as he thanked "all the people who have fought for my liberation". "It was truly exceptional that he came here today... He needs time to be able to recover," Stella Assange told reporters after the committee hearing. "He's only been free for a few weeks and we're really just in the process of starting from zero, or from less than zero," she added.

Asked what the next moves for Wikileaks might be, the site's editor-in-chief Kristin Hrafnsson told reporters Assange was "committed as ever to the basic principles that he's always abided by — transparency, justice, quality journalism". Assange's case remains deeply contentious. Supporters hail him as a champion of free speech and say he was persecuted by authorities and unfairly imprisoned.

Detractors see him as a reckless blogger whose



WikiLeaks' founder Julian Assange, next to his wife Stella Assange, raises his fist during a parliamentary hearing at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, eastern France, on Oct 1, 2024. — AFP

uncensored publication of ultra-sensitive documents put lives at risk and jeopardized US security. Assange is still campaigning for a US presidential pardon for his conviction under the Espionage Act. US President Joe Biden, who is likely to issue some pardons before leaving office next January, has previously described him as a "terrorist".

But Chelsea Manning, the army intelligence analyst who leaked documents to Assange, had her 35-year sentence commuted by President Barack Obama in 2017. Assange's timing and his choice of venue for his first post-release appearance have puzzled some observers. The Council of Europe brings together the 46 signatory states of the European Convention on Human Rights, with little say over Assange's legal fate. Holly Cullen, a law professor at the University of Western Australia, told AFP ahead of the hearing that in criticizing the United States, Assange might "need to be a bit more restrained until the pardon issue is resolved". — AFP

## Iran attacks Zionist entity...

Continued from Page 1

Lebanon for 18 years would pit Zionist soldiers against Hezbollah, Iran's best-armed proxy force in the Middle East. It marks the biggest escalation of regional warfare since fighting erupted in Gaza a year ago, and follows weeks of intense airstrikes that have decapitated Hezbollah by killing most of its top leaders. More than a thousand Lebanese have been killed and a million have fled their homes.

Iran had vowed to retaliate against the Zionist entity, raising fears that war could spill across borders throughout the region, despite efforts by the United States, the Zionist entity's closest and most powerful ally, to contain it. In the latest announced killing of a senior Hezbollah figure, the Zionist entity earlier said it had assassinated Muhammad Jaafar Qasir, describing him as a commander in charge of weapons transfers from Iran and its affiliates.

The rapid escalation that has engulfed Lebanon into war has killed hundreds. Near the city of Sidon along the Mediterranean south of Beirut, mourners wept over coffins containing black-shrouded bodies of people killed in Zionist strikes. "The building got struck down and I couldn't protect my daughter or anyone else. Thank God, my son and I got out, but I lost my daughter and wife, I lost my home, I have become homeless. What do you want me to say? My whole life changed in a second," said resident Abdulhamid Ramadan.

Many Lebanese said they were ready to resist Zionist forces. "Not just Hezbollah, all of Lebanon will fight this time. All of Lebanon is determined to fight (the Zionist entity) for the massacres it committed in Gaza and Lebanon," said Abu Alaa, a Sidon resident. In Beirut, the Zionist entity struck a high-rise building in the central Jnah area and one in the capital's southern suburbs that briefly closed the road to Beirut airport.

A Zionist security official said troops in southern Lebanon had begun limited raids into Lebanon overnight that only went a short distance over the border, adding that no direct clashes with Hezbollah fighters were reported. The military said similar such raids had in fact been taking place in recent months. But in a clear sign that the war could expand further, the military said it was calling up four additional reserve brigades for operational missions on the northern border.

Hezbollah, which suffered heavy losses in a spate of attacks last month, said it targeted a Zionist intelli-

gence base near Tel Aviv and other military facilities on Tuesday, as air raid sirens sounded and blasts rang out in the coastal city. The group "launched salvos of Fadi 4 rockets at the Gilot base of the military intelligence's unit 8200 and the Mossad headquarters located on the outskirts of Tel Aviv," it said in a statement. Lebanon's official National News Agency said a Zionist air strike on Ain al-Helweh Palestinian refugee camp killed six people, and Zionist shelling of border communities killed 10.

Elsewhere, Syria's state television said anchor Saffa Ahmad was killed "in the (Zionist) aggression" on Damascus, and official news agency SANA reported three civilians killed. Lebanon's Health Minister Firass Abiad said more than 1,000 people have been killed since Sept 17. Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati and the UN humanitarian agency appealed for more than \$400 million in aid for the displaced, estimating there could be as many as one million.

Hamas appealed for "global solidarity with Gaza and Lebanon" in rallies planned for the Gaza war's first anniversary on Monday. Zionist airstrikes killed at least 37 people in Gaza on Tuesday, local medics said and fighting ramped up. Palestinian health officials said at least 13 people, including women and children, were killed in two Zionist strikes on two houses in Nuseirat, one of the enclave's eight historic refugee camps. Another strike on Al-Shejaia School sheltering displaced Palestinian families in the Tuffah neighborhood of Gaza City killed at least seven people, medics added.

Later on Tuesday, two separate Zionist attacks killed five Palestinians in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip and in the Zeitoun suburb of Gaza City, medics said. In Khan Younis, in the south of the enclave, six Palestinians were killed in a Zionist air strike on a tent housing displaced people, medics said. Hours later, a Zionist airstrike on a car in western Khan Younis, killed six Palestinians, medics said. Footage circulated on social media showed a mangled, burnt-out vehicle.

The armed wings of Hamas, the Islamic Jihad, and other smaller militant factions said in separate statements that their fighters attacked Zionist forces operating in several areas of Gaza with anti-tank rockets, mortar fire and explosive devices. "The eyes of the world now are on Lebanon while the occupation continues its killing in Gaza. We are afraid the war is going to go on for more months at least," said Samir Mohammed, 46, a father of five from Gaza City. "It is all unclear now as (the Zionist entity) unleashes its force undeterred in Gaza, Yemen, Syria, Lebanon and God knows where else in the future," he told Reuters. — Agencies

## Former US president Jimmy...

Continued from Page 1

First Lady Jill Biden's office said a display would be set up on the White House lawn with the message "Happy Birthday President Carter."

Beyond serving as president for a single term from 1977 to 1981, Carter worked as a global mediator, rights activist and elder statesman, founding the well-respected Carter Center in 1982 to pursue his vision of world diplomacy. His presidency included the 1978 Camp David Accords between the Zionist entity and Egypt, establishment of diplomatic relations with China following a rapprochement initiated by president Richard Nixon, and return of control of the Panama Canal to Panama. But his administration hit numerous snags, including the Iran hostage crisis and a renewed oil crisis in 1979-1980, which saw Ronald Regan sweep into power in a landslide.

"We are thrilled that the president from this little town is going to be the only president to ever live to be 100 years old," Jill Stuckey, superintendent of the National Park Service's Jimmy Carter historical site and longtime family friend, told AFP. She spoke from Plains High School, where Carter graduated in 1941 and which now serves as the visitor center for the national park that features sites from his early life, including the nearby peanut farm where he grew up.

On Tuesday, the school held an evening concert and also a naturalization ceremony for 100 new US citizens. A devout Baptist and self-described "born-again" Christian, Carter is remembered for a moralistic streak, but also his civility, admired even by detractors across



Jimmy Carter

the aisle. "Healthy habits and his faith are a lot of the reasons why he is still with it today," Stuckey said, referencing Carter's penchant for fresh food and exercise.

According to family, Carter remains keenly interested in politics and was highly motivated to make it to 100 and to vote in the November election for fellow Democrat Kamala Harris. "He will be voting by mail-in ballot," Stuckey told AFP, adding "he's always been very politically active, and nothing has changed with that respect." In Plains, like in many rural places with strong evangelical Christian leanings, far more yard signs support Republican Donald Trump than Harris.

But it is also not uncommon to see a sign celebrating Carter's centennial birthday next to one supporting Trump. Carl Lowell, who has lived in Plains since infancy, said he tries not to get involved in politics because it is "so divisive" right now. Like most residents of Plains, the 59-year-old retired firefighter is linked to Carter in various ways — he says his grandfather helped build the Carters' house and that he himself even went dove hunting with him once. "Jimmy's a good man, he's a godly man, and that's what

## Small exoplanet discovered in 'our...'

Continued from Page 1

a researcher at Spain's Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias. "Even if the star is about 2,500C cooler than our Sun, it is too hot there to maintain liquid water on the surface," said Gonzalez Hernandez, the lead author of the new study in the *Astronomy and Astrophysics* journal.

Barnard's Star is located in the constellation Ophiuchus. After the three stars in the Alpha Centauri system, 4.2 light years away, it is the closest to

our Sun. It is also a target for exoplanet hunters because it orbits a red dwarf star. Red dwarfs are significantly colder than other stars. Astronomers spot exoplanets when they flash in front of their star, so the closer they orbit, the more chances there are to observe them.

The researchers also found evidence of three other potential exoplanets orbiting Barnard's Star but need more observations to confirm their findings. The discovery, along with that of two exoplanets orbiting the nearby star Proxima Centauri, "shows that our cosmic backyard is full of low-mass planets," said study co-author Alejandro Suarez Mascareno. Since the 1990s, more than 5,700 planets have been discovered outside our Solar System. But few have been in the Goldilocks zone. — AFP



## International

# S Korean president warns North of 'regime end' if it uses nukes

## Seoul unveils 'monster missile' at revived annual military parades



South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and his wife Kim Keon Hee attend a celebration to mark 76th anniversary of Korea Armed Forces Day in Seongnam on Oct 1, 2024.



Military vehicles are seen during a parade to celebrate South Korea's 76th Armed Forces Day in Seoul on Oct 1, 2024. — AFP photos

SEOUL: North Korea's Kim Jong Un would face the end of his regime if he used his nuclear weapons against the South, its president said Tuesday, as Seoul staged a parade showcasing its military prowess.

Fighter jets flew over downtown Seoul and tanks rolled through the streets, as South Korea displayed weaponry including its largest ballistic monster missile, the Hyunmoo-5, which is capable of destroying underground bunkers, for the first time. The event, which marks Armed Forces Day in the South, comes as relations between the two Koreas are at one of their lowest points in decades, with Pyongyang declaring the South its "principal enemy" and moving nuclear-capable weapons to the border.

"If North Korea attempts to use nuclear weapons, it will face the resolute and overwhelming response of our military and the US and Republic of Korea alliance," Seoul's President Yoon Suk Yeol said.

"That day will be the end of the North Korean regime," Yoon said, ad-

addressing thousands of service members gathered at Seoul Air Base for the event. Washington stations tens of thousands of troops in South Korea to help defend it against the North, and Seoul — which has no nukes of its own — is covered by the US nuclear umbrella. Yoon urged the North to "abandon the delusion that nuclear weapons will protect them", and slammed Pyongyang's recent campaign of floating trash-carrying balloons into the South, which have caused airport disruptions and triggered small fires.

An American B-1B heavy bomber staged a flyover of the ceremony early Tuesday, flanked by F-15K jets. Washington periodically deploys nuclear assets to the Korean peninsula, as part of the nuclear umbrella to protect the South from Pyongyang's growing threats.

North Korea slammed the B-1B flight and warned it would take "corresponding" action against what it deemed America's "reckless military bluff," according to a statement carried by the official Korean Central News

Agency. The North Korean military would be "keenly watching the frequent deployment" of US strategic assets to the peninsula, said Kim Kang Il, the vice-minister of national defense.

Pyongyang's military is "fully prepared to thoroughly defend" the nuclear-armed state, he added. Yoon's warning comes weeks after the North disclosed images of a uranium enrichment facility for the first time, showing leader Kim Jong Un touring the site as he called for more centrifuges to boost the country's nuclear arsenal. South Korea's spy agency later stated that the unprecedented disclosure was "directed at the US" and that North Korea was believed to be capable of producing a double-digit number of nuclear weapons from its stockpile of highly enriched uranium and plutonium. Last week, a lawmaker told reporters that the National Intelligence Service had warned the North might carry out another nuclear test — its seventh — after the US elections in November.

"The public display of the Hyunmoo-5 is aimed at the North," Hwan Kwon-hee of Korea Association of Defense Industry Studies told AFP. The move signals that "while Seoul doesn't have nuclear weapons, it possesses a sufficient stockpile of conventional weapons capable of reducing Pyongyang to rubble when fired in large numbers during a full-scale war," he said. With a weapon on the scale of the Hyunmoo-5 — which experts say can carry an eight-ton warhead — this could include "targeting underground bunkers where Kim Jong Un is likely to hide," he added. Thousands of people attended the military parade, which was being held for a second consecutive year in Seoul's central Gwanghwamun square, involving 3,000 personnel and 80 pieces of equipment.

The last time Seoul held consecutive military street parades for Armed Forces Day was in 1984, under the dictatorial rule of the late Chun Doo-hwan. — AFP

### News in Brief

#### India police detains 600 workers

CHENNAI: Indian police on Tuesday said it has detained around 600 Samsung Electronics workers and union members for organizing a street protest, as a strike at the South Korean firm's home appliances plant in Tamil Nadu state entered its fourth week. More than 1,000 workers have disrupted operations and protested in a makeshift tent close to the factory near the city of Chennai since Sept 9. They have demanded higher wages and union recognition at the plant, which accounts for roughly a third of Samsung's annual Indian revenue of \$12 billion. — Reuters

#### Pope Francis to open Vatican summit

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis will open a month-long summit of global Catholic leaders on Wednesday but it is likely to defer any decision on divisive issues such as women's ordination and blessings for same-sex couples until next year. The gathering, which includes cardinals, bishops and lay people from more than 110 countries, will vote on a final text in late October that may suggest doctrinal changes. But most of the hottest issues have been assigned to study groups that will make final reports to Francis, who is 87, only next June. The assembly, known as a synod, drew fierce criticism from conservative critics of Francis last year. — Reuters

#### Chinese woman arrested in Germany

BERLIN: A Chinese woman has been arrested in the German city of Leipzig on suspicion of foreign agent activities and passing on information regarding arms deliveries, the prosecutor general said in a statement on Tuesday. The suspect, named only as Yaqi X, is accused of passing on information obtained while working for a logistics company at Leipzig/Halle airport to a member of the Chinese secret service, who is being prosecuted separately, the statement said. The second Chinese national, named as Jian G, was working as an aide to Maximilian Krah, a member of the European Parliament for the far-right Alternative for Germany, when he was arrested this year on suspicion of "especially severe" espionage on behalf of Beijing. — Reuters

#### Tunisia presidential candidate jailed

TUNIS: Tunisian politician Ayachi Zammel, a candidate in the north African country's October 6 presidential election, has been jailed for 12 years, his lawyer said on Tuesday. "The court in Tunis sentenced Ayachi Zammel to 12 years in prison in four cases" related to voter endorsements, lawyer Abdessattar Messoudi told AFP. Messoudi said Zammel "remains a candidate in the election" on Sunday. — AFP

#### Rwandan ex-doctor on trial in France

KIGALI: A former doctor went on trial in Paris on Tuesday accused of genocide in Rwanda, the latest suspect to face justice in France three decades after the massacre of the African country's Tutsi population by the Hutu majority. Eugene Rwamucyo, 65, is accused of aiding his country's then authorities to disseminate anti-Tutsi propaganda and of participating in mass murder in an attempt to destroy evidence of genocide. The former doctor, who practiced medicine in France and Belgium after leaving his country, has been charged with genocide, complicity in genocide, crimes against humanity, and conspiring to prepare those crimes. — AFP

## Junior doctors in Kolkata resume their full strike

NEW DELHI: Junior doctors in India's West Bengal state resumed their full strike on Tuesday, complaining that the country's judiciary has not made adequate efforts to restore justice after the rape and murder of a trainee doctor in August. Doctors from the West Bengal Junior Doctors' Front, which represents about 7,000 physicians in the state, reinstated partial services last month, citing the flood situation in parts of the state. The rape and murder of the 31-year-old female doctor in Kolkata, capital of the eastern state, set off a wave of protests by doctors demanding greater workplace safety for women and justice for their slain colleague, prompting India's Supreme Court to create a hospital safety task force. The top court, in its latest hearing on Monday, urged the state government to put in place all measures by Oct. 15 to meet the doctors' demands.

It also asked the information ministry to ensure the identity of the victim was concealed and not shared online as required by law.

The doctors, however, said they were disappointed with the court's decisions and were "compelled to return to a full ceasefire." "Unless we receive clear action from the government on safety, patient services, and the politics of fear, we will have no choice but to continue our full strike," the group said in a statement on Tuesday. The doctors' demands include increased police protection in hospitals and investigation of what they say is corruption in several medical colleges.

West Bengal, ruled by the regional Trinamool Congress party, has been slow to create new tribunals to try sex crimes speedily, according to a Reuters report. Only six tribunals are operational in the state, a far cry from the target of installing 123 fast-track tribunals by March 2021. — Reuters

## Japan finds body drifting in sea 10 days after floods

TOKYO: A body was found drifting in the Sea of Japan that Japanese rescuers said on Tuesday might be a teenager who went missing in a severe flood 10 days ago. Rescuers found the body on Monday in waters off the port of Fukui in central Japan, some 160 kilometers (100 miles) southwest of the Noto region that experienced torrential rain, violent floods and landslides that killed at least 13 people. The search for Hanon Kiso, 14, captured national attention as her distressed father Takaya Kiso appealed for help finding his daughter, who was home alone when the disaster hit on September 21.

The body found on Monday was wearing a gym suit with a tag that rescuers believed says "Kiso", a local



JAMMU: Voters queue up to cast their ballots at a polling station during the third and final phase of voting for local assembly elections in Jammu on Oct 1. — AFP

## Indian Kashmir votes in final round of polls

BARAMULLA, India: Indian-administered Kashmir was voting Tuesday in the third and final round of polls to elect its first government since the insurgency-ravaged territory was brought under New Delhi's direct control. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government cancelled Kashmir's partial autonomy in 2019, a sudden decision accompanied by mass arrests and a months-long communication blackout.

Since then the territory — which is divided between India and Pakistan and claimed by both in full — has not had an elected government, and has been ruled instead by a federally appointed governor. More than half a million Indian troops are stationed around Kashmir and Tuesday's vote saw a heavy security presence, with rifle-toting soldiers seen guarding polling stations in Baramulla district. A high unemployment rate and anger at the 2019 changes have animated campaigning, and local parties have promised to fight for the restoration of Kashmir's autonomy. "I voted so that there is some

relief for us. Modi doesn't agree with the views of Kashmiri people," Baramulla local Abdul Rahim Rah told AFP outside a polling station. More than 55 percent of eligible voters cast ballots in the first two rounds of the poll. Prior elections saw lower turnouts after boycotts called by separatist groups, who have waged a decades-long insurgency demanding Kashmir's independence or its merger with neighboring Pakistan.

Tens of thousands of civilians, soldiers and rebels have been killed since the conflict began in 1989, including dozens this year. Islamabad controls a smaller portion of the mountainous territory, divided since the end of British colonial rule in 1947.

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) says the 2019 changes to the territory's governance have delivered a new era of peace to Kashmir and rapid economic growth. That is disputed by homegrown political parties in Kashmir, who say the accompanying security clampdown brought a drastic curtailment of civil liberties. The territory is officially titled Jammu and Kashmir.



WAJIMA, Japan: This file photo taken on September 23, 2024 shows Takaya Kiso (center) searching for his missing 14-year-old daughter in the city of Wajima, Ishikawa prefecture. — AFP



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2024

# US dockworkers launch mass strike month before election

The first 'coast wide strike in almost 50 years' could drag on US economy



NEWARK, US: Dockworkers at the Maher Terminals in Port Newark are on strike on Oct 1, 2024 in New Jersey. — AFP

**NEW YORK:** Tens of thousands of workers at major ports on the US East and Gulf Coasts went on strike Tuesday in action that could drag on the world's largest economy just ahead of the November presidential election. The International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) said the walkout was the first "coast wide strike in almost 50 years."

The shutdown would halt shipments at 36 ports, impacting an array of goods from food to electronics and potentially costing the US economy billions of dollars a week. "We are prepared to fight as long as necessary, to stay out on strike for whatever period of time it takes, to get the wages and protections against automation our ILA members deserve," Harold Daggett, who heads the 85,000-member union, said in a statement.

The strike presents a thorny challenge to the White House and Vice President Kamala Harris's campaign, as both seek to bolster a pro-union image while preventing any economic fallout so close to the election. President Joe Biden has ruled out

federal intervention, but business lobbies are sure to amplify calls for action if the strike drags out.

Biden and Harris are "closely monitoring" the strike, the White House said, with both briefed on government assessments that "impacts on consumers are expected to be limited at this time." "The president has directed his team to convey his message directly to both sides that they need to be at the table and negotiating in good faith—fairly and quickly," it added. The ILA said it had "shut down all ports from Maine to Texas at 12:01 am on Tuesday" after it rejected a final proposal from the United States Maritime Alliance (USMX) shipping group.

USMX did not respond to a request for comment. ILA members began picketing at 14 major ports on the East and Gulf coasts soon after the announcement. In Boston, dockworkers marched to the port carrying signs that read "no work without a fair contract," videos shared on social media showed.

A possible stoppage had been telegraphed for months, with the odds rising in recent weeks as the two sides described themselves as far apart. USMX said on Monday it was "hopeful" after the two sides exchanged counter-offers. However, there was still no deal when the six-year contract expired at midnight. Oxford Economics estimated that the strike would dent US gross domestic product by \$4.5 billion to \$7.5 billion per week. The overall economic hit depends on the length of the strike, analysts say.

The first ILA walkout since 1977 follows high-profile strikes at US automakers, Boeing and other employers. The contract directly affects about 25,000 ILA members at 14 large US ports, including New York/New Jersey, Boston, Philadelphia, Savannah, New Orleans and Houston.

New York Governor Kathy Hochul said on Monday port officials were scrambling to clear out as many items as possible before the impending stoppage. Other ports, such as New Orleans,

Louisiana, and Savannah, Georgia, had offered extended hours in recent days ahead of the deadline.

The union is pressing for protections against automation-related job loss and for hefty wage hikes after dockworkers kept providing essential services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. USMX said Monday its latest offer would "increase wages by nearly 50 percent, triple employer contributions to employee retirement plans, strengthen our health care options, and retain the current language around automation and semi-automation." Media reports say the ILA is asking for a 77 percent wage increase over six years.

"A port strike would paralyze US trade and raise prices at a time when consumers and businesses are starting to feel relief from inflation," said Erin McLaughlin, senior economist at the Conference Board, a business research non-profit. "There's no easy Plan B. While shippers have already begun diverting some cargo to the West Coast, capacity for such alternative options are limited." — AFP



Thailand's Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra (right) shakes hands with Ruth Porat (left), president and chief investment officer of Google and its parent company Alphabet during a meeting at the government house in Bangkok. — AFP

## Google invests \$1bn in Thailand

**BANGKOK:** Google plans to invest \$1 billion to build digital infrastructure in Thailand, including a new data center, the US tech giant has announced, saying the move would support 14,000 jobs in the kingdom. The new hubs in Bangkok and the industrial area of Chonburi are intended to help meet growing demand for cloud computing in Southeast Asia, the company said in a Monday statement.

Google's investment comes after Microsoft announced in May that it would create Thailand's first data center region to boost cloud and artificial intelligence infrastructure. "These investments will empower Thai businesses, innovators, and communities to harness the power of cloud and AI technology," Ruth Porat, president and chief investment officer of Google and its parent company Alphabet, said.

The investment's details were unveiled after a Bangkok meeting between Porat and Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra, who hailed the move as proof Thailand was becoming a major digital hub in Southeast Asia. The data center will be located in Chonburi, a major industrial area southeast of Bangkok, while the cloud facilities will be in the

capital itself. Google's expansion in Thailand will add \$4 billion to the kingdom's GDP by 2029 and support 14,000 jobs between 2025 and 2029, the company said, citing a report from consultancy Deloitte.

The announcement comes a year after Shinawatra's predecessor Srettha Thavisin made a major push for investment from US tech giants during a trip to New York, seeking finance from Google, Microsoft and Elon Musk's Tesla. Thailand is Southeast Asia's second-largest economy, but its tech sector has lagged behind the likes of Singapore and Indonesia. The Thai economy, long focused on traditional manufacturing, agriculture and tourism, has struggled to bounce back from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The government hopes investment from Google, Microsoft and their ilk will diversify and modernize the kingdom's economy. Thailand's Office of the National Digital Economy and Society Commission has said the digital economy could contribute as much as 30 percent of GDP by 2027. Across the region, governments are vying for US tech dollars, with Vietnam making a drive to move up the value chain from its traditional base as a hub for producing shoes, clothes and furniture.

Vietnam hopes to cash in on the US move to become less dependent on China for key resources including high-tech chips. And last week, Vietnamese state media reported that Musk's SpaceX plans to invest \$1.5 billion in the communist country. — AFP

## Saudi projects budget deficit through 2027

**RIYADH:** The Arab world's biggest economy Saudi Arabia announced Monday it anticipates a budget deficit of 2.3 percent of GDP in 2025, projected to continue over the following two years. The Gulf kingdom is engaged in a years-long economic reform drive seeking to reduce its dependence on oil and boost its tourism and business sectors. It cited increased government spending and lower oil revenues for the budget outlook.

"In fiscal year 2025, the budget is anticipated to record a deficit of approximately 2.3 percent of GDP," the Saudi finance ministry said in a preliminary projection. "The deficit is likely to continue at similar levels over the medium term", it added. The deficit is projected to hit 2.9 percent of Saudi gross domestic product in 2026, and 3.0 percent in 2027, the ministry said, citing "the government's strategic

expansionary spending policies that foster economic diversification and sustainable growth".

In 2025, government expenditures are projected to rise to around 1.3 trillion riyals (\$342.6 billion), according to the finance ministry, while revenues would see a 4.3-percent decrease.

The ministry's estimates put total government revenues for 2025 at approximately 1.2 trillion riyals, which would create a deficit of 101 billion riyals. Saudi Arabia, the world's largest crude oil exporter, has enacted a series of production cuts since 2022 in a bid to hike prices.

It currently produces around nine million barrels per day, well below its declared capacity of 12 million bpd. Largely state-owned oil giant Saudi Aramco saw its 2024 first-quarter net profit dip 14.5 percent on-year, followed by a 3.4-percent decrease in the second quarter. Real GDP is expected to grow this year by 0.8 percent "driven by an estimated 3.7-percent increase in non-oil activities", the finance ministry said. Under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Saudi Arabia has invested hundreds of billions of dollars in mega-projects like the planned futuristic desert city NEOM and major tourism and leisure developments. — AFP

## ADNOC swoops on German chemicals firm Covestro

**FRANKFURT:** German chemicals group Covestro said Tuesday it had accepted a takeover bid from UAE state energy company ADNOC, as one of the key sectors in Europe's largest economy is gripped by crisis. Elevated energy costs in the wake of Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine have weighed heavily on chemicals producers, which account for around five percent of Germany's GDP.

The deal valued Covestro, a maker of plastics, at some 12 billion euros (\$13.3 billion), the German group said in a statement. Under the terms of the agreement, valid until the end of 2028, the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) will make an offer for all remaining Covestro stock at a price of 62 euros per share. The state energy company of the United Arab Emirates will also inject around 1.2 billion euros into the chemicals firm through the issuance of new shares, once the deal is completed.

With ADNOC onboard, Covestro would have "an even stronger foundation for sustainable growth",

the German group's CEO Markus Steilemann said in a statement. ADNOC was a "financially strong and long-term oriented partner", Steilemann said. The takeover offer was subject to a minimum acceptance threshold of "50 percent plus one share", as well as regulatory controls, Covestro said.

ADNOC's bid for Covestro comes while the challenges facing the Germany's energy-intensive chemicals industry show no signs of abating. The sector was "struggling in a difficult environment", the German chemical industry association VCI said in a report last month. Weak demand and high energy costs in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine were weighing on producers and leading them to cut back on production in Germany. BASF, the world's largest chemicals group, said last month would cut costs and refocus on its "core businesses", while some of its German plants lacked competitiveness.

For its part, Covestro said it was "making significant progress in its strategic transformation". The group, which makes chemicals used in everything from building insulation to electric vehicles, unveiled savings plan in June amid ongoing takeover talks with ADNOC. Leverkusen-based Covestro, which was spun off from chemicals giant Bayer in 2015, said it would cut material and personal costs in the hopes of saving some 400 million euros annually. — AFP



Business

# Gulf Bank champions heart health on World Heart Day with employee wellness campaign

Employees receive free health screenings for diabetes, cholesterol and blood pressure



Gulf Bank in collaboration with the Kuwait Heart Foundation, conducting a health awareness campaign for its employees.

**KUWAIT:** In celebration of World Heart Day, Gulf Bank, in collaboration with the Kuwait Heart Foundation, launched a comprehensive health awareness campaign for its employees. The initiative aimed to promote heart health awareness and provide employees with essential tools for managing their wellbeing. As part of the campaign, employees received free

health screenings for diabetes, cholesterol and blood pressure; vital tests that help in detecting early signs of heart disease and ensuring proactive health management. World Heart Day serves as a global reminder to prioritize heart care through regular exercise, balanced nutrition and adopting healthier lifestyle habits. Aligned with Gulf Bank's comprehensive sustain-

ability strategy, this wellness campaign is just one example of the Bank's dedication to promoting employee well-being. By focusing on health, wellness, and sports initiatives, Gulf Bank fosters a work culture that values both the physical and mental health of its employees, enabling its diverse and inclusive workplace delivering exceptional banking solutions and

service to the community. In line with Kuwait Vision 2035 'New Kuwait', Gulf Bank continues to champion sustainability initiatives across environmental, social, and governance (ESG) dimensions. Through strategic collaborations and diverse programs, the Bank plays an active role in supporting the Nation's vision of a sustainable, inclusive and prosperous future.

## Eurozone inflation below 2%; rate cut case stronger

**FRANKFURT:** Eurozone inflation dipped below 2 percent for the first time since mid-2021 in September, reinforcing an already solid case for a European Central Bank rate cut this month as a three-year battle to tame runaway price growth nears its end. Inflation in the 20 countries sharing the euro currency eased to 1.8 percent in September from 2.2 percent in August, Eurostat data showed on Tuesday, coming below expectations for 1.9 percent in a Reuters poll, primarily

on falling energy costs and muted goods prices. A more closely watched figure on underlying prices referred to as core inflation, meanwhile, dipped to 2.7 percent from 2.8 percent on slower services price growth, coming below expectations for 2.8 percent. Price growth has been above the central bank's target for years now with surging energy costs, production bottlenecks in the post pandemic reopening, corporate opportunism and copious fiscal support all lifting inflation to over 10 percent by late 2022.

But a record string of interest rate hikes from the central bank has tamed price growth relatively quickly, and policymakers are now debating just how fast they should ease borrowing costs. The ECB has already reduced rates in June and September, and ECB President Christine Lagarde sent the clearest signal yet on Monday that another cut may come later this month given sanguine price trends.

Such a quick follow-up rate cut was not expected until recently but a dismal string of growth data, moderating wage pressures and inflation readings below the ECB's own projections have all added to the urgency. Bolstering the case for a cut, services inflation - perhaps the most closely watched component of price growth - slowed a touch to 4.0 percent from 4.1 percent, easing but not completely erasing fears that domestic price pressures are stuck at a high level.

Rapid wage growth has driven services costs for years but economists have long predicted a slowdown given softening labor markets, weak growth and smaller pay increases. Falling energy costs remained the biggest contributor to disinflation, while non-energy industrial goods prices rose just 0.4 percent compared with a year earlier, also pulling the overall number down. Lagarde has already said that inflation is now under the baseline predicted by

the ECB, a signal that challenges the bank's own narrative of durable price pressures and a return to the 2 percent target only at the end of 2025.

Investors raised their bets on quicker cuts on Lagarde's comments and markets now price an 85 percent chance of a rate cut on Oct. 17, up from 25 percent at the start of last week.

They also price just over 50 basis points of moves until the end of the year, meaning back-to-back cuts are now fully priced in. This has prompted a whole range of bank economists to change their predictions, with most big banks now betting on cuts in both October and December, and possibly January, too. The ECB has predicted a rise in price growth to just above 2.5 percent around the turn of the year, but sharply lower oil prices point to downside risks to this scenario and investors now see a substantial risk that the ECB undershoots its target. — Reuters

# Markaz hosts an exclusive event to highlight 'GCC Momentum Fund'

Event celebrates first anniversary and recognition of 'Best Momentum Fund Innovation' by Global Finance

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Financial Centre (Markaz) hosted an exclusive event for its esteemed clients and investors to showcase the performance, potential, and investment opportunities offered by the "GCC Momentum Fund." This special gathering follows the Fund's prestigious recognition as the "Best Momentum Fund Innovation" by Global Finance during its inaugural year. The event underscores Markaz's unwavering commitment to introducing distinctive investment vehicles tailored to meet the diverse needs of its clients. Held at the Four Seasons Hotel on Sept 30, 2024, the event featured a keynote address by the CEO of Markaz, a detailed presentation from the MENA Equities team, and an engaging panel discussion, moderated by a representative from the Wealth Management and Business Development team. The panel discussion delved into the Fund's strategy, investment factors, long-term wealth-building opportunities and ways to capitalize on emerging market trends, and answered questions by the attendees.

In his opening remarks, Ali H Khalil, CEO of Markaz, said: "Innovation has been an intrinsic pillar of Markaz's DNA since its inception. Over the past five decades, we have pioneered innovation in the financial services realm, both locally and regionally. This is exemplified by Markaz's track record in crafting investment tools with unique attributes and opening new investment frontiers. Today, we proudly celebrate one of our most recent innovations, the 'GCC Momentum Fund,' which embodies our commitment to delivering the best-in-class investment opportunities and solutions that align with our clients' aspirations, as their partner in wealth creation. We take great pride in marking this milestone as part of Markaz's 50-year legacy, which has consistently prioritized the interests of our clients. This trust in our expertise inspires us to continuously innovate and evolve across all operational and strategic dimensions."

During the presentation, Fahad S Al-Rushaid, Senior Vice President, MENA Equities at Markaz, elaborated on the core principles underpinning the momentum strategy, stating: "The GCC Momentum Fund is the first passive fund of its kind to invest in GCC markets through a momentum-based methodology. This strategy targets top-performing stocks in the GCC, while me-



Panel discussion on the GCC Momentum Fund.



Ali H Khalil, Chief Executive Officer at Markaz.



Fahad Al-Rushaid, Senior Vice President, MENA Equities.



Sharefah Bensalamah, Senior Relationship Officer, Wealth Management and Business Development.

ticiously tracking components of the S&P GCC Momentum Composite Index. Since its inception in 2008, the S&P GCC Momentum Composite Index has on an average outperformed the S&P GCC

Composite Index by an average of 4.5 percent annually. This trend is expected to continue, bolstered by the region's robust economic prospects, particularly the ambitious growth initiatives in Saudi Arabia, which accounts for over half of the GCC's market capitalization. The Fund strategically selects stocks that collectively represent approximately 50 percent of the GCC market capitalization, thereby enhancing volatility management."

In the subsequent panel discussion, Mohammed A Al-Ghannam, Senior Vice President, MENA Equities at Markaz, added: "The momentum strategy has resonated strongly with our clients, and building on the unprecedented economic boom and expected growth in the non-oil economy, the Fund serves investors particularly those seeking to invest in GCC markets with a long-term, risk-adjusted approach.

The Fund's methodology allows investors to benefit from the compounding returns over time, while its focus on top-performing companies with solid fundamentals ensures optimized returns. This approach mitigates market volatility by distributing risks across various sectors. The success of this strategy has been evidenced in global markets, and its adoption in the GCC is a natural evolution. The development of the Fund's mechanism is the result of two years of rigorous research and analysis by the MENA Equities team, optimizing the strategy's efficacy in driving long-term returns."

Mohammad Al-Smaiee, Assistant Vice President, Wealth Management and Business Development at Markaz, added: "As trusted investment advisors, it is incumbent upon us to closely monitor market trends and seize optimal opportunities that align with our clients' financial goals. This philosophy is what led to the creation of the 'GCC Momentum Fund,' a fund built upon a globally recognized and valued performance methodology. The 'Best Momentum Fund Innovation' award from Global Finance, granted within the Fund's first year, stands as a testament to the strength of our strategy, guided by global benchmarks. We remain committed to developing further innovations that enhance market offerings and provide our clients with unparalleled growth opportunities."

Concluding the event, Markaz team engaged with interested attendees, addressing inquiries about the momentum strategy and providing detailed guidance on how to subscribe to the Fund and explore other portfolio services, either digitally or in person at Markaz's headquarters. The GCC Momentum Fund is the latest in a series of innovative investment products launched by Markaz, underscoring its commitment to staying ahead of market developments locally, regionally, and globally.





## Business

# Burgan Bank launches co-branded Qatar Airways bank cards in partnership with Visa

## As part of its ongoing efforts to enhance customers' banking experience

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced launching its co-branded Qatar Airways credit and prepaid cards under the umbrella of its expanding partnership with the world leader in digital payments, Visa. Introduced in a bid to make travel easier and more rewarding for its loyal customers, the new Qatar Airways co-branded cards are set to offer cardholders exclusive benefits and rewards. This comes as part of Burgan Bank's unwavering efforts to add ease and convenience to its banking experience by partnering with world-class service providers and modifying its products and services in response to customers' evolving needs and aspirations.

"Every Burgan banking card is designed with a customer segment in mind, whereby every feature, upgrade, and privilege caters to their particular lifestyle and guarantees to make everyday purchases and transactions more rewarding," Manaf Al-Menaifi, Acting General Manager - Retail Banking at Burgan Bank, said. "With our new Visa Qatar Airways credit and prepaid cards, we are merging the best in financial and travel services for an all-around rewarding

and convenient travel experience."

With Qatar Airways and Visa, Burgan Bank offers seasoned travelers three card variants: Qatar Airways Visa Infinite, Qatar Airways Visa Platinum, and Qatar Airways Visa Prepaid. By choosing to make everyday purchases using any of the Qatar Airways and Visa card variants, Qatar Airways Visa Infinite cardholders earn 6 reward points (Avios) for every KD 1 spent locally, 7 Avios for every KD 1 spent across the EU countries, and 12 Avios for every KD 1 spent internationally (out-



Manaf Al-Menaifi, Acting General Manager - Retail Banking at Burgan Bank



side of the EU). Furthermore, new cardholders receive a complimentary welcome bonus Avios of 20,000 upon paying the annual card fee upfront.

"This collaboration underscores Visa's global leadership in airline co-brands and our commitment to enriching the payment experience for frequent travelers in Kuwait. Our advanced security technology and Visa's worldwide acceptance network, with

over 130 million merchant partners, also allow Burgan Bank's Visa cardholders to use their cards with confidence anywhere in the world. We are excited to partner with Burgan Bank in bringing this unique proposition to their Visa cardholders and supporting the growth of digital commerce in Kuwait," said Mohamed Reyad, Head of Financial Institutions at Visa - Kuwait.

In addition to exchanging Avios for Qatar Airways miles, travelers can enjoy complimentary lounge access to over 1000+ airport lounges in 300 cities worldwide with Visa Infinite.

Throughout their longstanding partnership, Burgan Bank and Visa introduced several campaigns, offering cardholders exclusive benefits and valuable gifts. This includes the latest draw campaign, "Visa Olympics", which offered four lucky Visa cardholders an all-expense-covered trip to Paris to attend the 2024 Olympics. To find out more about the Visa and Qatar Airways co-branded credit and prepaid cards, call Burgan's customer service at 1804080 or visit the Bank's website [www.burgan.com](http://www.burgan.com).

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Abu Dhabi's GDP grew 4.1%

ABU DHABI: Abu Dhabi's economy grew 4.1 percent in the second quarter of 2024, according to preliminary government estimates, driven by non-oil sectors as the city-state accelerates efforts to diversify away from hydrocarbons. The United Arab Emirates capital's gross domestic product (GDP) in Q2 reached 297 billion dirhams (\$80.87 billion), according to the government statistics centre, and the contribution of non-oil sectors stood at over 55 percent, the highest in about 10 years, at 164.2 billion dirhams. Non-oil GDP surged 6.6 percent in Q2, vastly outperforming overall GDP growth, led by increases in construction, manufacturing, and finance and insurance activities. — Reuters

### Pakistan delays bidding for PIA

ISLAMABAD: The bidding for Pakistan's national airline PIA has been delayed to Oct 31, a spokesman for the privatization ministry said on Tuesday. A Pakistani parliamentary committee of privatization had earlier been informed that Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) would go under the hammer on Tuesday. The spokesman said the bidding will now take place on Oct. 31 and the date has been approved by the ministry. — Reuters

### Fed sees no 'hurry' to cut rates

NASHVILLE, Tennessee: Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell indicated on Monday the US central bank would likely stick with quarter-percentage-point interest rate cuts moving forward and was not "in a hurry" after new data boosted confidence in ongoing economic growth and consumer spending. "This is not a committee that feels like it is in a hurry to cut rates quickly," Powell told a National Association for Business Economics conference, even though the policy-setting Federal Open Market Committee kicked off its easing cycle with a larger-than-expected half-percentage-point reduction at its Sept. 17-18 meeting. — Reuters

### Ireland unveils budget giveaway

DUBLIN: The Irish government handed voters 10.5 billion euros of tax cuts and spending increases in a pre-election budget on Tuesday that also outlined how it will use a 14 billion euro (\$15.6 billion) Apple tax windfall to improve creaking infrastructure. Prime Minister Simon Harris must call an election by March but most analysts see November as the most likely date, when voters will start to benefit from the latest budget splurge resulting from Europe's healthiest set of public finances. — Reuters

## Targeted tax hikes, spending cuts to plug French deficit: Barnier

PARIS: Targeted tax rises and spending cuts will be required to narrow France's gaping budget deficit, Prime Minister Michel Barnier said on Tuesday as he outlined his new government's policy plans to parliament. Barnier, appointed last month, faces the challenging task of plugging a huge hole in public finances at a time when the fragmentation of parliament and infighting in his minority government will make it hard to push through reforms. At stake is France's credibility with its European Union partners and in financial markets, as its borrowing costs have surged. "The sword of Damocles hanging over us is our colossal financial debt," Barnier told lawmakers, ignoring heckles from the hard-left France Unbowed.

## Germany inaugurates IBM's first European quantum data centre

EHINGEN, Germany: Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Tuesday inaugurated US firm IBM's first quantum data centre in Europe, saying Germany was aiming to be at the forefront of the revolutionary technology. The centre—IBM's first outside the United States, and located in Ehingen, near Stuttgart—will allow dozens of European companies and research institutes to gain access to its quantum systems.

While still in its early stages, scientists believe that super-fast quantum computing will eventually be able

## Bhutan details plans for economy-boosting 'Mindfulness City'

PARO, Bhutan: Tiny, landlocked Bhutan detailed plans on Tuesday for a "Mindfulness City" to lure foreign investment and international travelers to the Himalayan kingdom which has otherwise sought to discourage outside visitors.

Bhutan, with a population of less than 800,000, is nestled between China and India and is known for its policy of prioritizing "Gross National Happiness" over growth. Despite striving for the contentment of its citizens, the government has struggled with wide-

## Anger meets tear gas as Nigeria protests fizzle out

LAGOS: Rallies over economic hardship struggled to build momentum in Nigeria on Tuesday as the country battles its worst economic crisis in a generation. Police fired tear gas to break up small crowds in the capital Abuja, while turnout was low across the country.

Dubbed the "National Day of Survival," the demonstrations followed larger rallies in August, when security forces killed at least 21 protesters in a nationwide crackdown, according to Amnesty International. After coming to power last year, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu brought in reforms billed as a way to revive the economy and attract foreign investment.

But Nigerians have seen fuel prices soar and inflation hit a three-decade high since Tinubu ended a fuel subsidy and floated the naira currency. The demonstrators on Tuesday called for an "end to hunger and misery" and lower fuel, electricity and food prices, as well as the release of protesters arrested in August. In Abuja, AFP journalists saw police firing volleys of teargas canisters at a crowd of around 50 peaceful protesters near Utaiko market. "Why are they firing?" said Moses, 39, a driver working at the market. "Are the protesters not telling the truth? Are we not hungry, are we not suffering?"

"I'm angry. It's unfair — they do violence on you and there is nothing you can do about it. We are helpless." The Oct 1 rally took place as Nigeria marks its 64th anniversary of independence from British colonial rule. In an address to the nation, the president said that "since independence, our nation has survived many crises and upheavals."

"I am deeply aware of the struggles many of you face in these challenging times," Tinubu said.

France's deficit was making it weaker in Europe, he added. France's biggest companies will be asked to contribute more to the deficit reduction effort through higher taxes, as will the country's wealthiest individuals, Barnier said, without giving further details. "The situation of our public finances today requires a targeted effort, limited in time," Barnier said. According to Le Parisien newspaper, Barnier was considering tax hikes of 15 to 18 billion euros (\$17-20 billion).

They reportedly included an additional 8 billion euros through taxes on corporations, and the imposition of an additional 3 billion euro levy on energy companies and share buybacks. The plans also include raising income taxes for top earners to bring in some 3 billion euros, and increasing electricity taxes for another 3 billion euros, Le Parisien said, without citing sources. Barnier's office did not reply to a request for comment on the figures. Barnier said he would push back the target date for reaching the euro zone's common 3 percent deficit goal to 2029 from 2027. It risks hitting 6 percent this year, his government has said. — Reuters

to power innovation in a range of fields, from smarter encryption software to artificial intelligence. Scholz hailed the data centre as "good news for Germany", adding that Europe's biggest economy needs such "key technologies". "It is precisely these future fields where we have to be at the forefront, where we must not be dependent on others," he said.

Quantum research is seen as a critical field and both the United States and China have been investing heavily in the area, while Washington has also placed restrictions on the export of the sensitive technology. The centre consists of two quantum computers linked to quantum processors. One of the computers at the site was inaugurated in 2021 by Scholz's predecessor, Angela Merkel, and was the first in Germany. Quantum computers can process complex information at a mind-boggling speed and should eventually vastly outperform even the most powerful of today's conventional computers. — AFP

spread unemployment that has prompted thousands of youngsters to emigrate abroad. Authorities hope the new project will reverse the trend by attracting foreign capital to a new special economic zone on the country's border with India at Gelephu — currently a small town home to less than 10,000 people.

Press materials describe the project as a future repository for businesses utilizing the kingdom's cheap and abundant hydropower resources, including for data centers and artificial intelligence companies.

"The city will be a haven for creativity and knowledge-sharing, with public spaces designed for communal learning and collaboration," the project's lead architect Bjarke Ingels said. Ingels was speaking at a forum in the city of Paro held to publicize the Gelephu Mindfulness City project.

The forum's start coincided with an announcement from King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck that a board had been appointed to steer the project's development, led by Mun Leong Liew of Singapore. Liew's infrastructure experience includes stints with Singapore's airport authority and state-owned urban development consultancy Surbana Jurong. Bhutan's government has given scant other details of the project since it was announced by the king last December.

There has been no official confirmation of when construction will break ground or its total estimated budget. What plans have been released outline an airport to service the special economic zone which will handle up to five million passengers per year when fully operational.

Bhutan saw around 100,000 foreign arrivals last year, part of the kingdom's efforts to protect its environment and culture from overtourism by levying a \$100 daily charge to most visitors. — AFP



Protesters carry placards during the "Fearless In October" protest over bad governance in Abuja, Nigeria on October 1, 2024. — AFP

"Once again, I plead for your patience as the reforms we are implementing show positive signs, and we are beginning to see light at the end of the tunnel." Rex Elanu, a chicken farmer and activist at the protest in Abuja, has seen the price of poultry feed soar under Tinubu. "It's a failed state, we must be sincere with ourselves," the 39-year-old said. He called for the president to address hunger and insecurity, and said he was frustrated the demands of the #EndBadGovernance protesters in August weren't met.

"Sometimes I feel hopeless — but not everybody is going to stay quiet and docile," he said.

Turnout was lower than at the August rallies. There was calm in the northern city Kano, which previously saw intense clashes. In the economic hub Lagos, hundreds of demonstrators gathered under the Ikeja bridge and marched to the headquarters of the Lagos State government.

The demonstration ended peacefully under a heavy security presence. "As Nigerian people, we are not surviving. We are hungry. The hunger is too much," said Lagos protest leader Hassan Taiwo.

"We are demanding that all the policies that have led to this hunger must be removed." — AFP

## Sri Lanka to review sovereign bond restructure deal

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's new government said Tuesday it would "review" a \$12.5 billion sovereign bond debt restructure deal announced last month as part of efforts to repair the nation's ruined finances.

Restructuring the debt is a cornerstone of the International Monetary Fund rescue plan Sri Lanka agreed to last year after an unprecedented economic crisis. Former president Ranil Wickremesinghe had unveiled an agreement with international bondholders, the largest component of the government's foreign debt, just days before he lost office in an election last month.

But new foreign minister Vijitha Herath told reporters that the new administration was still weighing whether to proceed with it. "We will review the debt restructure agreement the previous government announced," Herath said. Herath said an IMF team would visit Colombo on Wednesday to meet members of new leftist President Anura Kumara Dissanayake's team.

The IMF delegation's meeting was a "courtesy call" and substantive negotiations will commence later this month in the United States, he added. Sri Lanka defaulted on its \$46 billion foreign debt in April 2022 after the country ran out of foreign exchange, sparking months of acute food, fuel and medicine shortages. Street protests forced then-president Gotabaya Rajapaksa to flee the country and tender his resignation from abroad.

His successor Wickremesinghe secured the IMF



COLOMBO: A vendor watches a live telecast as Sri Lanka's newly elected President Anura Kumara Dissanayake addresses the nation at Galle Face Beach in Colombo. — AFP

bailout that included tough and unpopular austerity measures that saw him resoundingly lose last month's presidential vote.

Dissanayake, an avowed Marxist, had criticized Wickremesinghe during the campaign for not securing better deals with international creditors and vowed to renegotiate if elected.

Last month's tentative deal had seen bondholders agree to a 27-percent haircut on their loans and reductions in overdue interest payments accumulated since the April 2022 default. The deal would need approval by parliament, but Dissanayake last week dissolved the legislature and called a snap election for November. — AFP



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2024



Spanish farmer Miguel Angel Garcia poses near a pistachio tree.



An employee processes pistachios in 'Pistamancha' cooperative.



Joaquin Cayuela Verges, general secretary of Pistamancha, agricultural cooperative that groups 51 pistachio farms, poses in the cooperative, on the outskirts of Pozuelo de Calatrava.

## Droughts drive Spanish boom in pistachio farming

Two decades ago, Miguel Angel Garcia harvested grapes and grains on his farm in central Spain, like his father and grandfather before him. Now he produces pistachios -- a more lucrative crop that can better withstand the droughts that have become more frequent and intense in Spain. Garcia harvests 10 to 20 tons of the green nut each year at his 26-hectare (64-acres) farm in Manzanares in the central region of Castilla-La Mancha, part of a boom in pistachio production in Spain.

"Wine and cereals weren't viable anymore," said the 58-year-old, who planted his first pistachio trees in 2007. "If I hadn't changed, I wouldn't have been able to make a living from my farm." In the stony plot behind him, an electric harvester latched onto



An employee processes pistachios in 'Pistamancha' cooperative.

the trunk of a small pistachio tree and then shook it, causing nuts to fall into a vast canvas set up below, open like an upside-down umbrella.

Pistachio trees, which are native to the Middle East, are "resistant" and "adapted to the climate we have here" with its hot and dry summers and cold spells in winter, Garcia said. The amount of land devoted to pistachio trees in Spain has jumped nearly five-fold since 2017 to 79,000 hectares (195,000 acres) in 2024, according to agriculture ministry figures.

### 'Strong demand'

This makes Spain the biggest pistachio grower in Europe in terms of surface area, and the world's fourth-largest after the United States, Iran and Turkey. Most pistachios are grown in Castilla-La Mancha as well as Extremadura in the west and Andalusia in the south, which are facing water shortages due to climate change. This crop comes from a "desert region" and is "much better adapted" to the new climate realities, said Mario Gonzalez-Mohino, an agricultural engineer and the director of the



An aerial picture shows a farmer harvesting pistachios in his farm in Manzanares. — AFP photos



A picture shows pistachios on a tree in a farm on the outskirts of Manzanares.



A farmer harvests pistachios in his farm in Manzanares.

specialist website Pistacho Pro.

Spain experienced its hottest August on record this year, with temperatures averaging 25 degrees Celsius (77 Fahrenheit) -- and the national weather agency says 2024 could rival 2022 as the warmest ever registered. Spain's production -- nearly 9,000 tons per year -- is "still limited" but "it will increase rapidly because the vast majority of plots have not gone into production", since it takes at least seven years before a newly planted tree gives its first harvest, he added.

Joaquin Cayuela Verges, secretary general of the Pistamancha agricultural cooperative that groups 51 pistachio farms, said the boom had only started. "There is strong demand, it's a dynamic sector," he said. The cooperative, based in the town of Pozuelo

de Calatrava, sells 90 percent of its pistachio production in Europe, mainly France and Germany, at 10-11 euros per kilo (around \$5 a pound).

### 'Matter of patience'

To keep up with its rapid expansion, Pistamancha is spending five million euros to build a new plant to sort, peel and dry its pistachios. It will be able to process one million kilos of pistachios per year when completed, Cayuela Verges said. Can this boom lead to overproduction that will drive down prices? Those involved in the industry see little risk since the amount of pistachios produced in Spain falls well short of domestic demand.

In Spain pistachios are still "mostly imported", mainly from the United States, said Gonzalez-Mohi-

no, who predicts a "bright future" for national producers of the crop. Pistachios are mostly eaten as snacks but are also widely used in Middle Eastern cuisine, as well as in the production of cakes, sweets, ice cream and cosmetics.

"A lot of people think they'll get rich but when you plant pistachio trees, you have to realize that you won't get anything for several years" until the trees "start bearing fruit", Garcia said. "I have been investing" in this crop for 15 years and "it's only now that I can recoup what I have spent and earn a living. Pistachios are a matter of patience," he said.—AFP

## Hollywood's Damian Lewis herds sheep across bridge in London

Hollywood star Damian Lewis on Sunday drove sheep across a bridge crossing London's River Thames in a celebration of a medieval tradition. The Golden Globe and Emmy Award-winning British actor wore his grandfather's wool coat and wielded a crook to move the sheep across Southwark Bridge. The event honors the medieval tradition of anyone awarded "freeman of the City of London" status being allowed to drive their sheep toll-free across the bridge, a historic trading route.

An event celebrating the tradition has taken place annually since 2013. Lewis, 53, described the event as "eccentric", adding: "I just played shepherd,

shepherd Lewis, and it was very fun." Lewis, himself a freeman, has strong links to the City of London—the capital's financial district—having studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Several of his ancestors as well as his brother also served as Lord Mayors of London, who are elected annually and run the governing body of the area. The sheep-driving event is part of a fundraiser for the wool trade's Woolmen Charity and the Lord Mayor's Appeal which aims to have an impact on "London's most pressing societal issues".—AFP



British actor Damian Lewis leads The Worshipful Company of Woolmen, driving sheep across Southwark Bridge, during the annual event in London.



British actor Damian Lewis (fourth left) poses for a photograph with freemen of The City of London at the annual sheep drive on Southward Bridge by The Worshipful Company of Woolmen, in London. — AFP photos



## Lifestyle

## MAJOR LEAGUE EATING: THE SPORT OF STUFFING YOUR FACE



Competitors take part in a meat roll competitive eating contest in Trenton, New Jersey.— AFP photos



Geoffrey Esper celebrates winning a meat roll competitive eating contest in Trenton, New Jersey.



Meat rolls are lined up as competitors take part in a pork roll competitive eating contest in Trenton, New Jersey.

Each man gobbled up 44 meat rolls in 10 minutes, but it was the last bite that earned one of them the \$2,000 top prize in the very American pastime of competitive eating. The winner, Geoffrey Esper, ate just a bit more of roll number 45 than his closest competitor, sealing his triumph in this chapter of a sport called Major League Eating. The runner-up, James Webb, said that in most of the contests this year the winner down to the fourth place finisher were separated by “a swallow or a mouthful or a serving size.”

The 35-year-old Australian who moved to the United States to compete full-time added, “It’s very competitive.” The prize money is nowhere near enough to live on, says Webb, a bearded, healthy-looking man who gets by financially with help from sponsors and his YouTube channel, which has 115,000 viewers. “Everybody’s got another job but Joey,” said Crazy Legs Conti, a maitre d’ at a New York restaurant who says he has made several thousand dollars this year on the pro-eating circuit.

That Joey is Joey Chestnut, an eating superstar who has won 16 of the last 18 editions of the yearly Nathan’s Hot Dog Eating Contest on Coney Island, the Super Bowl of the MLE season. Because of a problem with a sponsor Chestnut did not take part this year. But he did win \$100,000 by beating another competitive



Competitors take part in a meat roll competitive eating contest in Trenton, New Jersey.

eating legend, Takeru Kobayashi of Japan, in a duel organized by Netflix.

Even with Chestnut absent, thousands of spectators gathered on Coney Island in July and around one million watched online as a man named Patrick Bertoletti took the title held by Chestnut and won \$10,000 by wolfing down 58 wieners in 10 minutes. “There’s a lot of media coverage. We got more media coverage this year than ever before,” said George Shea, a co-founder of Major League Eating. He has visions of expanding overseas, after organizing an event in Thailand.



## 83 dogs in 10 minutes

MLE was created in 1997 and has transformed American eating competitions from something of a joke into high-level events. Gone are the hulks who used to be common at these bouts and in their place are more slender guys like Kobayashi, who has won the Coney Island competition six times. He weighs about 160 lbs (72 kilos). Rather than the size of a competitor, what matters more now is technique and how much their stomach can stretch as they eat, eat and eat.

Most MLE contestants train by ingesting large amounts of liquid, a technique that has been widely studied. They also focus on relaxing and mentally visualizing their goal of huge food intake. “You look at almost all the athletes minus one, they’re all in traditional athletic shape. They stay in great shape,” said Conti.

Over the course of 30 years, the record for competitive hot dog consumption has ballooned from 21 in 12 minutes to 83 in 10 minutes. Webb said that after competing he sleeps, hydrates, eats little and is back in shape in 48 hours, without having to induce vomiting. There is no scientific study showing the health of these food athletes suffers because of what they do.

“My health checks out. I’m in pretty good shape,” said Conti, adding that his doctors are not worried about his lifestyle. “They’re kind of fascinated by it.” Critics of competitive eating dislike its image, saying it smacks of grotesque over-consumption and eating disorders. But Angel Ortiz, who came to watch the meat roll eating contest organized earlier this month by a minor league baseball team called the Trenton Thunder, is not worried. “I just see it as more of a fun thing to do,” said Ortiz. Shea, the MLE cofounder understands “there are all kinds of other issues related to it, and thoughts and concepts.” But, he added: “Generally, this is perceived for what it’s supposed to be, which is fun, silly.” — AFP

## Long-delayed cruise leaves Belfast after four months

A luxury round-the-world cruise ship beset with technical delays and docked in rainy Belfast since May finally departed from the Northern Irish capital late Monday, prompting celebration among its passengers. “We are going to have one heck of a time tonight, we are going to party like there’s no tomorrow,” beaming passenger Joe Martino told AFP before boarding.

The Odyssey residential cruise ship pulled out from Belfast harbor at 2240 GMT as passengers cheered on board. But even Monday’s departure was hit with yet another technical hiccup. Dozens of passengers were left waiting in Belfast’s cruise terminal beyond the scheduled boarding time as a last piece of required paperwork was held up. After Mike Petersen, head of the US-based firm Villa Vie Residences that owns the Odyssey ship, at last announced the green light for the ship’s exit passengers shrieked with elation and hugged each other.

“The exhilaration of getting on that ship, when it takes off it will be the feeling of a lifetime,” said Martino, 61, an actor from Chicago who spent



Villa Vie Residences’ ‘Odyssey’ cruise ship, docked at the Harland &amp; Wolff ship repair dock in Belfast. — AFP

the last four months waiting in Belfast. Passenger Holly Hennessy, holding her cat named “Captain”, said ecstatically: “I’ve been in Belfast for four months and two days, but hey, who’s counting!”

## ‘Everything went wrong’

The Odyssey was scheduled to set sail from the Northern Irish

capital on May 30 on a three-and-a-half-year cruise. But outfitting, certification processes and engine repairs all took much longer than expected. “Everything that could go wrong went wrong,” Martino said. The ship had undergone repairs for engine trouble in drydock at Belfast’s Harland & Wolff, the famed shipyard where the doomed Titanic was built

more than a hundred years ago.

Further delay was caused by the shipbuilder going into financial administration this month. Passengers are able to either buy or rent long-term cabins on the so-called “residential” cruise ship, with the promise of unlimited voyages around the globe. During the long wait, passengers could spend all day on board the ship but were not allowed to sleep there, so spent the nights in hotels or rented apartments instead. Some decided to explore Northern Ireland, while others took the opportunity to travel in Europe or join other cruises while the Odyssey remained stuck.

They then flocked back to Belfast in recent days for the expected departure, which will see the ship head first to Brest, then Bilbao, the Azores, and across the Atlantic towards the Caribbean. The floating town, which can accommodate around 600 passengers, is due to visit all seven continents with more than 425 stops in 147 destinations planned. Port stays will last between two to seven days. — AFP



British singers Liam Gallagher (left) and Noel Gallagher. — AFP

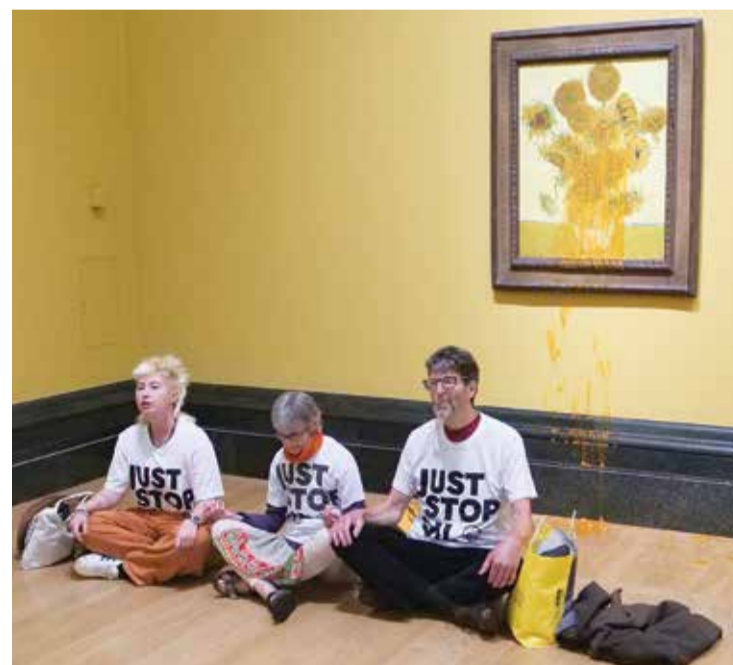
## Oasis announces North American concert dates

Oasis on Monday announced a North American leg of their reunion tour, after selling out their dates across Britain and Ireland. The Britpop rockers said they will play starting late next summer in Toronto, Mexico City, Chicago, Los Angeles and East Rutherford, New Jersey, which houses a stadium outside of New York. “America. Oasis is coming. You have one last chance to prove that you loved us all along,” the band wrote in a statement. Oasis, whose hits include “Wonderwall”, “Don’t Look Back In Anger” and “Champagne Supernova”, last played together in 2009.

News that brothers Noel and Liam Gallagher were setting aside their infamous 15-year feud to reunite for a string of concerts triggered a frenzy among fans. The chaotic scramble for prized tickets for the original 17 concerts saw sudden big price hikes—known as dynamic pricing—hours-long waits online and hopes dashed for some by technical glitches. It left many fans enraged, and the UK’s competition watchdog said it was investigating Ticketmaster over its handling of the sales.

Following the hubbub, the band scheduled two more UK dates, with the brothers denying they had anything to do with the dynamic pricing. America is no stranger to ticketing chaos: Ticketmaster’s pricing practices for concerts and other events, with high fees and lack of alternatives, have long been a political issue in the United States, with little done historically to open up the market to more competition.

The pre-sale in 2022 for Taylor Swift’s “Eras Tour” memorably saw lawmakers in Washington hold hearings questioning Ticketmaster parent company Live Nation—a mammoth concert promoting company—over its practices. Earlier this year the US Department of Justice filed a major antitrust lawsuit seeking to break up the alleged monopoly between Live Nation Entertainment and its subsidiary Ticketmaster.—AFP



A handout picture from the Just Stop Oil climate campaign group shows three activists sitting on the floor under Vincent van Gogh’s “Sunflowers” after throwing tomato soup over two paintings at the National Gallery’s in central London following the sentencing of fellow activists Phoebe Plummer and Anna Holland. — AFP

## Trio plead not guilty in UK after Van Gogh soup attack

Three climate activists on Monday pleaded not guilty to criminal damage after two paintings by Vincent Van Gogh were doused with soup at London’s National Gallery. Stephen Simpson, 71, Mary Somerville, 77, and Philippa Green, 24, — members of the Just Stop Oil group—were arrested at the gallery immediately after Friday’s incident, and appeared at London’s Westminster Magistrates’ Court on Monday.

The paintings were targeted just hours after two other members of the same group were jailed over a similar incident in October 2022. The gallery said “a soup-like substance” was thrown over “Sunflowers” (1888) and “Sunflowers” (1889) and that three people had been arrested.

Prosecutor James Bowker said the frames of the paintings had been dam-

aged and would “likely require lengthy restoration”. He told the court that the defendants entered the Van Gogh exhibition at the museum on Friday afternoon, threw soup on the paintings and then took off their coats to reveal T-shirts reading “Just Stop Oil”.

Phoebe Plummer, 23, and Anna Holland, 22, were convicted in July of criminal damage after pouring tomato soup over the screen protecting the still life masterpiece “Sunflowers” (1888). Plummer was on Friday jailed for two years and Holland for 20 months. Both had pleaded not guilty. The attacks are the latest in a series of protests by the group—seeking an end to the extraction and burning of oil, coal and gas—that have prompted an increasingly hard line by the authorities.— AFP

## Netflix loses bid to toss ‘Baby Reindeer’ defamation lawsuit

Netflix has lost its bid to throw out a defamation lawsuit filed by the woman who says she was the inspiration for the stalker in the Emmy-winning hit “Baby Reindeer.” The streaming giant had asked a judge to toss the suit brought by Fiona Harvey, who has identified herself as the real-life “Martha,” the delusional, violent and abusive woman at the center of Richard Gadd’s global television phenomenon.

The show, which has been seen by millions around the world and won six Emmys, claims in its opening episode to be “a true story” — a characterization that has landed it in legal trouble after the script did not strictly hew to real-life events. The seven-episode series, which is based on Gadd’s one-man play, follows a fictionalized version of

the writer who meets a woman in the pub where he works. What unspools is a deeply disturbing, yearslong ordeal for Gadd in which Martha sends thousands of emails, texts and voice messages as she harasses him, his girlfriend and his family.

Martha, whom the show portrays as having been previously convicted for stalking a lawyer, is also shown to sexually assault Gadd. Netflix had argued that it could not be sued for defamation because the events depicted in the series were “substantially true,” and that in any case viewers would know it was not entirely factual because it was a drama.

The streamer had offered as evidence the fact that Harvey had been investigated for stalking, had touched Gadd sexually without his consent and had

shoved him. However, a judge in California ruled that there were considerable deviations between real-life events and those served up to viewers. “There are major differences between inappropriate touching and sexual assault, as well as between shoving and gouging another’s eyes,” wrote Judge Gary Klausner, in a ruling published Friday.

“There is a major difference between stalking and being convicted of stalking in a court of law.” The ruling cited an article in Britain’s Sunday Times newspaper that quoted entertainment industry sources saying that Gadd had been concerned that Netflix was presenting the series as “a true story,” rather than “based on a true story.” That Netflix carried on anyway “suggests a reckless disregard” of facts, Klausner wrote. —AFP



English actress Jessica Gunning (left) winner of the Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Limited or Anthology Series or Movie for “Baby Reindeer”, and actor Richard Gadd, winner of the Outstanding Limited or Anthology Series for “Baby Reindeer”, poses in the press room during the 76th Emmy Awards. — AFP





# Feathers fly at Chanel's Paris fashion return



Chanel returned to the Grand Palais — scene of the late Karl Lagerfeld's most legendary triumphs — for the first time in four years Tuesday with a birdcage-themed Paris Fashion Week show that recalled the label's past glories. The famed French house turned the newly refurbished Belle Epoque edifice into a giant aviary, with a white birdcage at its center to show off a collection festooned with plumes and feathers.

Only a day earlier British designer Stella McCartney had lamented the "billions of birds killed for the fashion industry" after the animal rights campaigner's own bird-themed Paris show. But there were plumes aplenty at Chanel — a favorite of its founder Gabrielle Chanel — as it celebrated her fascination with birds and flight. The cage in the center of the glass and steel nave was also a knowing nod to Chanel's iconic bird on a swing advert from 1992 starring French singer Vanessa Paradis and her black tail feathers.

Elvis Presley's granddaughter Riley Keough took Paradis' place on the swing to sing this time. With the main entrance of the Grand Palais now bearing Gabrielle Chanel's name as a part of a 30-million-euro (\$33-million) deal to stage its shows at the Paris landmark, the brand wanted to plant a flag during uncertain times.

**No rush for new designer**  
Without a creative director since June after Vir-

ginie Viard — who took over from Lagerfeld after his death in 2019 — bowed out, Chanel's studio designed the spring summer collection, riffing on some of the label's standards, from its trademark tweeds to lacy flapper dresses and flying jackets. Chanel's more austere convent-inspired black and white ensembles were lifted by slashed skirts and sleeves. But it was the feathers that stood out, used in ruff-like collars on crocheted bombers and on 1920s-style gowns inspired by the glamour of French writer Colette's forays into musical hall and cabaret.

Chanel chief Bruno Pavlovsky told AFP that the French company would not be rushed into finding a replacement for Viard, who was Lagerfeld's righthand woman for decades. With the big luxury Paris houses seeing profits fall as Chinese buyers button their purses, he said it was "the time for us to bounce back. Virginie did a great job over the last five years — indeed these last 30 years when she was at Karl's side."

"We are just at the end of a cycle and the brand must start a new one," Pavlovsky told AFP before the show. "You should not have a knife at our throat" if you are going to make "the right choices", he insisted, saying there would likely be an announcement by the end of the year. "The strength of the brand is that it can take its time because we have (studio) teams who are super solid. All that gives us strength at a time when we could have been disturbed or weakened—but we are not," Pavlovsky added. — AFP



Models present creations by Chanel for the Women Ready-to-wear Spring-Summer 2025 collection as part of the Paris Fashion Week in Paris on October 1, 2024. — AFP photos





## Sports

# LeBron James 'given life' by playing with son, Olympic gold

## James to suit up for record-tying 22 NBA season

**EL SEGUNDO:** LeBron James said Monday the historic prospect of playing alongside eldest son Bronny for the Los Angeles Lakers has given him a new lease of life ahead of the upcoming NBA season. James, 39, will tie Vince Carter's record of playing 22 seasons in the NBA this year when he suits up for the Lakers after a summer in which he helped the USA defend their Olympic gold medal in Paris. At some point this season, James will make NBA history by playing alongside 19-year-old son Bronny, who was chosen by the Lakers with the 55th pick in the draft in June.

James, who turns 40 in December, said he felt reinvigorated by the "pure joy" of being able to go work with one of his children. "It's a lot of excitement, a pure joy, to be able to come to work every day, put in hard work with your son every day and be able to see him continue to grow," James said at the Lakers media day in El Segundo.

"We push each other. He pushes me. I push him. We push our teammates, and vice versa. So it's just a very joyous moment not only for myself, but for our family. So it's pretty awesome. Gives you a lot of life," James revealed that he had taken a relaxed approach to guiding his teenage son at home, revealing that Bronny was just as likely to be in his bedroom playing video games as taking advice from his superstar father.

"To be honest, if you have kids, at my age and his age, there's not really much interaction going on on a day-to-day basis," James joked. "I mean, he comes

down, he eats, he goes to his room, plays a video game. I'm down there with my wife, watching the movie.

"So it's not like, you know, 'Meet me at the table at five o'clock. We need to discuss work tomorrow.' That doesn't happen. But he's been around the game of basketball since he was born. Obviously, I've played in the NBA longer than he's been alive, so he understands the nuances of it, as far as just being around the game. But now he's a man, and it's time for him to learn and get better with that."

### Plenty 'in the tank'

James meanwhile said being part of the USA's gold medal-winning team in Paris, when he formed part of a star-studded line-up alongside the likes of Kevin Durant and Stephen Curry, had convinced him that he still had plenty "left in the tank".

"When you're with 11 other unbelievable, great talents, some of the best talent we've ever seen, it gives you a lot of joy to be able to play the game, play it at a high level," James said. "For myself individually, to go out there at my age, the miles that I have, and to be able to play at the level I played at, it gave me like, 'Okay, I do have a lot in the tank, a lot and I can help a big part of a team win the ultimate.'"

James added that the gold medal win had fueled his hunger to play "meaningful basketball" again, four years after his last appearance in the NBA Finals in 2020. "It felt damn good to play meaningful basketball at the highest level," James said, describing hard-fought Olympic semi-final against Serbia



**EL SEGUNDO:** Los Angeles Lakers #23 LeBron James and his son #9 Bronny James attend the Lakers media day at UCLA Health Training Center in El Segundo, California, September 30, 2024. — AFP

and the final against hosts France as like "two game sevens back-to-back."

"You know that that fire and desire was brought back to me, that I was like, 'Okay, this is what it was all about. This is why we all came together

and called ourselves the Avengers.' So to have that feeling again where you're playing like meaningful basketball, every possession means something - if you make a mistake it burns you. That was good to relieve that moment." — AFP

## Mutombo, NBA legend and humanitarian giant, passes away

**LOS ANGELES:** Congolese-American basketball great Dikembe Mutombo, renowned as one of the best defensive players in NBA history, has died aged 58, the league announced on Monday. Mutombo, an eight-time NBA all-star, passed away surrounded by his family after a battle with brain cancer, the league added.

"Dikembe Mutombo was simply larger than life," NBA commissioner Adam Silver said of the 7ft 2in (2.18m) Hall-of-Famer in a statement. "On the court, he was one of the greatest shot blockers and defensive players in the history of the NBA. Off the floor, he poured his heart and soul into helping others," Silver added, noting Mutombo's extensive humanitarian work.

Mutombo, who played 18 seasons in the NBA, worked tirelessly to improve living conditions in his native Democratic Republic of Congo through his personal foundation. Those efforts, which included donating millions of dollars to help build a hospital on the outskirts of Kinshasa, earned him multiple humanitarian accolades including the US President's Volunteer Service Award.

"He was a humanitarian at his core," said Silver, who often traveled alongside Mutombo in his work as the NBA's Global Ambassador. "He loved what the game of basketball could do to make a positive impact on communities, especially in his native Democratic Republic of Congo and across the continent of Africa," Silver said. "I had the privilege of traveling the world with Dikembe and seeing first-hand how his generosity and compassion uplifted people."

Mutombo retired from the NBA in 2009 after a dazzling playing career in which he became synonymous with defensive dominance. After moving to the United States from his homeland to pursue basketball as a 21-year-old, Mutombo shone during his collegiate career with Georgetown before being chosen by the Denver Nuggets with the fourth pick of the 1991 NBA Draft.

### Finger-wagging dominance

He played five seasons with Denver before spending another five years with the Atlanta Hawks, followed by stints with Philadelphia, the



**HAVANA:** Former NBA basketball player Dikembe Mutombo (C) gives instructions to Cuban children during clinical organized by the NBA, FIBA Americas and Cuban Basketball Federation on April 24, 2015, in Havana. — AFP

New Jersey Nets, New York Knicks and Houston Rockets. Mutombo rapidly established himself as an elite defensive player, and became known for his signature finger wag whenever he blocked a shot — a move the NBA banned at one stage after ruling it to be a form of taunting.

Mutombo said the finger wag was a way of asserting his defensive dominance. "The purpose was to stop anybody that was coming to the basket, and my mission was to win," Mutombo said in a 2020 interview.

"And any time I would block shots, people would still be coming and trying to put a little bit on me. Then I used to shake my head every time I would block the shot. Then I said ... 'Those guys are not listening to me. Maybe if I start giving them the finger wag.' And I tell you what, I lost a lot of money because of that finger wag, man. I got so many technical fouls, but no referee would kick me out of the game."

Mutombo, a four-time NBA defensive player of the year, finished his career with 3,289 blocks, second all-time behind only Hakeem Olajuwon with

3,830. Mutombo played in two NBA finals - in 2001 and 2003 - but finished on the losing side on both occasions.

Philadelphia 76ers star Joel Embiid led the tributes as news of Mutombo's passing swept across the NBA on Monday as teams staged their pre-season media days. "It's a sad day, especially for us Africans and really the whole world because, other than what he's accomplished on the basketball court, he was even better off the court," the Cameroon-born former NBA MVP Embiid said. "He's one of the guys that I look up to, on and off the court. He's done a lot of great things. He did a lot of great things for a lot of people, so he was a role model of mine."

Sixers president of basketball operations Daryl Morey, who worked closely with Mutombo in his previous role as a general manager with Houston, described Mutombo as "just a great human being."

"There aren't very many guys like him," Morey said. "When I was a rookie GM in this league, my first chance in Houston, he was somebody I went to all the time...amazing human being, what he did off the court for Africa. Rest in peace, Dikembe." — AFP

## Baseball great Pete Rose dies aged 83

**LOS ANGELES:** Pete Rose, Major League Baseball's all-time hit king who left the sport in disgrace after being banned for betting on games, died Monday aged 83, his former team confirmed. Nicknamed "Charlie Hustle" for his hard-charging effort and dogged determination, the long-time hometown hero for the Cincinnati Reds passed away in Las Vegas, the Reds said in a statement.

Rose set MLB career records with 4,256 hits, 15,890 appearances at the plate, 3,562 games played and 3,215 singles. His most celebrated feat came on September 11, 1985 when he singled to left field off San Diego pitcher Eric Snow in Cincinnati for his 4,192nd career hit, breaking the prior all-time MLB hit mark held by Ty Cobb, who played from 1905 to 1928.

Over his 24-season career, Rose captured three World Series titles, in 1975 and 1976 with the Reds and in 1980 with the Philadelphia Phillies. Rose was a 17-time All-Star over his career at a record five different positions - left and right fielder plus first, second and third baseman.

He won the season batting titles in 1968, 1969 and 1973, when he also claimed the National League Most Valuable Player award. Ten years earlier, Rose had been named the NL Rookie of the Year.



**CINCINNATI:** Pete Rose acknowledges the crowd during a ceremony at Great American Ball Park on September 12, 2015 in Cincinnati, Ohio. — AFP

After a brief stint with the Montreal Expos in 1984, Rose was traded back to the Reds and made player-manager, a dual role he kept through the 1986 campaign before retiring as a player and guiding the club for three final seasons until 1989, when details of his gambling on MLB games emerged.

Rose denied the allegations. But only three days after Bart Giamatti took over as MLB commissioner in April 1989, the new boss named attorney John Dowd to investigate the matter. The following month, Dowd documented betting activity by Rose in 1985 and 1986 and produced a day-by-day gambling account for 1987 that included Rose betting on 52 Reds games in which he served as the team's manager.

On August 24, 1989, Rose was placed on MLB's permanently ineligible list and Giamatti announced his ban. Eight days later, Giamatti died of a heart attack. In 1991, the Baseball Hall of Fame voted to exclude consideration of players on the permanent ban list and Rose's status as a historic player who disgraced the game has made his inability to join the shrine of legends among baseball's greatest controversies. Rose would later fight to seek reinstatement several times without success.

In 2004, Rose admitted he bet on Reds games, saying he always bet on his team to win, never on them to lose. But in 2010, on the 25th anniversary of his record-breaking hit, Rose apologized to many of his former teammates for "disrespecting baseball."

Rose, who spent five months in prison in 1990 and early 1991 for tax evasion, became a familiar figure at events as an autograph seller, even appearing at pro wrestling events from 1998 to 2000. In 2016, Rose's jersey number, 14, was retired by the Reds.

Rose was born on April 14, 1941, in Cincinnati and was given a look by the Reds when he left high school thanks to an uncle who worked as a scout for the club. Rose got his chance to make the Reds roster as an injury replacement and made his MLB debut on April 8, 1963. — AFP

## Braves, Mets split double-header to seal wild card berths

**LOS ANGELES:** The New York Mets and Atlanta Braves split their weather-delayed double-header to seal their places in Major League Baseball's playoffs on Monday. The Mets booked a wild card series clash against the Milwaukee Brewers after winning a thrilling opening game at Atlanta's Truist Park 8-7.

The Braves, needing to win the second game of the double-header to join the Mets in the playoffs, then came through with a nervy 3-0 triumph. The Braves' victory saw them clinch the fifth seed in the National League playoffs, sending them into a best-of-three series against the fourth-seeded San Diego Padres starting on Tuesday.

The Arizona Diamondbacks - who could have advanced if the Mets or Braves had won both of Monday's games in Atlanta - are now eliminated from postseason contention. While the rest of baseball's regular season wrapped up on Sunday, the playoff fate of the Braves, Mets and Diamondbacks had been left hanging in the balance due to Hurricane Helene.

With the deadly storm battering the region over the weekend, the final Mets-Braves games of the season were postponed 24 hours. The Mets clinched their playoff spot in thrilling fashion in the first of Monday's games in Atlanta, Francisco Lindor crushing a two-run homer in the top of the



**ATLANTA:** Spencer Schwellenbach #56 of the Atlanta Braves pitches in the third inning of game one of a doubleheader against the New York Mets at Truist Park on September 30, 2024 in Atlanta, Georgia. — AFP

ninth inning to put New York ahead 8-7.

Lindor's bomb was the final act of a jaw-dropping late rally which saw New York recover from 3-0 down at the start of the eighth inning to reel off six runs to take the lead. But Atlanta yanked back the initiative in the bottom of the inning. Jarrod

Kelenic singled to allow Eli White to cross home plate and then Ozzie Albies drove in three runs after doubling with a line drive to left field. That left Atlanta 7-6 up heading into the ninth, but Lindor's blast to center-field put the Mets back in front to punch their playoff ticket. — AFP



Sports

# Vinicius taking control as holders Madrid face Lille in Champions League

## Ancelotti backs 'world's best player' Vini Jr

**MADRID:** Real Madrid forward Vinicius Junior is hoping to end October with a first Ballon d'Or in his hands in Paris, but his month also begins in France with a Champions League visit to Lille on Wednesday. With star summer signing Kylian Mbappe recovering from a thigh injury, Vinicius has taken the reins once again as Madrid's key attacking influence.

The reigning European champions are unbeaten in 14 matches on the continent and after a hard-fought win over Stuttgart on the opening day, are aiming to follow that up with victory at the Stade Pierre-Mauroy.

Last season Vinicius endured a sluggish start to the campaign but hit form in the second half of the season to help Madrid earn a record-extending 15th European Cup triumph. Despite brief teething problems as he and Mbappe worked out how to play together in the first weeks of this season, the pair seemed to be forging a good relationship before the Frenchman's injury.

Madrid named Mbappe in their squad to face Lille but he is unlikely to start and may not feature at all. The forward was expected to be out until after the upcoming international break. "We're used to playing without (Mbappe) because last year he wasn't here," said Ancelotti on Saturday, before backing Vinicius to be crowned the world's best player.

"I think so, he deserves it for what he did last year, for his impact in the Champions League, scoring in the semi-final and final -- I think he will win," continued the Italian. "But if he doesn't, no worries, we carry on, he'll carry on."

### Uncertain summer

Mbappe's arrival at Madrid at the end of his Paris-Saint Germain contract raised questions about how he and Vinicius would fit together, as both like to play coming in off the left flank. Thus far Ancelotti has kept Vinicius in his favored position, usually lining up with Mbappe in the middle.

Vinicius was criticized in his homeland after disappointing displays at the Copa America and then in World Cup 2026 qualifiers. Brazil's new coach Dorival Junior tried to ease the pressure on the forward. "We are calm and can wait for the moment when everything blossoms," he said last week.

In August there were reports that a Saudi Pro League club had offered Vinicius a huge deal and the player has not ruled out leaving Madrid. Vinicius' Real Madrid contract runs out in 2027 and the 24-year-old may reassess his options next summer. For now his focus is on driving his team onwards in Europe and at home and he is clicking into gear on the pitch.

After two goals in his first seven appearances for Madrid across all competitions, the Brazilian came off the bench and scored to help Madrid come from behind to thrash Espanyol 4-1 in La Liga on September 21. Vinicius also created a goal for Rodrygo in that match and set up Lucas Vazquez for another in the 3-2 win against Alaves.

Madrid outplayed rivals Atletico Madrid on Sunday and Vinicius supplied Eder Militao's



**MADRID:** Real Madrid's Brazilian forward Vinicius Junior warms up before the Spanish league football match between Club Atletico de Madrid and Real Madrid CF at the Metropolitano stadium in Madrid on September 29, 2024. — AFP

opening goal, and although the match eventually finished 1-1 Los Blancos moved within three points of league leaders Barcelona.

Ancelotti replaced Mbappe with Luka Modric against Atletico in a 4-4-2 system but could re-

vert to a 4-3-3 against Lille, with Vinicius' compatriot Endrick pushing for a start. Mbappe's brother Ethan, 17, who signed for Lille this summer after leaving PSG as well, is injured and will miss the match. — AFP

## Aston Villa target repeat of 1982 heroics

**LONDON:** Unai Emery has warned Aston Villa that fatigue will be no excuse as his side aim to emulate the most memorable night in the club's history against Bayern Munich on Wednesday. Emery's team will face Bayern at Villa Park in Birmingham in a repeat of their shock 1982 European Cup final victory over the German giants in Rotterdam.

Villa are back in Europe's elite club competition for the first time in 41 years and the reunion with Bayern is sure to be an emotional occasion for players and fans alike. It is especially poignant just two weeks after the death of former Villa striker Gary Shaw, a key member of the team to beat Bayern 12 months after they surprisingly won the English title.

Shaw, who died aged 63 after sustaining injuries in a fall, scored three goals in Villa's run to European Cup glory, including a crucial quarter-final second-leg effort against Dynamo Kiev. When Peter Withe's winner against Bayern lifted Villa to previously unimaginable heights, no one savored the success more than locally-born Shaw.

Villa's victory was all the more unlikely because in February of that season, their title-winning manager Ron Saunders quit over a contract dispute. Saunders' assistant Tony Barton took over and calmly guided Withe, Shaw,

Tony Morley, Dennis Mortimer and company to the final.

Villa were underdogs against a star-studded Bayern side boasting Karl-Heinz Rummenigge and Paul Breitner. On a balmy spring evening at De Kuip, Villa looked doomed when goalkeeper Jimmy Rimmer came off with a neck injury, forcing untested Nigel Spink into action.

But Spink, who had made only one appearance for the club, produced a series of superb saves before Withe poked in Morley's cross in the 67th minute to send Villa into dreamland. Wearing a disbelieving grin, Villa captain Mortimer lifted the trophy as Barton hailed "the most important day in the history of the club".

### Fixture schedule

Villa's hopes of recreating that stunning victory will not be helped by the fixture schedule. While Bayern played out a draw against Bundesliga champions Bayer Leverkusen on Saturday, Villa were not in action until 24 hours later.

Emery's men were held to a hard-fought 2-2 draw at Ipswich, with Liam Delap's second-half equalizer denying them a chance to move second in the Premier League. Emery had banned all talk of the Bayern game in a bid to keep his players focused on their trip to Portman Road.

Whether that was entirely successful is another matter as promoted Ipswich caused Villa problems with their tenacious performance. The end of Villa's five-game winning run in all competitions stopped them moving level on points with leaders



**WARWICKSHIRE:** Aston Villa's English striker #11 Ollie Watkins speaks during a press conference on the eve of their UEFA Champions League 1st round day 2 football match against Bayern Munich, at Bodymoor Heath Training Ground in Warwickshire, central England, on October 1, 2024. — AFP

Liverpool, sparking fears the mental and physical toll of a bruising encounter could hand Bayern an advantage on Wednesday.

Bayern, six-time European champions, hope to have Harry Kane available at Villa Park after the England captain suffered an ankle injury against Leverkusen. But Emery is determined not to let Villa feel sorry for themselves if tiredness starts to seep in.

"What do we want? We want to play in Europe. We want to play

matches on Sunday and Wednesday. We want to try to get to the same level they have on other teams like (Manchester) City, Arsenal, Liverpool, Manchester United, Newcastle, Tottenham. We want it," Emery said.

"If we don't want? OK, we are not playing in Europe and we are resting all the week. Fantastic for everybody, but it is the challenge we have -- the players, myself, the supporters, even the journalists. "We are going to be tired, but this is the level." — AFP

er Santiago Castro, quickly settled in after arriving from Velez Sarsfield in January, and has started this season in fine form. The 20-year-old has scored three times this season, with two of those goals cracking long-range strikes against Monza and Atalanta.

Castro has managed to keep summer signing Thijs Dallinga, who scored in both of Toulouse's group matches with Liverpool in last season's Europa League, out of the team. He should be fit to play at Anfield as he trained with his teammates on Monday and looks to have shaken off a calf injury suffered against Atalanta.

"He's extraordinary, he's a young lad who's developing day by day, scored a great goal today and worked so hard," said Italiano. "He's come here and got straight down to it... I hope his doesn't stop with his development because he's got a great future ahead of him."

It would take a huge performance and a serious off-night for Liverpool for Bologna to get anything from Anfield, let alone become the third Italian club to win there after Genoa in 1992 and Atalanta last season. But for a team like Bologna, whose last major trophy was the 1974 Italian Cup, playing in matches of this magnitude is an honor in itself. — AFP

luc against the continent's best teams.

Without last season's star players Joshua Zirkzee and Riccardo Calafiori, who both departed for the Premier League, and now-Juventus coach Thiago Motta, Bologna were undoubtedly weakened over the summer.

Motta's replacement Vincenzo Italiano has earned just one win from his new team's first six matches in all competitions, with Saturday's 1-1 draw with Atalanta their fifth stalemate this term. "Atalanta are a Champions League-level team and the rhythm of play at Anfield on Wednesday will be the same," said Italiano after Saturday's draw.

Bologna are on one point in the tournament's new league phase following another draw, this one goalless, with Shakhtar Donetsk at a sodden Stadio Dell'Ara a fortnight ago. But on their side is transfer maestro Giovanni Sartori, a maestro of signing young talent and pushing unfancied clubs further than they might ever have imagined. Sartori was the man who built Chievo and Atalanta teams that reached the Champions League, with the latter now on another level thanks in part to his ability to build teams for clubs with limited financial means.

Another of those young signings, Argentine strik-

### News in Brief

#### Kamala's victory to unite nation: Curry

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Golden State Warriors star Stephen Curry reiterated his support for US presidential election hopeful Kamala Harris on Monday, saying the Democratic nominee could bring "hope and unity" to a divided nation. "Supporting her is an honor, a sophisticated leader that I expect and have confidence she can lead our country and provide hope, inspiration, and unity," Curry said of Harris at the Warriors media day. "Obviously there's a lot of tough conversations that need to be addressed in our country and a lot of progress needs to be made." Curry said that Harris would bring a "level of decency and humanity" to the job. "First and foremost, is she going to run the entire country and be a leader for everybody?," Curry said. "I feel like she checks that box. You've got to start there. That's why I have confidence in her." — AFP

#### Ibra's son joins youth squad

**STOCKHOLM:** Swedish football legend Zlatan Ibrahimovic's son Maximilian, 18, has been selected to join Sweden's national youth squad for the first time, it was announced Tuesday. The young center-forward signed his first professional contract this summer with AC Milan, where his father ended his career in June 2023 at the age of 41. "He's had a great start in Primavera. This is a great opportunity for us to see him in our environment," coach Andreas Petterson told newspaper Expressen. The Swedish youth team will play two games against Japan and one against the United States in Spain next week. Zlatan Ibrahimovic returned to AC Milan as an advisor to the Serie A club's management in late 2023. — AFP

#### Atletico Madrid ban fan for life

**MADRID:** Atletico Madrid said on Monday they had permanently banned a fan for throwing objects onto the field during the weekend's heated derby draw with Real Madrid. Sunday's match at Atletico's Estadio Metropolitano was halted for 15 minutes after home fans threw objects including lighters at Madrid players. "Our security department continues to work with the police to identify the rest of those involved, who will be permanently expelled as soon as they are located," Atletico said. "The club's firm conviction to eradicate any form of violence and our defense of the values of sport are unquestionable. We will continue to work with all our resources with the aim of eliminating this type of behavior." — AFP

## Bologna living the dream with clash at Liverpool

**MILAN:** Bologna face their biggest match in 60 years on Wednesday when they take on Liverpool at Anfield, the sort of glamour fixture fans were dreaming of when the Serie A team surprised everyone by reaching the Champions League. Last Italian champions in 1964, Bologna played in the old European Cup that same year but were knocked out of the competition in the preliminary round on a coin toss by Anderlecht.

That is why this season's campaign in the revamped Champions League feels much more like a debut than a return, and why some 40,000 fans celebrated in the center of Bologna once qualification was secured last term.

Bologna finished fifth, their highest league placing since 1971, and took advantage of Serie A getting an extra spot in the elite club competition to try their

# Classifieds

### Clinics & Hospitals

#### Clinics

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

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

#### Hospitals

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

### Change of Name

**I, Ebsiba,** holder of Indian Passport No. Y1280869 having permanent address H. No. 11/412, Karthianikattu (H), Theyyappara, Kodenchery, Kozhikode, Pin-673580 residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as Ebsiba (given name) Eldose (surname).  
(# 6176 01/10/2024)

**I, Edson,** holder of Indian Passport No. Y1280872 having permanent address H. No. 11/412, Karthianikattu (H), Theyyappara, Kodenchery, Kozhikode, Pin-673580 residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as Edson (given name) Eldose (surname).  
(# 6176 01/10/2024)



## ‘I don’t care about individual records anymore’: Ronaldo

New Al-Nassr coach Pioli enjoys winning Asian Champions League start



RIYADH: Al-Nassr’s Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo warms up ahead of the Saudi Pro League football match between Al-Nassr and Al-Wehda at Al -Awwal Stadium in Riyadh on September 27, 2024. — AFP

**RIYADH:** Cristiano Ronaldo insists he is focused on being the perfect team member at Saudi side Al-Nassr rather than collecting more individual accolades in the twilight of his career. The 39-year-old, who has won the Ballon d’Or award five times, scored in Al-Nassr’s 2-1 win over Al-Rayyan of Qatar in their AFC Champions League Group B match on Monday.

It was the club’s fourth successive victory in all competitions under new coach Stefano Pioli, who replaced Luis Castro last month. “It was a strong and difficult match like all the matches in the AFC Champions League, but the most important thing is that we created many chances and defended well to prevent the opponent from creating easy chances,” Ronaldo told a press conference.

“It is not important anymore whether I am the best or not, I no longer care about that. It is good for a player to score goals, but for me it is better for the team to win. I am used to breaking records and I no longer look for them. The most important thing for me now is to enjoy and help Al-Nassr and my teammates to win.”

Ronaldo became the top scorer in a single season in the Saudi Pro League last May with 35 goals. The Portugal captain also scored his 901st career goal in a 2-1 win over Scotland in the Nations League last month. “My goal against Al-Rayyan was different and important because my father would have been happy with it if he was alive, as today (yesterday) is his birthday,” the former Real Madrid, Juventus and Manchester United forward added.

### Successful debut

Ronaldo helped new Al-Nassr manager Stefano Pioli enjoy a successful AFC Champions League Elite debut on Monday. Sadio Mane gave Al-Nassr the lead at Al Awwal Park in first-half stoppage time, the former Liverpool and Bayern Munich forward meeting Sultan Al-Ghannam’s superb deep cross to head home from close range.

Ronaldo, making his first appearance in the re-branded Asian Champions League having missed last week’s 1-1 opening draw against Iraqi club Al-Shorta, had a goal disallowed for a narrow offside at the beginning of the second half.

Undeterred, the five-time UEFA Champions League winner doubled Al-Nassr’s advantage on 76 minutes when he received Abdulrahman Ghareeb’s pass and curled a beautiful left-footed strike into the net. The hosts were given a scare late on, though, Brazilian Roger Guedes scoring off Aschraf Bencharki’s low center at the back post. Still, Al-Nassr held on to make it four points from two matches.

### Al-Ahli cruise

Saudi Arabian counterparts, Al-Ahli, recorded a second successive win to begin their Asian campaign, with Riyad Mahrez inspiring the visitors to a 2-0 victory at UAE champions Al-Wasl in Dubai.

The former Manchester City winger opened the scoring at Zabeel Stadium on three minutes. Meeting defender Roger Ibanez’s excellent long pass over the Al-Wasl defense, Mahrez controlled the ball expertly before prodding a shot low into the corner.

Al-Ahli, who began the match with summer signing Ivan Toney up front, doubled their lead seven minutes before half-time, when the two same players combined. This time, it was Mahrez

who turned provider, curling a corner onto the head of Ibanez for the former Roma center-back to powerfully nod home.

The win offers some respite to manager Matthias Jaissle. The German, 36, has come under heavy criticism this past week following Al-Ahli’s elimination from the King’s Cup to second-tier Al-Jandal and Friday’s Saudi Pro League defeat to Al-Qadsiah.

Meanwhile, 2011 Asian champions Al-Sadd of Qatar secured a 2-0 win against Iran’s Esteghlal at the Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium in Doha. An own goal from visiting goalkeeper Hossein Hosseini and an Akram Afif penalty settled the tie. Also on Monday, Iran’s Persepolis were held to a 1-1 draw at home by Pakhtakor FC despite taking a first-minute lead at Shahr-E Qods Stadium in Qods.

The AFC Champions League Elite features 24 teams – 12 from West Asia and 12 from East Asia. With each club playing four matches at home and four away, the top eight in each side of the draw progress to the knockout stages early next year. The eventual winner receives \$10 million in prize money, an increase from \$4 million last season. — Agencies

## Jaiswal leads India to remarkable victory in Bangladesh Test

**KANPUR:** Yashasvi Jaiswal smashed 51 on Tuesday as India pulled off a remarkable seven-wicket victory over Bangladesh in a rain-hit second Test in Kanpur that lost two-and-a-half days to bad weather.

The hosts bundled out Bangladesh for 146 before lunch on the fifth and final day and, needing 95 for victory, reached 98-3 in just 104 balls in the second session. “To be honest we had to think a lot to keep the game moving forward,” said skipper Rohit Sharma. “When we came on day four, we wanted to get them out as early as possible and see what we can do with the bat.”

Jaiswal reached his second fifty of the match in 43 balls including eight fours and one six before falling to Taijul Islam, ending a 58-run stand with Virat Kohli. Former captain Kohli hit 29 and was there at the end as Rishabh Pant hit the winning boundary. Bangladesh spinner Mehidy Hasan Miraz had

earlier removed Rohit, for eight, and Shubman Gill, for six. The series victory extends India’s lead at the top of the World Test Championship rankings ahead of Australia in second.

India rode on Jaiswal’s 72-run blitz in the first innings to force a result in a match which saw no play on Saturday and Sunday because of rain and a wet outfield.

### ‘We didn’t bat well’

Bangladesh resumed their second innings on 26-2 on the final day, 26 runs behind, but the batting fell apart during the first session, with opener Shadman Islam top scoring on 50. “We didn’t bat well,” admitted Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto. “If you look at all our batters, they played 30 to 40 balls and then got out. It’s important for one batsman to get big runs.” Ashwin, fellow spinner Ravindra Jadeja and fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah took three wickets apiece. Mushfiqur Rahim frustrated India to delay the lunch break and was last man out when Bumrah bowled him for 37.

Off-spinner Ashwin broke through in the third over of the day when he had first-innings centurion Mominul Haque caught at leg slip by KL Rahul for two. Left-arm spinner Jadeja, who had taken his



KANPUR: India’s players celebrate with their trophy at the end of the second Test cricket match between India and Bangladesh at the Green Park Cricket Stadium in Kanpur on October 1, 2024. — AFP

300th Test wicket on Monday, struck in his first over of the day when he bowled Najmul, who had made 19. Shadman reached his fifty off 97 balls but fell almost immediately after to fast bowler Akash

Deep. Jadeja also picked up the wicket of veteran all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, caught and bowled without scoring, in what could be the former captain’s last Test for Bangladesh. — AFP