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## Kuwait slams silence on Zionist crimes

Envoy hails countries and companies divesting from the Zionist entity

### Crown Prince in Qatar for ACD summit



DOHA: Representative of HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, meets Qatari Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Thani after he arrived in Doha on Wednesday to head Kuwait's delegation at the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) summit. — KUNA (See Page 3)

GENEVA: The Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations and International Organization in Geneva Ambassador Nasser Al-Hain condemned Wednesday the international silence on the crimes committed by a "rogue state in defiance of international law" against the Palestinian people, warning that this silence amounts to "complicity" if immediate and effective steps are not taken to stop these violations.

This came in a speech delivered by Hain at the 57th Human Rights Council under Item 7 of the agenda dedicated to discussing the human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories. He warned that the continued impunity and disregard for these violations undermine respect for international law and weaken the credibility of international institutions.

Hain expressed his regrets over attempts to change the true narrative and exonerate the perpetrators and encourage them to ignore all international condemnations and



Nasser Al-Hain

Security Council resolutions, noting that the occupying power in Palestine continues its blatant aggression on Lebanon as well.

"What human rights are we discussing today, as we witness a series of violations amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity, including the torture of prisoners, silencing of peaceful supporters and intimidation of supportive voices accusing them of

anti-Semitism? These systematic violations, such as the destruction of reconstruction efforts, civil infrastructure, places of worship, demolition of homes and terrorizing of peaceful residents, are aimed at imposing a new reality that violates all international laws and standards," Hain said. Hain also commended the glimmer of hope seen in the actions of some countries and companies that have withdrawn their investments, stating that "such courageous steps reflect a genuine commitment to human rights and send a strong message that the international community will not tolerate these violations".

The ambassador reiterated Kuwait's full support for Saudi Arabia's initiative to launch a new international coalition to promote a two-state solution as a step towards achieving lasting peace. He also praised the General Assembly's decision supporting Palestine's application for membership in the United Nations, passed on May 10 this year. — KUNA

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Curbs on wireless device imports

KUWAIT: The Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) said people must obtain permission from the authority if they want to import wireless communication devices such as radio and walkie-talkie sets.

#### Preparations underway for rains

KUWAIT: Minister of Public Works Dr Noura Al-Mashaan affirmed on Wednesday that preparations are underway for the upcoming rainy season. Following a meeting with officials from various relevant authorities, Dr Mashaan said the ministry's field teams would be ready and will coordinate with other departments to address challenges that may arise from heavy rainfall, such as the formation of water pools in public areas. She urged citizens and residents to keep drains clean and refrain from littering in public spaces to prevent the clogging of sewage pipes. — KUNA

#### Kuwait inflation up by 2.92%

KUWAIT: Kuwait's annual inflation rate grew by 2.92 percent in August, according to the Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau. On a monthly basis, inflation rose by 0.97 percent compared to July. The rise was driven by increases in key sectors, including food and beverages (up 5.96 percent), clothing (up 5.76 percent) and education (up 0.96 percent). Housing services rose by 0.91 percent while furniture increased by 3.17 percent. Health, transport and communication sectors also saw modest increases. — KUNA (See Page 2)

#### Iranian president visits Qatar

DOHA: Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian insisted Wednesday that Iran was "not looking for war" but pledged a stronger response if the Zionist entity retaliates for its missile attack. "If it (the Zionist entity) wants to react, we will have a stronger response, this is what the Islamic Republic is committed to," Pezeshkian said in a joint press conference with Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani. Sheikh Tamim warned the Zionist was drawing the region to the "brink of the abyss" with its attacks on Hezbollah in Lebanon. The Amir also condemned ongoing Zionist attacks on the Gaza Strip. — AFP

### Hezbollah kills 8 Zionist troops; 65 martyred in Gaza

JERUSALEM/BEIRUT: The Zionist entity said on Wednesday eight of its soldiers were killed in combat in south Lebanon as its forces thrust into its northern neighbor in a campaign against Hezbollah. The losses were the deadliest suffered by the Zionist military on the Lebanon front in the past year of border-area clashes between the Zionist entity and its Iranian-backed Lebanese foe.

Hezbollah said its fighters were engaging Zionist forces inside Lebanon on Wednesday, reporting ground clashes for the first time since Zionist

forces pushed over the border. Hezbollah said it had destroyed three Zionist Merkava tanks with rockets near the border town of Maroun El Ras. The Zionist military said regular infantry and armored units were joining its ground operations in Lebanon, a day after Iran fired 200 missiles into the Zionist entity, a barrage which raised concerns that the oil-producing Middle East could be caught up in a wider conflict.

Zionist military strikes across the Gaza Strip killed at least 65 Palestinians overnight, including in a school sheltering displaced families, medics said, as Zionist tanks advanced in areas of Khan Younis in the south of the enclave. Zionist tanks carried out a raid on several areas in eastern and central Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip, before partially

Continued on Page 6

### US veep rivals defend bosses in polite debate

NEW YORK: US vice presidential contenders J D Vance and Tim Walz faced off in a surprisingly civil debate Tuesday, despite tense moments on the hot topics of migration, abortion and the threat of war in the Middle East. Republican Vance and Democrat Walz dug into policy and avoided the bitter personal attacks that presidential candidates Donald Trump and Kamala Harris exchanged during an often

heated clash in September.

But the shadow of their bosses hung over the CBS debate, with Walz attacking Trump as a threat to democracy and unfit to lead America on the world stage, and Vance slamming Harris' record on the economy and illegal migration as part of President Joe Biden's administration. A key moment came near the end, when Vance refused to say whether he backed Trump's false claims to have won the 2020 election against Biden.

Minnesota governor Walz accused him of a "damning non-answer" and blasted Trump over the Jan 6, 2021 attacks on the US Capitol by pro-Trump supporters.

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### Africa roads are world's deadliest despite few cars

ADDIS ABABA: Africa has the fewest roads and cars of any region, and yet the largest ratio of vehicle deaths, caused by the usual suspects — unsafe habits, speeding and drinking — but also poor infrastructure, scant rescuers and old cars. As everywhere, speed, alcohol and not wearing a seat belt or helmet are among the main causes of death and injury, say experts.

But in Africa, where there are 620 traffic deaths every day, these prob-

lems are compounded by bad roads, outdated vehicles, minimal prosecutions and a shortage of emergency services. A recent World Health Organization report found that Africa surpassed the rest of the world, including Southeast Asia — which recorded the most road deaths — with a record ratio of 19.5 people killed per 100,000 inhabitants in 2021.

Home to only around four percent of the world's automobiles, Africa accounted for 19 percent of road deaths last year. "What is worrying is the upward trend in Africa," said Jean Todt, a former head of the International Automobile Federation and now the United Nations (UN) special envoy for road safety.

Continued on Page 6



GAZA: Palestinian rescuers extract the body of a victim from the rubble of a collapsed building hit by a Zionist strike in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip on Oct 2, 2024. — AFP



NEW YORK: US Senator J D Vance and Minnesota Governor Tim Walz shake hands at the end of the vice presidential debate at the CBS Broadcast Center on Oct 1, 2024. —AFP



JOHANNESBURG: Onlookers gather on Queen Elizabeth bridge to look at a public transport bus that drove over the side of the bridge in this Feb 25, 2015 file photo. — AFP





## Local

# KRCS sends 16th air bridge to Sudan

## 2,500 tons of aid delivered to flood-hit Sudan



16th air bridge carrying food, relief supplies and transport vehicles departed to Sudan. — KUNA photos

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced its 16th air bridge to Sudan, carrying 28 tons of food, relief supplies and transport vehicles to support displaced individuals in Sudan affected by ongoing conflicts, heavy rains and floods. Speaking to KUNA, General Director Abdulrahman Al-Oun affirmed that Kuwaiti aid provided to Sudan is guided by the leadership of Kuwait. He emphasized that this aid represents Kuwait's significant humanitarian role, embodied through the KRCS.

Kuwait has provided humanitarian relief, medical aid and transport vehicles, including ambulances, to mitigate the impact and risks of the natural disaster caused by floods and the current conditions in Sudan, he added. Al-Oun mentioned that the 28-ton plane consists of four ambulances, food supplies, and blankets, as he expressed his gratitude to the donors from Kuwait. He extended his sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Kuwaiti Embassy in Sudan, the Ministry of Defense, and the Kuwaiti Air Force, commending their pioneering humanitarian role in rescuing and assisting those affected in various countries worldwide.

### 2,500 tons of aid delivered

A Kuwait-based charity dispatched some 2,500 tons of humanitarian aid to Sudan in an endeavor that encapsulates the camaraderie shared between



Kuwait's Ambassador to Khartoum Dr Fahad Al-Thefeeri

the two countries, Kuwait's Ambassador to Khartoum Dr Fahad Al-Thefeeri said on Tuesday. The cargo given by Kuwait Relief Society is the largest in the charity's history, the diplomat told KUNA, citing the shipload as part of a perpetual flow of aid pouring into the impoverished Arab-African nation that has seen floods accentuate the misery of people displaced by war. The shiploads are in addition to an "air bridge" set up by Kuwait to ensure the prompt delivery of much-needed assistance to Sudan, added the Kuwaiti envoy. — KUNA



PORT SUDAN: A picture taken on October 2, 2024 shows containers of humanitarian aid sent by Kuwait to victims of Sudan's conflict and latest flooding across the country at the harbor of Port Sudan. — AFP



Officials attend the 28th meeting of GCC Ministries of Culture Undersecretaries in Doha. — KUNA

## Officials discuss Gulf cultural strategy

**DOHA:** The 28th meeting of the GCC Undersecretaries of the Ministries of Culture kicked off in Doha on Wednesday, with the participation of Kuwait. Assistant Undersecretary for Cultural Affairs at Qatar's Ministry of Culture, Dr Ghanem Al-Ali, affirmed in his speech the continued support for joint cooperation in all cultural fields, highlighting its importance in overcoming challenges.

Al-Ali also stressed that the keenness to implement the Gulf Cultural Strategy 2020-2030 reflects on culture in the new phase that the region is experiencing, noting that exchanging views and dialogue are the basics of joint work and that the results achieved so far show the richness of the cultural movement in the region.

For his part, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic and Development Affairs at the General Secretariat of the GCC, Khaled Al-Sunaidi, said that culture is a fundamental pillar of our national identity and the development of the GCC countries. Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts, & Letters Dr Mohammad Al-Jasser headed the Kuwaiti delegation. — KUNA

## Int'l Cybersecurity Forum 2024 kicks off in Riyadh

**RIYADH:** The fourth Global Cybersecurity Forum (GCF) 2024 annual meeting began Wednesday in Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, under the theme "Advancing Collective Action in Cyberspace," organized by Saudi Arabia's National Cybersecurity Authority. The two-day event aims to advance knowledge and catalyze collective action on critical issues around cyberspace, featuring participants from numerous international officials, including leaders, prime ministers, ministers, decision-makers, and executives from over 120 countries.

In his remarks, Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman stated that Saudi Arabia has been working for the benefit of humanity and prosperity around the world, emphasizing the importance of boosting cooperation and strengthening international collaborations, as many initiatives launched to achieve these goals across various sectors. Prince Mohammad bin Salman, also the Prime Minister, noted that cybersecurity is linked to economic growth, societal development, and national stability, underscoring the significance of unifying international efforts to seize opportunities and face challenges in cybersecurity through investments.

He said that Saudi Arabia recognized the importance of this sector, having launched two global initiatives in 2020, one aimed at protecting children in cybersecurity and the other empowering women in this sector. The Crown Prince pointed out the productive outcomes of these initiatives, enabling the International Cybersecurity Forum Foundation to

implement qualitative programs and projects, publish research and studies, and formulate new frameworks and strategies. He announced the launch of the Global Summit for Child Protection in Cyberspace, hosted by Saudi Arabia, as the first global summit of its kind, aimed at uniting international efforts and enhancing the global response to threats facing children in cyberspace.

The GCF is an independent, non-profit organization that seeks to strengthen global cyber resilience by advancing collaboration, purposeful dialogue, and impactful initiatives, uniting decision makers and thought leaders from around the world. The GCF



Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman

aligns with global efforts to build a more secure cyberspace that enables prosperity for all nations and communities. This year's edition will feature panel discussions involving decision-makers, high-ranking officials, and international experts from various government entities, academic institutions and leading global companies. — KUNA

## Kuwait inflation grows by 2.92%

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's consumer price index (inflation), on an annual basis, grew on an annual basis by 2.92 percent last August, according to the Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau (KCSB). In a statement to KUNA on Wednesday, the bureau said the inflation rate rose 0.97 percent, compared to last July—on a monthly basis. It attributed the rise of the inflation, on a yearly basis, to an increase in the rates of the major groups that affect the benchmarks, namely clothing, food, and education.

Benchmark of the first group (food and beverages) went up by 5.96 percent in July, compared to the same month in 2023, while price index of the second group (cigarettes and tobacco) inched up by 0.15 percent yearly. Consumer price index (CPI) for the clothing group increased by 5.76 percent, housing services by 0.91 percent, and furniture by 3.17 percent. The health index went up by 0.49 percent in August compared to the corresponding month of the past year, while rates of transport moved up by 2.37 percent on an annual basis compared to the same month in 2022.

Communications moved up by 2.37 percent year-on-year, culture and entertainment rose



KUWAIT: A vendor sells freshly caught shrimp at a fish market in Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

by 2.19 percent, and education by 0.96 percent. Restaurants and hotels climbed on a yearly basis by 2.52 percent in August, with services and miscellaneous goods rising by 5.25 percent, it said. The consumer price index (inflation), excluding food and beverages, recorded a hike of 2.35 percent in August—on an annual basis. CPI is a measurement that examines prices on a monthly or annual basis. Generally, it constitutes a basic index for growth and economic recession. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Nigeria Embassy's Charge d'Affaires Ambassador Murtala Jimoh takes a group photo with Nigerian expatriates in Kuwait.

## Nigeria marks 64th independence day

**KUWAIT:** On this very auspicious occasion of the 64th Independence Day Celebration of Nigeria, I extend my warm greetings and congratulations to all Nigerians resident in the friendly country of the State of Kuwait. The 64th Independence anniversary of our dear country is a significant milestone in our commitment to build a democratically stable nation and an economic self-reliant country that guarantee the aspirations of all citizens. Indeed, Nigeria's freedom and progress are worth celebrating. Today, we are celebrating a nation that has overcome challenges and



Ambassador Murtala Jimoh

achieved success.

While we express joy and celebrate the 64th Independence Day of our dear country, it is pertinent to inform our compatriots in Kuwait of the ongoing transformative policies and economic reforms of the Federal Government of Nigeria, under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR, designed to address socio-economic challenges, reposition Nigeria as an economic superpower in the near future as well as return the country to the path of prosperity and sustainable growth.

Let me also seize this platform to convey our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the well-wishers and friends of Nigeria in Kuwait. The Embassy will continue to work with relevant authorities in Nigeria and the State of Kuwait to further strengthen the warm and cordial bilateral relations between the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Kuwait in all fields of bilateral engagements to forge a strategic partnership. I reaffirm our commitments to place high premium on the welfare and well-being of Nigerians resident in Kuwait. Once again, on this special occasion of the 64th Independence Day Anniversary of Nigeria, I wish all Nigerians and friends of Nigeria in Kuwait, happy Independence Day.



Local



DOHA: Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, arrives in Doha. — KUNA photos



DOHA: Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, meets with Qatari Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Thani at the Amiri Diwan in Doha.

# Asian Cooperation Dialogue kicks off

## Amir's Representative arrives in Qatar for Asian summit

**DOHA:** The Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, arrived along with an accompanying delegation at Doha International Airport on Wednesday. His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad will head Kuwait's delegation at the third summit of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), scheduled in the Qatari capital, Doha.

His Highness the Amir's Representative, along with his entourage, was welcomed at the airport by the Qatari Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Thani, Minister of State Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Saud Al-Thani, Kuwait Ambassador to Qatar Khaled Badr Al-Mutairi, and the Qatari Ambassador to the State of Kuwait Ali Abdullah Al-Mahmoud.

Upon his departure from Kuwait airport, he was seen off by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Deputy Chief of the National Guards Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdulh Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shareeda Al-Maousherji, and other senior state officials. His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled is accompanied by Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya and senior officials from the Crown Prince Diwan.

The Amir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim Al-Thani, is set to inaugurate the third summit of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) in Doha on Thursday, with the participation of Representative of His Highness

the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. ACD, established in 2002 by Thailand, aims to enhance cooperation between regional Asian organizations, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

It also aims to expand Asian commerce and finance markets, increase Asia's competitiveness in international markets, and create an Asian community that can perform equally with the rest of the world. The first ministerial meeting of the ACD was held in Thailand in 2002, while the first summit was held in Kuwait in October 2012. During the events, the participants announced pledges worth two billion dollars, with \$300 million provided by Kuwait.

Kuwait continues to commit to boosting Asian dialogue on all levels to tackle issues and chal-

lenges facing the continent's countries. The second summit was held in Thailand in 2016, where the countries agreed on establishing a permanent general secretariat for ACD, headquartered in Kuwait. The theme for this year's edition of the conference is "Sports Diplomacy," as sports is a soft power that plays a big role in developing countries and bringing nations and cultures closer.

It also involves supporting youth, women, and development as main pillars in the sports field. Despite the variations in natural and human resources, significant economic power, and energy sources, Asian countries are still facing many challenges that require joint work and cooperation. These include different development rates between Asian countries as well as security issues. ACD is aiming to enhance its role on a regional and international level to tackle these issues. — KUNA



## US ambassador visits foreign workers' shelter

**KUWAIT:** The Public Authority of Manpower welcomed US Ambassador to Kuwait Karen Sasahara during her field visit to the foreign workers' shelter. She was received by Acting Deputy Director General for Labor Protection Dr Fahad Al-Murad. The visit aimed to review the process of receiving foreign workers and the role of government agencies at the center, in addition to the various services provided to the female residents, including healthcare, psychological support and legal assistance. The ambassador was briefed on all relevant information and statistics regarding the number of residents at the shelter.

During the visit, Sasahara observed the care and rehabilitation procedures followed at the center, praising the efforts made to provide social and



psychological protection, as well as dignified living conditions for the residents, while ensuring their legal rights. The ambassador also toured the center's facilities, which were highlighted as a unique experience in the GCC and Middle East region in terms of

services provided and capacity. Sasahara expressed her deep gratitude to all the staff at the center for their continuous efforts in supporting the female residents, commending their dedication to improving living and care conditions.

## Kuwait implements strategies to boost productivity

**KUWAIT:** In 1955, Kuwait introduced its first civil service legislation, known as the Employees and Retirement System, which included 13 chapters, the last of which was devoted to the "Employee Affairs Department," which was considered an independent department. To further this initiative, Kuwait introduced the government's employee cadre the same year. This law set employment conditions for workers in government agencies, including rules for hiring, wage categories, and working hours.

The laws evolved over time, with the employee affairs department becoming the Civil Service Bureau and later renamed to the Civil Service Commission (CSC) under Law No. 67 in 1996, expanding its scope of authority. Kuwaiti legislation has continuously balanced the implementation of modern systems with the role of government employees in enacting reforms; this modernization was essential for driving sustainable development and increasing productivity in line with Kuwait's new goals.

The importance of revitalizing state institutions has grown, particularly under the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who put an emphasis on accelerating project implementation and improving public services. With the formation of the current government in May, headed by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, there has been a clear desire to chart a roadmap for productivity, which included innovative mechanisms to improve the government work environment and encourage creativity across various departments.

Recent government directives also called on the CSC to review laws and regulations and adopt new measures to boost productivity in government agencies. Over the past few months, opportunities for national employment have expanded, with approximately 24,000 job openings created. The government has also activated automated job nomination systems to ensure fairness and equal opportunities.

In a progressive step toward fostering a competitive and achievement-oriented work environment, Kuwait is preparing to launch the "Employee Achievement Record" project, which would be tested in five government agencies for six months, with the trial starting date to be announced later. On August 27, the CSC announced that the new system would allow employees to save their work in an electronic file, documenting their achievements and prioritizing top performers for financial incentives, training courses, or supervisory roles.

In a bid to improve government services, a comprehensive study was launched with representatives from 13 government entities to explore the possibility of providing services during both morning and evening shifts. This aims to facilitate citizens' and residents' access to government services. Kuwait introduced a flexible attendance system in mid-August, which took effect on August 18. In government entities, it aimed to reinforce commitment and optimize work hours. Annual training plans were implemented to enhance employee skills across all fields and specializations, in collaboration with government bodies and specialized training institutes.

Kuwait's 2024/2025 development plan focuses on empowering individuals with knowledge, creativity, and innovation skills to cultivate a productive and cohesive workforce with positive economic, social, and cultural impacts. The government was also implementing policies to develop a national workforce skills system, supporting the transition to a knowledge-based economy, and promoting STEM education for leadership in this sector. Partnerships with reputable international academic institutions were being pursued as well.

Part of the broader government development program was to create a more interconnected and transparent government, aiming to meet citizens' needs while raising productivity levels in public institutions. A 2022 report by the World Government Summit Foundation indicated that advances in big data analytics and digitalization could boost productivity by up to 33 percent, and large-scale structural programs could also increase government productivity by 32 to 49 percent. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Cancer Aware Nation launches breast cancer awareness campaign for the 13th consecutive year, under the theme 'Your health is in your examination'.

## CAN launches breast cancer awareness campaign

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Under the patronage of Social, Family, and Childhood Affairs Minister Dr Amthal Al-Huwailah, the Cancer Aware Nation (CAN) launched its breast cancer awareness campaign for the 13th consecutive year, under the theme "Your health is in your examination." Social Affairs Ministry Undersecretary Dr Khalid Al-Ajmi said the Ministry supports many NGOs and all awareness campaigns in order to increase health awareness, especially for women. He urged women to be keen on periodical testing, as science proved its importance in the

early discovery of cancer, just as it is important to follow a healthy lifestyle.

CAN's chairman of the board, Dr Khalid Al-Saleh, said: "For the 13th consecutive year, we stand in front of you as we all join hands to raise awareness and transform Kuwait into a developmental, cultural, and healthy state. This was a far-ambitious hope, but every year, it draws closer. When I joined the Kuwait Center for Cancer Control (KCCC) in 1983, the rate of advanced breast cases was more than 70 percent, but now, with the awareness, the late referral dropped to almost 30 percent, as the woman whose case is discovered early has a great chance of being cured — at a rate of over 85 percent."

CAN board member, Dr Hussa Al-Shaheen, who is in charge of "Your Health in Your Testing," said: "We are so proud that we are launching the 'Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign' for the 13th consecutive year, under the official patronage of Minister Dr Amthal Al-Huwailah." She said the campaign trained nearly 152,000 women on self-examination in co-

operation with the Health Ministry and the World Health Organization (WHO). The strategy of CAN in promoting awareness is to cooperate with ministries, NGOs, and private sector companies.

CAN knows the importance of awareness activities and their effect on society. Many women turned out to be trained on self-examination and the mammogram test. The "Your Health is in Your Examination" started with making advertisements in public places and asking people to participate in the "Pink October" activities, which last from October 1st until 31st.

"There are women who have fully recovered from cancer, and we seek their help in spreading hope, as many of them volunteer to give a correct and hopeful image about the disease, which is now considered among the chronic diseases. CAN gives great attention to sports, and we established a Heido team that is made of young men and another team for women. There will be a tennis tournament for blind women themed "Pink Steps" in cooperation with the Blinds Society at the Boulevard Mall," she added.



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## NBK Run: A different experience

The largest sporting event of its kind in Kuwait



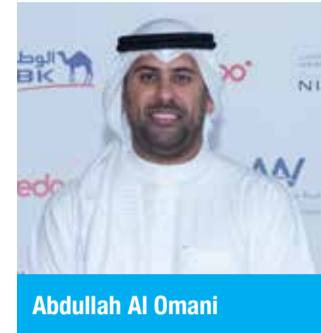
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KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) held a press conference at its headquarters on Wednesday to announce the details of the NBK Run 2024, which is scheduled for December 14th. The event was attended by executives from the bank and the organizing company, representatives of the strategic partners of this major sporting event and covered by various media outlets. In her speech at the conference, Manal Al-Mattar, Head of Group Corporate Communications at National Bank of Kuwait said, "This year, NBK proudly celebrates 30 years of the NBK Run, which is a major social sporting event organized on an annual basis."

"The NBK Run has become a symbol of social cohesion, rather than just a sporting event, and a message to everyone to lead a healthy and active lifestyle. This aligns with NBK's firm belief that sport is not only a way to improve physical well-being but also to promote positive values like cooperation, determination and perseverance, therefore, the bank is keen on organizing this race every year, being a platform to promote these values, and it gives participants the opportunity to enjoy an experience full of enthusiasm and fun," she remarked.

"I would like to take this opportunity to point out that the NBK Run, which is considered the largest sporting event of its kind in Kuwait given its massive public participation and extensive media coverage year after year, will allow in its upcoming version different age groups and genders to participate in different challenges in the 5km and 10km categories, according to their physical abilities. This will foster challenge and competition among the participants. To enhance competitiveness and excitement, we will be offering valuable prizes for the winners and participants, as well as special draws for the public, ensuring a fun experience for all," she continued.

## New categories

Al-Mattar highlighted that NBK has added 3 new categories for participants in the NBK Run 2024, to allow wider segments to participate in this spectacular event. "Underscoring its pioneering position as one of the most socially responsible institutions in Kuwait, and in a step to engage different sectors of society in this major event, and to foster its leading efforts in extending all means of support to people with special needs, the bank announced that NBK Run 2024 will be different from the previous versions, by introducing 3 new categories for the people with special needs for both men and women, including wheelchairs, blind and prosthetic limbs, with the starting point being from Kuwait Towers for a distance of 5 km," she explained.

"The participation of people with special needs in this year's race is an initiative of one of the leading petrochemical companies, EQUATE, which was keen to include this segment to the participants and provided valuable prizes for the winners: KD 500, KD 400 and KD 300 for the first, second and third place winners respectively, in each of the three categories, for both men and women," she added. Al-Mattar thanked the strategic partners who joined NBK Run this year in recognition of the importance of this

long-standing and successful race and their role in supporting the community.

She also expressed her thanks to all those who helped in organizing this race, including teams, sponsors, and especially government institutions who help us spread awareness on the importance of sport and its role in promoting public health. Al-Mattar concluded her speech by inviting everyone, from sports enthusiasts to professionals, to participate in this race that combines sporting competition with a festive atmosphere, saying: "I invite everyone to register and participate in the NBK Run to create a day full of challenge and positivity. With your participation and support, this event will be a success."

## Clear impact

On his part, Ahmed Al-Majed, Executive Manager at the Suffix Company for Sports Events Management, expressed the company's pride in continuing to partner with NBK in organizing this major social sporting event, which year after year proves its excellence and success in attracting large numbers of participants from all segments of society. "NBK Run is the oldest sporting event in Kuwait, and it was a trailblazer for many entities to organize similar sporting events, as well as a source of inspiration for us," he added.

He said that sports events in the GCC countries are usually organized with the sponsorship of government, while in Kuwait, the private sector is leading the organization of these events, underscoring its belief that sport is a key factor to develop societies, and that it has become culturally and economically impactful, and much more. "At Suffix, we look forward to providing all capabilities for participants and spectators to spend an enjoyable social sporting day, and always aim to organize outstanding events that help raise the bar of sporting events in Kuwait and the region," he concluded.

## Greater corporation

The NBK Run 2024 will be different from previous versions, as there will be greater collaboration from strategic partners who will provide valuable prizes for the winners, participants as well as spectators. "We at Al Bابتain Group are delighted to participate for the 15th year in this important sporting event, as our sponsorship of the NBK Run comes as part of our CSR activities and our belief in the importance of promoting a healthy lifestyle in the community, and we encourage our employees and family members to join and participate in this race," said Sandi Nassar, Senior Customer Experience Specialist at Al-Bابتain.

"Al Bابتain Group will be giving away an all-new Nissan X-Trail 2024, as contestants in the NBK Run will be eligible to enter the draw to win the car once they register for the race," she added. "We are proud of our strategic partnership with NBK over the past years, especially as the NBK Run is a spectacular event with massive participation from all segments of society."

In line with our social responsibility, we are happy to participate and sponsor important events or-

ganized by NBK,"

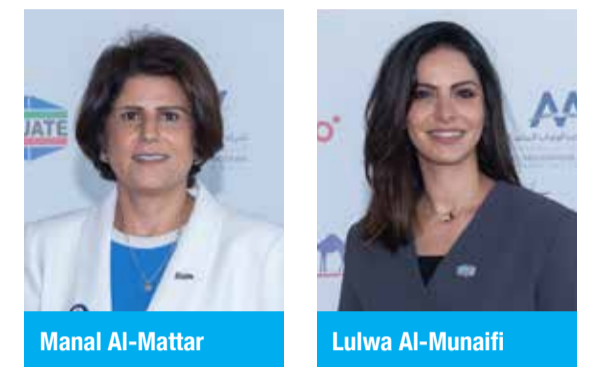
commented Sundus AlShatti, Director Digital Service of Ooredoo - Kuwait. She said that Ooredoo will be giving away prizes during NBK Run this year, including iPhones, Apple Watches, Shamel plan subscriptions, as well as a draw on a Platinum Line worth KD 5,000, which participants will qualify for once they register.

"The new version of the NBK Run will witness a new achievement and a qualitative leap by adding the special needs category. EQUATE will sponsor participants in this category in 3 groups: Wheelchairs, Blind and Prosthetics users, where EQUATE will provide cash prizes for the winners," mentioned Lulwa Al-Munaifi, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Program at Equate Petrochemical Company. Al-Munaifi emphasized that the aim of adding this category is not a mere contest to win, but to integrate people with special needs into society and promote inclusion, adding: "We aim to bring change through this race to the lives of this category to contribute more effectively to the development of society."

She added that this year, EQUATE has recruited a number of people with special needs to be part of its team, which has had a positive impact on the company's work environment. "The NBK Run is not an ordinary event, but one of the largest events in Kuwait, and we are pleased with our continued strategic partnership with NBK," noted Khalid Al-Mutawa, Corporate Relations Manager at Ali AbdulWahab Al Mutawa Commercial Company. He explained that AAW's participation in sponsoring the race through its brands Intersport and Joe & The Juice does not only aim to promote a healthy lifestyle and sports, but also reflects the company's support of the national vision for sustainable healthy living and Kuwait Vision 2035.

"We are pleased to sponsor this major sporting event and continue the strategic partnership with NBK," said AbdulWahab Al Qenaie, Public Relations Manager at CHIPS. "At CHIPS, we always seek to integrate technology and electronics with sports, especially since electronics is closely related to all sports," he added, wishing success to all strategic sponsors and participants in the NBK Run this year. "We are pleased with our strategic partnership with NBK in this sporting event, which is the largest in Kuwait, and to host the race on the Sea Front, which is a key touristic destination in Kuwait, adjacent to the landmark Kuwait Towers," quoted Abdullah Al Omani, Head of Marketing and Corporate Communications at Touristic Enterprises Company.

Al Omani highlighted that the Sea Front was developed to provide a sporting environment and places for running, walking and cycling, pointing out that the first phase of the Sea Front development project was



Faisal Al Mosawi



Manal Al-Mattar



Lulwa Al-Munaifi

inaugurated last February, while the second and final phase will be inaugurated next February. He added that TEC's 2024-2025 Strategy aims to strengthen its partnership with the creative and inspiring private sector, and our sponsorship of the NBK Run comes in this context, noting that the company will provide 16,000 entry tickets to its facilities and parks (Winter Wonderland and South Sabahiya Park) to all contestants in NBK Run this year.

## People with special needs

Speaking at the press conference, Faisal Al Mosawi, holder of 3 Guinness World Records including the fastest wheelchair-using scuba diver in the world, extended thanks to NBK and EQUATE, as well as the strategic sponsors of the NBK Run 2024, for taking the initiative to include people with special needs. Al Mosawi stressed that this meaningful initiative stands out with the fact that the participation of people with special needs will not be honorary, noting that promoting competition by honoring the winners creates a sense of inclusion in the community, and the positive impact will extend beyond the end of the race. He said that through his communication with some people with special needs, he found that they were very happy and enthusiastic to participate in the race.

## Early registration

NBK has already opened early registration for the 2024 NBK Run starting from September 18th to October 5th through the "Suffix" website, offering special discounts on race fees. Following this period, registration will continue at regular prices until all slots are filled. The race will start at 8:30 am on December 14th, featuring two distances, both beginning and ending at Kuwait Towers. The 10 km route will proceed towards Souq Sharq, then turn and follow the Gulf Road, reaching 200 meters before the intersection with Green Island, before returning to Kuwait Towers.

The second distance of the race is 5 km, starting from Kuwait Towers and heading towards Souq Sharq. Competitors will then turn and continue running until they reach the intersection at Kuwait Army Club. The race will honor the top three winners in both the men's and women's 10 km categories with cash prizes of KD 1,000, KD 700, and KD 500, respectively. The top three winners in the men's and women's 5 km categories will receive KD 500, KD 400, and KD 300, respectively.



## KUNA Chief, Cuban ambassador discuss media cooperation

KUWAIT: Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Director-General Dr. Fatima Al-Salem and Cuba's Ambassador to Kuwait Jose Sanchez discussed, Wednesday, developing media cooperation between the two countries. During the meeting at

KUNA headquarters, both sides affirmed the vital role of media in boosting bilateral relations and understanding between the people of Kuwait and Cuba. Dr Al-Salem pointed out the importance of exchanging media expertise and information that serves the mutual interests of both media agencies and countries, adding that media cooperation enhances cooperation in various fields. For his part, Ambassador Sanchez praised Kuwait's media, pointing out that it reflects the values of transparency and objectivity and that his country has great confidence in the professional media work carried out by KUNA. — KUNA

## KUNA participates in FANA's first yearly meeting in UAE

ABU DHABI: The Federation of Arab News Agencies (FANA) held its first meeting of the year on Wednesday in Abu Dhabi, at the Emirates News Agency (WAM) headquarters, with participation from Kuwait News Agency (KUNA). In his speech at the opening session of the meeting, representative of KUNA, Deputy Director General for Administrative and Financial Affairs Mohammad Al-Mannai, expressed KUNA's welcome to hosting FANA's 51st General Assembly Conference.

The conference will be held in Kuwait between

October 27 and 29. Al-Mannai added that they hope to achieve the desired results in developing the work of the federation and achieving its goals. The meeting was moderated by the President of FANA and Acting Director of WAM, Dr Jamal Al-Kaabbi. He discussed the items on the agenda, which were read by the Secretary-General of the federation, Farid Ayar.

They discussed the activities of the General Secretariat and the impact of current events in some Arab countries on the activities of media organizations, as well as the preparations for the upcoming 51st conference. The meeting was also attended by Director General of the Oman News Agency (ONA) Ibrahim Al-Azri, Assistant Director General of the Jordan News Agency (Petra) Fayeze Al-Jabour, International Relations Researcher at KUNA Abdulaziz Al-Bloushi, and Executive Director of News Content Sector at WAM Jamal Nasser. — KUNA

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Driven out of Iran, Afghan refugees tell of ordeal

On world stage, Harris promises alliances; Trump puts US first

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BEIRUT: A man looks at the destruction at the site of an overnight Zionist airstrike on the Ruwais neighborhood in Beirut's southern suburbs on October 1, 2024. — AFP

# ‘No one left’: Zionist strikes kill entire families in Lebanon

Claims of military leaders or equipment present in civilian areas ‘does not justify attacks’: HRW

BEIRUT: Qassem Al-Qadhi left his home in east Lebanon this weekend to buy bread for 17 family members, but when he returned they were all dead. A Zionist air strike on Sunday hit the village of Zaboud in the Bekaa valley, killing a whole family, the national news agency NNA said. Qadhi said it was his wife, children and grandchildren. They were killed in an instant. The 57-year-old says the only member of the family who survived was his 25-year-old son Hussein, who had headed off to do his military service just before the strike. “It was 11 am. We were all sitting in front of the house and then I went to buy them bread,” he told AFP by phone.

While he was at the bakery he heard a loud explosion, he said. “I tried to call them, then rushed home but there was no one left. Just body parts,” Qadhi said. “Seventeen people — including my son’s fiancée and her mother, my wife, my three sons and two daughters, and seven grandchildren,” he said. “Seventeen martyrs in my home.”

They included his oldest son Mohammad, 38, who was working as an electrician. And his two youngest,

Ali and Mehdi, who worked with him planting the land and looking after livestock. And his two daughters Zaynab, 22, and Fatima, 18, who had been studying at university. Qassem speaks of his seven grandchildren — the youngest aged just two and half years old and the oldest nine — as if they are still alive.

### ‘Were going to get married’

To compound their devastating loss, he and his surviving son are now homeless. “We don’t have a home any more,” Qadhi said. “There’s nowhere left for us to sleep except the fields and orchards.” His surviving son Hussein is still in shock and trying to process what has happened. As well of his mother and siblings, the Zionist strike killed his fiancée just days before their planned wedding.

“We were going to get married on October 12, but my love is gone — gone in a massacre. I don’t know what to say,” he said. Hussein said he left for his military service early on Sunday, and received the news shortly after reporting for duty. “It was such a shock,” he said. “Two

hours earlier, I had been with them, and then suddenly no one was left.”

He said no one had expected a strike on their tiny village some 125 kilometers (77 miles) from the border with the Zionist entity. “We used to feel safe,” he said. The entity says it has been targeting Lebanese militant group Hezbollah in increased air strikes since last week. But reports have emerged of whole families in Lebanon being killed in the raids.

According to official Lebanese figures, hundreds of people have died and a million more have been forced to flee their homes. At least 558 people were killed on Monday last week alone, the deadliest day of violence since the 1975-1990 Lebanese civil war. The following day, Health Minister Firass Abiad told reporters “the vast majority, if not all, of those killed” that day were “unarmed people in their homes”.

### ‘We collected their body parts’

Human Rights Watch warned on Wednesday that Zionist strikes in Lebanon were “placing civilians across the country at grave risk of

harm”. It stressed that “the presence of a Hezbollah commander, rocket launcher, or other military facility in a populated area” did “not justify attacking the area without regard to the civilian population”. The Lebanese news agency has reported at least four similar cases of entire families being wiped out by Zionist strikes.

In the southern village of Dawoudiya, Najah Diab lost 10 family members on Monday, according to the NNA. “My family were civilians ... My mother was an old lady who was 75 who didn’t even go out any more. My 54-year-old older brother was sick and out of work,” Diab said. She said she also lost her sister, niece, three other brothers, the family of one of her brothers, and a cousin.

“I only have my oldest nephew left,” she said, adding that he was a university student. The strikes destroyed a four-storey building. “They were looking out of the window and a rocket fell on them,” she said. “The building collapsed and their bodies were torn apart. We collected their body parts,” Diab said. “It’s unbelievable. They were all civilians.” — AFP

## As war drums beat, Iranians cheer, fear or simply shrug

DUBAI: At Tehran’s central Valiasr Square, a towering billboard with a yellow-and-green portrait of slain Lebanese Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah looms over passing pedestrians. A Quranic verse proclaims: “God’s victory is close at hand.” Nearby banners and newspaper headlines vow vengeance against the Zionist entity for its assaults on Iranian assets across the region, and a 30-foot missile on display in front of a picture of Iran’s Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei points skyward. The Zionist entity killed Nasrallah, Iran’s most important ally in the Levant, in an airstrike last week that flattened a Beirut neighborhood.

Iran fired a salvo of ballistic missiles at the entity on Tuesday in what it said was a response to the entity’s repeated targeting of Iranian interests in the region — a move that Western leaders worry could lead to a direct Zionist entity-Iran war.

While war drums beat, crisis-weary Iranians are split between those who wish the Zionist entity ill, those who hope a war might remove their own clerical system, and those who are simply resigned to yet another dark chapter in their lives. “Have they considered the repercussions of this attack?” Saeed, a 43-year-old English teacher from the central city of Isfahan, said, referring to Tuesday’s missile salvo on Tel Aviv. “Like it or not, the West supports (the Zionist entity), and if (the entity) retaliates, it will be the Iranian people who suffer,” he said, speaking to Reuters by phone. “The regime lacks the financial resources and public support to endure the pressure or a potential strike” by the Zionist entity, he said.

Some Iranians believe their government had no choice but to send scores of missiles to the entity on Tuesday — an attack which caused relatively little damage — but fear what comes next. “If there is a war, I’m just worried for my children,” an Iranian mother walking to work past the display of official defiance at Valiasr Square said. “If we hadn’t responded to (the entity), they might have continued with their acts of destruction. I just fear for my children.” In an initial panic, some Iranians had stocked up on hard currency in preparation for a war, heading to exchange offices after the Iranian missiles hit Tel Aviv. “It’s not widespread, though,” said money changer Mohammad Reza, 52, via phone. “There aren’t lines outside exchange houses. Life mostly carries on as normal.”

Iranians have grown accustomed to crisis. Iran was rocked by a deadly crackdown on anti-government protests two years ago, has suffered years of economic misery under Western sanctions, and been deeply involved in proxy clashes with the Zionist entity and the United States through a network of paramilitaries it controls in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon and Palestinian territories. — Reuters

## Gazan buried as only known victim of Iran’s strikes on Zionist entity

JERICHO, West Bank: A 38-year-old Gazan, the only known fatality in Iran’s missile attack against the Zionist entity, was buried on Wednesday. Sameh Khadr Hassan Al-Asali had been staying in a Palestinian security forces compound in the occupied West Bank when he was killed by falling missile debris during Tuesday’s attack, which the entity said was largely thwarted by its air defense systems. Security forces personnel carried the body draped in the red, green, white and black Palestinian flag. The crowd of about 200 mourners was made up of fellow Gazans staying in Jericho and local people.

A large section of the rocket lay on the ground where it fell outside the compound. Around 700 workers from Gaza have been staying in Jericho, in the Jordan Valley, since the start of the war in Gaza almost a year ago. Unlike citizens of the Zionist entity, who went into bomb shelters after warning sirens sounded across the country, many Palestinians in the West Bank went out to watch the missiles and observe the explosions as they were intercepted by the Zionist air defense.

Video footage taken from a CCTV camera showed a large metal tube falling out of the sky and landing on a man walking across a street, apparently killing him instantly. Reuters was able to confirm the location from the road layout, buildings, utility poles and markings on the ground



JERICHO: A mourner prays by the Palestinian-flag-draped body of Sameh Al-Asali, who was killed in Jericho by falling debris from one of the intercepted projectiles fired overnight by Iran on the Zionist entity, during his funeral in Jericho in the occupied West Bank on October 2, 2024. — AFP

which matched satellite imagery of the area. The date was verified by a timecode.

In Jerusalem’s Palestinian quarter of Silwan, people did not go to shelters because they don’t have any. They also went out into the streets or onto roofs to see what was happening. One resident told AFP of the reaction in Silwan, which is

located in the east of Jerusalem and was seized by the Zionist entity in the 1967 war and later annexed. “As soon as the Palestinians heard the first sirens, there were whistles and applause, and there were cries of ‘Allahu Akbar!’ (God is Greatest),” said one resident of the moment the streaks of fire appeared in the night sky. — Agencies



## International

# Russia captures town after 2 years of Ukrainian resistance

## Russian forces now control 98.5% of Luhansk, 60% of Donetsk

**MOSCOW:** Russian troops on Wednesday took charge of the eastern Ukrainian town of Vuhledar, a bastion that had resisted intense attacks since Russia launched its full-scale assault in 2022. The advance of Moscow's forces, which control just under a fifth of Ukraine, has underlined Russia's vast superiority in men and materiel as Ukraine pleads for more weapons from the Western allies that have been supporting it.

Ukraine's eastern military command said it had ordered a pullback from the hilltop coal mining town to avoid encirclement by Russian troops and "preserve personnel and military equipment". The Russian defense ministry did not mention Vuhledar in its daily battlefield report.

Russian Telegram channels, however, published video of troops waving the Russian tricolor flag over shattered buildings. The town, which had a population of over 14,000 before the war, has been devastated, with Soviet-era apartment buildings smashed apart and scarred. The Moskovsky Komsomolets newspaper said the last Ukrainian forces from the 72nd Mechanized Brigade, a unit famous for its resistance, had abandoned the town late on Tuesday.

President Vladimir Putin has said Russia's primary tactical goal is to take the whole of the Donbas region — the provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk — in south-eastern Ukraine. Russia controls about 80 percent of the Donbas, a heavy industry hub where the conflict began in 2014 when Moscow supported pro-Russian separatist forces after a pro-Russian president was toppled in Kyiv and Moscow seized Crimea from Ukraine.

Since Russia sent its army into Ukraine in February 2022, the war has largely been a story of grinding artillery and drone strikes along a heavily fortified 1,000-km (620-mile) front involving hundreds of thousands of soldiers. But in August the battlefield became much more dynamic: Ukraine smashed through the border in Russia's Kursk region in a bid to divert Russian forces, and Russian troops began advancing faster than before in eastern Ukraine.

Russian forces have been pushing westwards at key points along some 150 km (95 miles) of the front in the Donetsk region, with the logistics hub of Pokrovsk also a key target. They captured Ukrainians on Sept. 17 and then began encircling Vuhledar, about 80 km (50 miles) south of Pokrovsk.

Russia has been using pincer tactics to trap and then constrict Ukrainian strongholds. Images from the area showed intense bombardment of the town with artillery and aerial glide bombs. Neither side discloses losses, and each said the other had paid a high human price for the town.

Control of Vuhledar, which lies at the intersection of the eastern and southern battlefields, is significant because it will ease Russia's advance as it tries to pierce deeper behind the Ukrainian defensive lines. Russian bloggers said Russia could now try to push towards Velyka Novosilka, just over 30 km (20 miles) to the west. Vuhledar also sits close to a railway line connecting Crimea to the Donbas region. Russian forces currently control 98.5 percent of the Luhansk region and 60 percent of the Donetsk region. — Reuters



**LVIV:** People visit graves of fallen Ukrainian soldiers at the Lychakiv cemetery on the national "Defenders Day" in Lviv, on October 1, 2024, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine. — AFP

## On world stage, Harris promises alliances; Trump puts US first

**WASHINGTON:** The two candidates for US president offer starkly different visions of the world, with November's election carrying the potential to dramatically change policy toward Ukraine and other partners. Vice President Kamala Harris largely offers continuity with President Joe Biden, though she has sought more nuance on the Middle East in particular, while a return of Donald Trump would likely mean a sharp rupture from current US foreign policy.

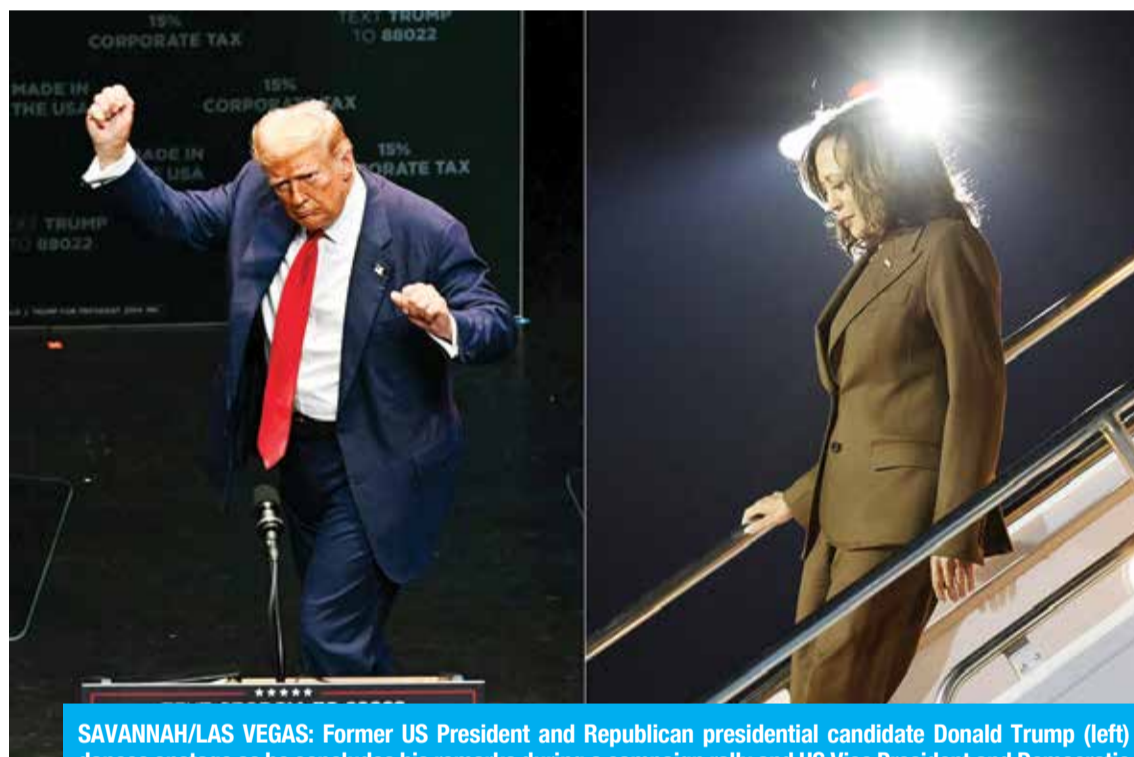
### Ukraine

Few issues divide the two candidates as much as Ukraine. Trump has scoffed at the billions of dollars in US aid to Ukraine, saying that Russia, which invaded its smaller neighbor in February 2022, is destined to win. The Republican has in the past voiced admiration for Russian strongman Vladimir Putin, comments seized upon by Harris, who in their September debate said, "If Donald Trump were president, Putin would be sitting in Kyiv right now."

Harris has promised to keep up support for Ukraine, while Trump's aides have suggested leveraging US assistance to force Ukraine into territorial concessions to end the war quickly. Trump has also mocked Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky as the "greatest salesman" in a job at his lobbying for US military aid, although the two recently had a cordial meeting.

### Middle East

Harris and Trump are both solidly pro-Zionist entity but they diverge on how far to pressure the US



**SAVANNAH/LAS VEGAS:** Former US President and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump (left) dances onstage as he concludes his remarks during a campaign rally and US Vice President and Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris exits Air Force Two at the Harry Reid International Airport. — AFP

ally as war spreads in the Middle East. Harris, like Biden, has made clear she will keep arming the Zionist entity, distancing herself from calls from the left of their Democratic Party for an arms embargo for the sake of sparing civilians. But Harris has also called for Palestinian "self-determination" and said she will "not be silent" on the suffering in the Gaza Strip.

Trump's Republican base is staunchly pro-Zionist entity and he has repeatedly attacked Biden's record as a failure, including on Tuesday as Iran fired missiles in response to the entity's killings of

top Hezbollah militants and Iranian commanders in Lebanon. Trump as president took a series of landmark actions on the entity's behalf, including moving the US embassy to flash point Jerusalem and giving Arab nations incentives to recognize the Zionist entity. But he also has a complicated history with Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whom he criticized for joining other world leaders in recognizing that Biden won the 2020 US election — an outcome that Trump refused to accept despite overwhelming evidence.

### China and Taiwan

Policymakers of both US political parties have spoken of China as the top long-term challenger, though they differ on rhetoric and approach. Trump has relentlessly attacked China in his stump speeches and has vowed to impose massive tariffs on Chinese goods, hoping to boost manufacturing at home. But despite his public statements, he has also indicated he is open to deal-making with President Xi Jinping.

Biden has in some ways gone further than Trump, including by imposing a sweeping ban on high-tech chip exports. Harris has highlighted Trump's reluctance while he was in office to take similar measures, charging that he "basically sold us out," with China's military benefiting from US technology. Meanwhile in Taiwan, the self-ruling democracy claimed by Beijing, Trump has caused jitters by suggesting that it pay for its defense, likening the United States to an insurance company. Harris, as vice president, has pledged to maintain the status quo, stating that "we support Taiwan's self-defense, consistent with our longstanding policy."

### US allies

In a sharp break from previous presidents of both parties, Trump has questioned the utility of NATO, the collective defense alliance formed at the start of the Cold War. Trump even said in February he would encourage the Russians to do "whatever the hell they want" to NATO allies that do not pay more on defense. Harris has frequently pointed to Trump's remarks as she promises, like Biden, to work with allies and stand by NATO. Trump in his first term showed he was ready to break with international agreements he does not like, including the Iran nuclear deal. He would also be expected to champion tough US pressure against leftist leaders in Latin America, particularly Cuba and Venezuela, although neither Biden nor Harris has deviated sharply from his approach. — AFP

## Hezbollah kills 8 Zionist troops...

Continued from Page 1

retreating, leaving at least 40 people killed and dozens wounded, according to the official Voice of Palestine radio and Hamas media.

In Gaza City, at least 22 Palestinians were killed, the medics said. One Zionist strike on a school sheltering displaced families in Gaza City killed 17 people, while another hit the Al-Amal Orphan Society, which also houses displaced persons, killing at least five others, the medics said. Later on Wednesday, a Zionist strike on Nuseirat Girls' School sheltering Palestinian displaced families in Nuseirat in central Gaza killed three people and wounded 15, medics said.

Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, locked in nearly a year of war with the Zionist entity, celebrated as they watched dozens of Iranian rockets en route to the Zionist entity. Some of those rockets fell in the Palestinian enclave after being intercepted by the Zionist Iron Dome missile defenses, but caused no human losses, witnesses said.

Iran said on Wednesday its missile volley — its biggest ever assault on the Zionist entity — was over barring further provocation, but the Zionist entity and the United States promised to hit back hard. US President Joe Biden said Wednesday he would not support a strike by the Zionist entity aimed at wiping out Iran's nuclear facilities in retaliation. "The answer is no," Biden told reporters, when asked whether he would back strikes against Iranian nuclear sites.

A 38-year-old Palestinian from Gaza, the only known fatality in Iran's attack on the Zionist entity, was buried on Wednesday. Sameh Khadr Hassan Al-Asali had been staying in a Palestinian security forces compound in the West Bank when he was killed by falling missile debris during Tuesday's attack. Two people were wounded by shrapnel and a school building was damaged. The Zionist military said several Iranian missiles struck inside air force bases without causing any casualties or damage.

Hezbollah said it had repelled Zionist forces near several border towns and also fired rock-

ets at military posts inside the Zionist entity. The paramilitary group's media chief Mohammad Afif said those battles were only "the first round" and that Hezbollah had enough fighters, weapons and ammunition to push back the Zionist entity. The Zionist military issued new evacuation orders for around two dozen towns along the southern border, instructing inhabitants to head north of the Awali River, which flows east to west some 60 km north of the Zionist frontier.

The Zionist entity renewed its bombardment early on Wednesday of Beirut's southern suburbs, where Hezbollah has its headquarters, with more than a dozen airstrikes against what it said were targets belonging to Hezbollah. The Zionist entity also carried out an airstrike on a residential building in the Mezzah suburb in the west of Syria's capital Damascus, killing three civilians and injuring three, Syrian state media reported on Wednesday.

More than 1,900 people have been killed and over 9,000 wounded in Lebanon in almost a year of cross-border fighting, with most of the deaths occurring in the past two weeks, according to Lebanese government statistics. Caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati said that about 1.2 million Lebanese had been displaced by Zionist attacks.

Malika Joumaa, from Sudan, was forced to take shelter in Saint Joseph's church in Beirut after being forced from her house near Sidon in coastal south Lebanon with her husband and two children. "It's good that the church offered its help. We were going to stay in the streets; where would we have gone? We were (sheltering) under the bridge, it is not safe. If we go back home, it is not safe, they are striking everywhere."

Iran described Tuesday's missile assault as a response to Zionist killings of militant leaders, including Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah, attacks in Lebanon against the group and the Zionist entity's war against Palestinian Hamas fighters in Gaza. The general staff of Iran's armed forces said any Zionist response would be met with "vast destruction". US news website Axios on Wednesday cited Zionist officials as saying the Zionist entity will launch a "significant retaliation" for Iran's attack within days that could strike oil production facilities inside Iran and other strategic sites. — Agencies

## US veep rivals defend bosses...

Continued from Page 1

There was also a fiery moment when Vance, who mostly restrained his persona as Trump's attack dog, had his microphone briefly muted when the moderators tried to fact-check him on migration. Walz said false stories spread by Vance and Trump about migrants in the town of Springfield, Ohio "dehumanize and villainize other human beings". Another tough exchange was over abortion, a key issue since a Supreme Court packed with judges picked by Trump overturned the national right to abortion in 2022. Vance accused Democrats of taking a "very radical pro-abortion stance" who backed what he called "barbaric" laws. Walz hit back saying he was "pro-women".

But the debate, which is likely to be the last before the Nov 5 vote, featured a mostly respectful tone despite the deep ideological differences between the two men. Vance, 40, and Walz, 60, who both claim folksy roots in the US Midwest, said several times that they agreed with each other during the debate, and shook hands at the beginning and the end. The usually ebull-

## Africa roads are world's deadliest...

Continued from Page 1

The continent is the only region where road deaths increased between 2010 and 2021 — up 17 percent to 226,100. The spike was seen in more than half of Africa's countries (28 out of 54). The biggest victims are pedestrians, accounting for a third of fatalities due to a lack of adequate pavements, compared to 21 percent worldwide. "We need to have better designed streets with sidewalks, adequate signage and pedestrian lanes, particularly around schools," Todt said.

He also bemoaned the shortage of public transport for the rapidly urbanizing continent. Urban planning is also at fault. "Many African countries continue to design their infrastructure for motor vehicles and not for individuals, and without safety being the main

concern," said Haileyesus Adamei, a transport expert at the World Bank.

One major culprit is the quality of the cars plying Africa's roads, with many more than 15 years old, according to the UN Road Safety Fund. A transport ministry spokesperson in Senegal told AFP that faulty brakes and worn tires were common — and often deadly. "The dilapidated state of vehicles is a major factor in the lack of safety," the spokesperson said.

The West African country introduced a raft of new rules after a head-on crash between two night buses in January 2023 killed 40 people. "But most have never been implemented," the ministry spokesperson admitted. Some rules, such as a ban on loading luggage on the roof of buses, which could unbalance the vehicle, were fiercely opposed by operators.

It does not help that drivers can often get a license with only perfunctory lessons and testing — often avoided altogether with a bribe. Corruption also means that permissive law enforcement often sweeps many road safety violations under the carpet. — AFP



## International

# Sheinbaum takes office as Mexico's first woman president

## Sheinbaum to 'be more effective at getting things done' than predecessor, experts expect

**MEXICO CITY:** Claudia Sheinbaum was sworn in Tuesday as Mexico's first woman president, inheriting a country beset by gang violence and economic uncertainty over controversial reforms passed by her powerful ruling party. To cries of "Long live Claudia! Long live Mexico!" the 62-year-old former Mexico City mayor took the oath of office and received the presidential sash in Congress, with foreign dignitaries looking on — including US First Lady Jill Biden.

Sheinbaum told cheering lawmakers that, for the first time, "women have arrived to shape the destiny of our beautiful nation," where around 10 women or girls are murdered every day. Supporters began gathering at dawn to celebrate the inauguration of the new leader of the world's most populous Spanish-speaking country, home to 129 million people, which has had 65 male presidents since independence. "I don't arrive alone" but with "all the women of Mexico," Sheinbaum told the flag-waving crowd in the capital's main square after undergoing an Indigenous purification ritual. "No to racism, no to classism and no to machismo," she said.

Marta Ramirez arrived at five in the morning after a bus journey from the central city of Leon to join the celebrations. A woman president "understands the people better," the housewife said. Gina Montes de Oca, a 28-year-old social worker, said it was "a day of celebration," calling the inauguration of Mexico's first woman president "a historic change." One high-profile absence at the ceremony was Spanish King Felipe VI, whom Sheinbaum refused to invite, accusing him of failing to acknowledge harm caused by colonization. In response, Spain announced it would boycott the inauguration, despite its strong economic and historic links with Mexico.

### Popular predecessor retires

A scientist by training, Sheinbaum won a landslide victory in June elections with a vow to continue the left-wing reform agenda of outgoing leader Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, a close ally. Lopez Obrador leaves the presidential palace after six years due to the country's single-term limit, despite an approval rating of around 70 percent, largely thanks to his policies aimed at helping poorer Mexicans. He bequeaths Sheinbaum the leadership of a nation where murders and kidnappings occur daily and violent drug cartels control vast swaths of territory. Spiraling criminal violence, much of it linked to drug trafficking and gangs, has seen more than 450,000 people murdered in Mexico since 2006 and left more than 100,000 people missing.

While Sheinbaum has pledged to stick to the outgoing president's controversial "hugs not bullets" strategy — using social policy to tackle crime at its roots — experts expect some changes in her approach. "It will be a modified version of 'hugs not bullets' that will be more reliant on intelligence and therefore more effective at getting things done," said Professor Pamela Starr, an expert on Mexico at the University of Southern California.

### Reassuring investors

The new president will also have to deal with the fallout from a row over newly passed judicial reforms that will make Mexico the world's only country to elect all judges by popular vote. Dozens of judicial workers demonstrated on Tuesday morning near Congress — the latest in several weeks of protests.

Lopez Obrador argued the reforms were needed to clean up a "rotten" judiciary serving the inter-



**MEXICO CITY:** This handout photo released by Mexico's presidency press office shows Mexico's new President Claudia Sheinbaum during the inauguration ceremony at the Congress of the Union in Mexico City on October 1, 2024. — AFP

ests of the political and economic elite. The changes, which critics argued would make it easier for politicians and organized crime to influence the courts, upset foreign investors as well as Mexico's key trade partners: the United States and Canada.

Sheinbaum sought to allay such concerns, telling investors their money "will be safe" and pledging a "responsible fiscal policy." The United States, Canada, and Mexico "know that economic cooperation strengthens the three nations," she added. US Pres-

ident Joe Biden offered Sheinbaum his "heartfelt congratulations," underscoring his country's "deep political, economic, and cultural ties" with Mexico.

The United Nations human rights office said Sheinbaum's presidency "sends a powerful message" about the crucial role of women in public office. At the same time, it voiced concern about the increased public safety role given to the military under Lopez Obrador and urged Sheinbaum to address the country's missing persons crisis. — AFP

## Christmas comes early to un festive Venezuela

**CARACAS:** Christmas has come early to Venezuela, but the mood is not jolly. The Yuletide street-lights are up in capital Caracas and other cities, and storefronts glitter with decorations after the festive season officially started Tuesday under a decree issued by strongman President Nicolas Maduro. The public spirit, however, does not reflect the glitz in a country rocked by economic and political strife since Maduro's widely questioned reelection to a third six-year term in a July 28 vote. "Christmas ended a few years ago," Urimare Capote, a 62-year-old lawyer, told AFP of Maduro's decree, which many view as a transparent attempt to distract a crisis-weary population.

Thousands had come out to protest Maduro's claim of election victory, resulting in clashes that killed 27 and saw more than 2,400 arrested. Many others fled the country. And those who remain are not in a celebratory state of mind. "It's a miserable mockery of the president towards us," said Eduardo Martinez, a 71-year-old teacher. "We have no money to buy milk, never mind Christmas" paraphernalia.

### 'Abandoned'

On Tuesday, dozens of pensioners who say they can barely afford to eat, gathered outside the UN headquarters in Caracas to push for an intervention. The monthly pension in Venezuela has been 130 bolivars since 2002, when it was worth the equivalent of \$30. Today it is \$3.50. "Who can live on \$3.50?" asked Capote, with the cost of a basket of basic food for a family at \$539. Socialist Maduro insists the economic crisis that saw Venezuela's GDP plummet 80 percent in 10 years on his watch was the result of US sanctions. Analysts point to years of economic mismanagement under Maduro and his socialist predecessor Hugo Chavez.

Last month, Maduro made great fanfare of announcing the Christmas season would be brought forward to October 1. And on Monday, he announced it would run until January 15. The practical implications are unclear, apart from public money being spent on adorning city streets, building facades and public squares. Shops in twinkling malls in Caracas are already selling ornaments, trees and lights —



**A man walks past giant Christmas decorations in Caracas on October 1, 2024. — AFP photos**



**CARACAS:** Retirees and elderly pensioners participate in a protest over the pension system on the International Day of Older People in Caracas, on October 1, 2024.

some mixed up with supplies for Halloween celebrations at the end of October. An artificial Christmas tree costs anything from \$100 amid sky-high inflation — a price few can afford.

Deilyn Pena takes photos of her five-year-old son on a square adorned with two giant bears, one wearing a Christmas cap and the other a red top hat.



**ISLAM QALA:** Afghan refugee Fazila Qaderi reacts during an interview with AFP after her deportation from Iran. — AFP photos

### Growing hostility

Ramazan Azizi, 36, waits, haggard, on a blue plastic chair to be registered with his wife and three children. They entered Iran illegally in 2023, after paying \$1,220 to a trafficker but have faced growing hostility towards Afghans, accused of increasing unemployment and prices but also crime in a country under international sanctions. "The owners had to pay a fine because they rented their home to us. They threw our things out of the windows," Azizi, a construction worker, told AFP. "They (authorities) told us to pack up and we did, we were taken to a military camp to be deported." He said the family was crammed in with 2,000 to 3,000 other Afghans for six days. "We were exhausted ... without food or

"I don't agree completely" with what's going on, but "we must have Christmas spirit, especially for the children," she said. For her part, 22-year-old gym instructor Valeria Ponce said she felt the early Christmas was "a way to distract us from what's going on." Like others approached by AFP, she does not refer directly to the political situation amid widespread fear of landing up in jail for saying anything that might upset the Maduro regime.

Dozens of opposition members have been rounded up since the contested vote. Capote said retirees like himself have been "abandoned, not only by the state, but by their families who had to leave Venezuela." Nearly eight million have left in recent years, many to neighboring Colombia and other countries in Latin America, and some to the United States. "Family is meant to be united for Christmas, but the Venezuelan family is totally broken up," Capote lamented.

Retiree Arturo Morgado, 68, said "there cannot be a dignified Christmas without a dignified pension." "Last year I didn't celebrate, and this year things are even worse." The United States, EU and several Latin American countries support opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia's claim to victory in the July election. Gonzalez Urrutia has since taken up asylum in Spain. — AFP

## Fresh protests in India over doctor's rape, murder

**KOLKATA:** Tens of thousands of people packed the streets of one of India's biggest cities after doctors resumed a strike and called fresh rallies over the rape and murder of a colleague. The discovery of the 31-year-old's bloodied body at a state-run hospital in Kolkata two months ago rekindled nationwide anger at the chronic issue of violence against women. Doctors in the eastern city went on strike for weeks in response and walked off the job again on Tuesday, saying pledges by the West Bengal state government to improve safety and security at hospitals had been unmet.

They were joined on Tuesday evening by thousands of people from all walks of life for a huge protest march, with many carrying the Indian flag and some staying out until dawn on Wednesday. "We want to send out the message that our protests will not end until we get justice," rally organizer Rimjhim Sinha, 29, told AFP at the march.

With further demonstrations called over the coming days, a senior police official told AFP on condition of anonymity that more than 2,500 extra officers had been put on active duty around Kolkata. The victim of the August attack is not being identified in keeping with Indian laws on media reporting of sexual violence cases. Her father attended Tuesday's march and told AFP that his family was still "devastated" two months after her death. "My daughter's soul will not rest in peace until she gets justice," he said.

Doctors had briefly returned to limited duties in emergency departments last month, only to strike again in defiance of a September order from India's top court to fully return to work. They say that the state government's promises to upgrade lighting, CCTV cameras and other security measures in hospitals have not been fulfilled. Tens of thousands of ordinary Indians took part in the protests that followed the August attack. One man has been detained over the murder but the West Bengal government has faced public criticism for its handling of the investigation. Authorities sacked the city's police chief and top health ministry officials. — AFP

## Driven out of Iran, Afghan refugees tell of ordeal

**ISLAM QALA, Afghanistan:** At the border with Iran, streams of Afghan refugees return with children in their arms, their entire worldly possessions contained in a large bag. Every day up to 3,000 Afghans — some who were born in Iran — arrive back in their home country after a failed attempt at a better life. "Refugees face a lot of physical and mental torture," Abdul Ghani Qazizada, responsible for registering the arrivals in the border town of Islam Qala, told AFP.

Many entered Iran illegally or let their visas expire. Nearly 90 percent have been deported, with the rest returning voluntarily. The rate of expulsions has increased "in the last six months," said Qazizada. "They are warned there (in Iran) that they must leave within one week, or anyone above 18 must deposit 100 million toman (\$2,375) in the bank," he said. "These are the people who return to Afghanistan voluntarily because of this problem."

These refugees are registered by the Afghan authorities and examined by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). To rebuild their lives, they are given 2,000 Afghani (\$29) per person if they arrive with their family, but nothing if they are alone.



**An Afghan refugee sits with his children at a registration center after their deportation from Iran.**

water," he said, his little girl wearing a pink T-shirt with rabbits on it sat by his side.

### Metal batons

Tears flow from Fazila Qaderi, 26, as she recounts the ordeal she and her husband endured in the Karaj camp near the capital Tehran. The guards "beat us a lot for six or seven days with metal batons", making no distinction between men and women.

"Yesterday I told (the guards): 'kill me or send us back to Afghanistan'." They arrived in Iran four years ago, having paid a smuggler, as farm workers in the central-northern province of Qazvin. Their new life had started well, until she was hospitalized for 12 days for a severe allergy and needed an

operation. "We gave \$1,200 to the doctor for the surgery and they said they would do it the next day. When we went back, the security officials took us," she explained.

"We had a three-room apartment full of belongings, we couldn't take a single thing with us," she continued. "We had paid 50 million toman to the owner in advance, we couldn't take that back either," nor the advance to the doctor. Now they have no money to pay for the trip back to their home province of Takhar in northeastern Afghanistan.

### Torn passports

Day labourer Abdul Basir, 29, said he was arrested at work and expelled from Iran, despite having a valid passport and visa. "With a passport I ended up in the military camp (in Karaj) for 10 days," he said. "What government can do that?" With his hands and feet tied, he was taken away in a bus with 70 to 80 people standing, and once at the camp he was beaten to the point he couldn't move. He described "broken hands and feet, people fainting, maybe even dead" and thirst and hunger. "There were elderly Afghans, women and children," he said, adding that people were taken away and not seen again.

He also claimed that security personnel tore up Afghan passports or valid Iranian residence permits. He was deported back to Afghanistan without his Afghan passport, which he paid \$340 for so he could flee unemployment in Herat province. "Now, I don't have any money to pay for the bus to go home," he said. — AFP



## Business

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2024

# Oil breaks above \$75 on Mideast jitters

## Global stocks waver amid escalating geopolitical tensions

**LONDON:** Oil traded above \$75 a barrel while global stock markets wavered on Wednesday as Iran's missile attack on Zionist entity fanned fears of a Middle East-wide conflict. Brent crude, the international benchmark, topped \$75 per barrel while West Texas Intermediate, the US contract, was above \$72, with both more than three percent higher.

Iran launched its second direct attack on Zionist entity in history on Tuesday, firing what it said were 200 missiles. The attack sent oil prices surging by as much as five percent on Tuesday.

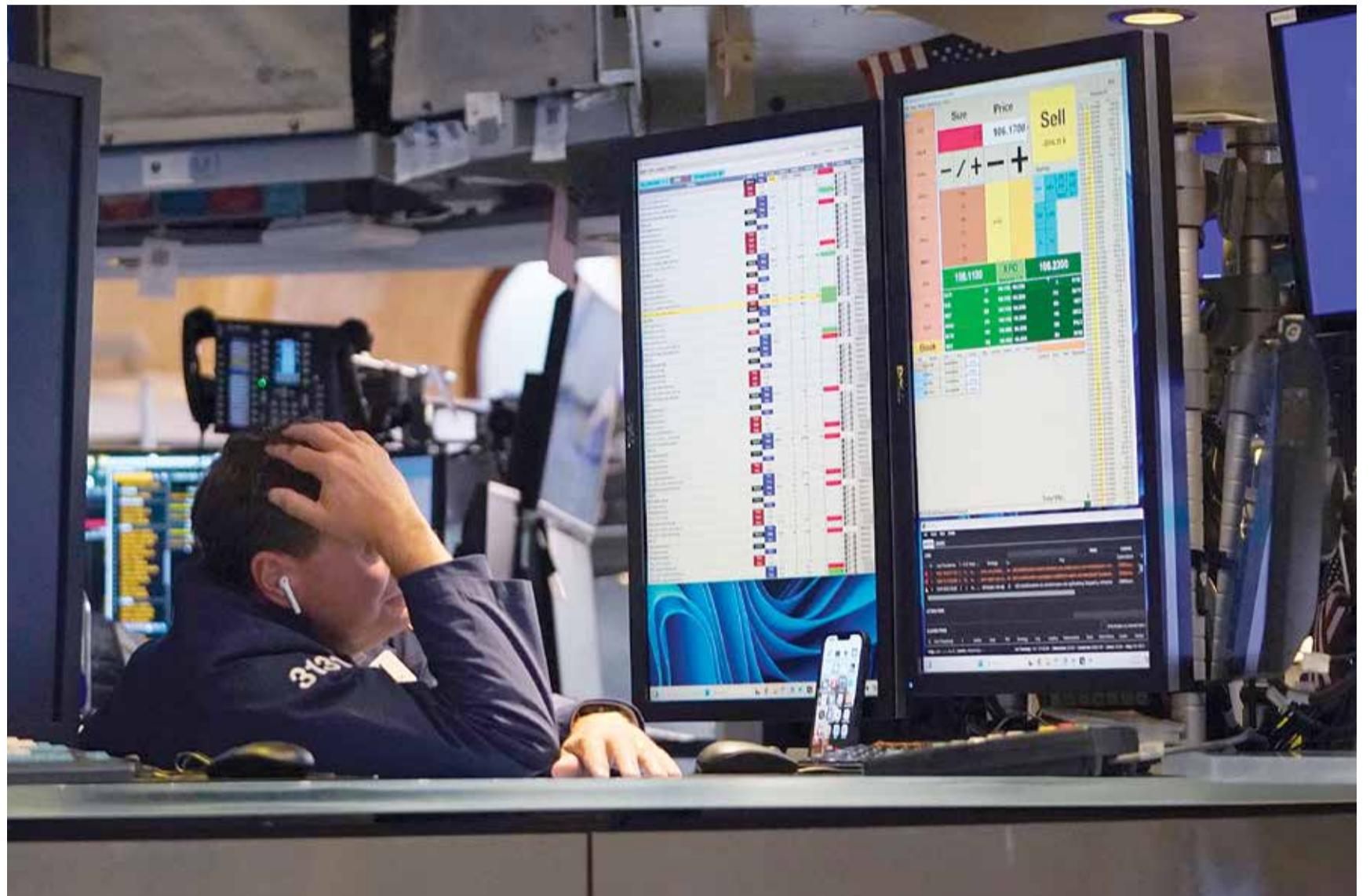
"It is all about Middle East conflict now, when it comes to oil prices," said Fawad Razaqzada, analyst at City Index and Forex.com. "The extent of Zionist entity's potential response to Iran will influence how much further geopolitical risk markets are likely to factor in," he said. Prices could fall if Zionist entity's has a "measured" response and avoids hitting Iran's nuclear facilities, he said.

"However, if Zionist entity lures in the US in its fight, or responds with an even bigger attack this time, then watch out for oil prices to potentially sky rocket," Razaqzada added in a note. Naem Aslam, analyst at Zaye Capital, said prices could be "flirting near the \$100" mark if a really serious threat materializes.

Oil prices had been struggling this year due to concerns over weakness in the Chinese economy and expectations of higher production from Saudi Arabia and seven other members of the OPEC+ crude cartel. "With Zionist entity now expected to retaliate, the chances of further escalation are high, prompting a pivot in (oil) market sentiment from concerns over excess supply to fears of shortages," said Ricardo Evangelista, senior analyst at ActivTrades.

Equity markets were mixed in Europe and New York, with the Dow flat and the tech-heavy Nasdaq and broad-based S&P 500 in the red in early trading. Frankfurt fell and Paris was flat in afternoon deals but London's top-tier FTSE 100 index rose slightly, helped by share-price gains for oil giants BP and Shell.

Hong Kong's stock market surged more than six percent by the close, continuing a sharp rally after China last week unveiled a raft of measures to boost its economy, particularly the troubled property sector. Markets were closed in Shanghai and Shenzhen for a week-long holiday, hav-



NEW YORK: A trader works on the floor at the New York Stock Exchange.—AFP

ing also zoomed higher before the break. Tokyo fell more than two percent.

Property developers led the surge in Hong Kong on Wednesday, with Agile Group rocket-

ing 160 percent higher and Sunac China Holdings up more than 75 percent. However, the firms were still at just a fraction of their prices three years ago. While the Middle East conflict has in-

vestors worried, they remain focused on the US Federal Reserve's future plans for interest rates and will look closely at jobs data Friday for clues about the central bank's next move. — AFP

## UK PM Starmer tries to woo wary investors

**LONDON:** British Prime Minister Keir Starmer faces a tough sales job this month in his first high-profile meeting with international investors whose cash he needs to accelerate economic growth and halt a sense of national decline. Starmer will host executives from global banks, power firms and other multinationals on Oct 14, hoping that political volatility in France, Germany and the United States will enhance Britain's attractiveness. But big questions hang over how he will tackle the problems that hampered previous governments.

Years of Brexit-linked political chaos may have ended with his Labour Party's big election win, but the near-collapse of utility Thames Water has unsettled investors. Britain's privatized water industry is under fire for polluting rivers with sewage amid accusations that profit has been prioritized over the environment. Current investors in Thames Water blame regulators for limiting bill rises they say are needed to fund investment.

"We're talking to international investors, and they're very nervous about the UK," Luke Hickmore, investment director at investment firm abrdn - a Thames Water creditor - said.

"That's largely around the uncertainty on regulation." Britain needs tens of billions of pounds annually to upgrade infrastructure to meet Starmer's promise to double economic growth and raise the tax revenues needed to improve public services. But it cannot match the big subsidies on offer in the United States and euro zone for the net-zero transition. Four days after July's election, finance minister Rachel Reeves outlined plans to unblock planning and financing constraints on infrastructure and home-building.

But details remain scant and the government has yet to appoint an investment minister. "There is definitely a sense that they have identified some of the problems, but it's very early days and there are a lot of unanswered questions," Raoul Ruparel, director of the Boston Consulting Group's Centre for Growth, said.

Low rates of return on private investment - and often over-complicated contractual terms - were compounded by elevated labor and energy costs and skills shortages, he said. "The rest of Europe is similar, but the UK is a different story because of its long-running under-investment problem."

Britain ranked 28th among 31 countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development for business investment as a percentage of national income in 2022, according to the Institute for Public Policy Research think tank. UK government officials say they are making progress, pointing to recent announcements like a 10 billion-pound (\$13.3 billion) investment by private equity firm Blackstone in an AI data center and a planned 8 billion-pound investment by Amazon. — Reuters

## Tech Barcelona, Kuwait collaborate to promote technological innovation

**BARCELONA:** Tech Barcelona has signed a collaboration agreement with the Artificial Intelligence Association of Kuwait (AAIOT), represented by its president, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Sabah, a member of the Kuwaiti royal family. The agreement aims to foster collaboration on technological innovation projects, with a particular focus on artificial intelligence, and create new business opportunities at an international level. Kuwait is emerging as a relevant player in the tech sector, thanks to its Vision 2035 program, which seeks to diversify the economy and promote digital transformation. The country has made significant investments in technological infrastructure and has nurtured a startup ecosystem supported by a new generation of STEM-trained professionals.

## White House sides with union as port strike enters 2nd day

**NEW YORK:** President Joe Biden's administration heaped pressure on US port employers to raise their offer to secure a labor deal with dockworkers on strike for a second day on Wednesday, choking half the country's ocean shipping. The strike by the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) union has blocked goods from food to automobile shipments across dozens of ports from Maine to Texas, a disruption that analysts warn will cost the economy billions of dollars a day.

More than 38 container vessels were already backed up at US ports by Tuesday, compared with just three on Sunday before the strike, according to Everstream Analytics. "Foreign ocean carriers have made record profits since the pandemic, when longshoremen put themselves at risk to keep ports open. It's time those ocean carriers offered a strong and fair contract that reflects ILA workers' contribution to our economy and to their record profits," Biden said in a post on X late on Tuesday.

He directed his team to monitor for potential price gouging activity that benefits foreign ocean carriers, the White House said. The ILA, which represents 45,000 port workers, launched its strike just after midnight on Tuesday after negotiations with the United States Maritime Alliance (USMX) for a new six-year contract collapsed.

USMX had offered the union a 50 percent wage hike, but the ILA's fiery leader, Harold Daggett, said the union is pushing for more, including a \$5 per hour raise for each year of the new six-year contract and an end to port automation projects that threaten union jobs. "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," Daggett said on Tuesday.

Hundreds of dockworkers demonstrated at a

Its strategic location in the Gulf and international partnerships position Kuwait as a leading tech hub in the region. Sheikh Mohammad Al-Sabah, president of AAIOT, stated, "This agreement presents an exceptional opportunity to exchange knowledge and resources, driving the development of artificial intelligence in both regions." Miguel Vicente, president of Tech Barcelona, highlighted that "this collaboration provides access to new technology and positions Tech Barcelona as a key player in global digital transformation, allowing us to expand our networks and strengthen the presence of our members and partners in international markets."

Tech Barcelona is the largest tech association in Southern Europe, representing over 1,400 members and 90 partner organizations, leading in their sectors. The agreement ceremony was attended by Sheikh Mohammad Al-Sabah, President of AAIOT; Cristina Martin Blasi, Partner in Spain and International Advisor of AAIOT; Miguel Vicente, President of Tech Barcelona; Miquel Marti, CEO of Tech Barcelona; and Juan Baselga, Director of Partnerships and Institutional Relations of Tech Barcelona.



Tech Barcelona signs collaboration agreement with the Artificial Intelligence Association of Kuwait.



BALTIMORE: Longshoremen with the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) and their supporters picket outside of the Dundalk Marine Terminal at the Port of Baltimore. — AFP

New York City area shipping terminal in Elizabeth, New Jersey, on Tuesday, carrying signs and shouting slogans like "ILA all the way!" as music blared and vendors hawked food. Morgan Stanley economists said in a late Tuesday note that the strike could hit growth and raise inflation "but only if it is long-lasting," noting that the implication for transport should be limited unless the strike lingers. Retailers accounting for about half of all container shipping volume said they have been busily implementing backup plans to minimize the impact of the strike as they head into the winter holiday sales season. Shares of shipper Maersk fell 2 percent in Copenhagen on Wednesday, while ZIM Integrated Shipping dipped 4 percent in pre-market action in New York.

The strike, the ILA's first major stoppage since 1977, is worrying businesses that rely on ocean

shipping to export their wares or secure crucial imports. It affects 36 ports - including New York, Baltimore and Houston - that handle a range of containerized goods ranging from bananas to clothing to cars.

Roughly half of US imports arrive via water, while 37 percent of exports are waterborne, Morgan Stanley noted. The walkout could cost the American economy roughly \$5 billion a day, JP Morgan analysts estimate. The National Retail Federation called on Biden's administration to use its federal authority to halt the strike, saying the walkout could have "devastating consequences" for the economy. Republicans, including Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin, have also called on Biden to end the strike, warning of its effect on the economy. Biden has repeatedly said he will not do so. — Reuters



## Business

# Global Finance recognizes Boubyan Bank with six prestigious awards

## Recognition for leading the global Islamic digital banking scene for a full decade



Abdullah Al-Mejhem receiving the awards during Global Finance ceremony.



Zaid Al-Sadoun receiving two awards for Business Banking Department serving SMEs.

KUWAIT: Global Finance, the internationally renowned publication, has crowned Boubyan Bank's successes with six prestigious awards of its annual awards that recognize the most outstanding and innovative financial and banking institutions in offering consumer and digital banking services for the year 2024. This took place during a special ceremony in the presence of a group of elite bankers, economists, and leaders from various economic sectors.

Boubyan Bank was uniquely recognized with the award for the "World's Best Islamic Digital Bank" for the tenth year in a row, thereby reinforcing its digital leadership over a full decade atop all Islamic institutions in the banking sector, coupled with receiving a similar award in the same domain across the Middle East and Kuwait, in addition to the award for the "Best Corporate/Institutional Digital Bank in Kuwait".

Additionally, the bank's Business Banking Department serving SMEs, received two awards for the "Best SME Banking/SME Platform in Kuwait" and the "World's Best SME Payments Innovation".

During a ceremony held in London, Abdullah Al-Mejhem – Chief Private Banking and Consumer Banking, and Zaid Al-Sadoun, Assistant General Manager - Business Banking, received the awards on behalf of the bank.

On this occasion, Al-Mejhem stated: "We are very delighted with this special recognition, which crowns our ceaseless efforts towards achieving the best unexpected results and our commitment to employing cutting-edge technology. This happens while keeping up with, and accelerating, banking innovations to reinforce the success of Boubyan's program for inclusiveness, which aligns well with the bank's status as a leader in innovation and in adopting many emerging technologies. Our goal from all that is to shift conventional work environments to a fully digitalized one to lead the financial sector in Kuwait and the region."

**The best Islamic digital bank, globally, regionally and domestically**

"Our digital excellence continued year after year culminating in our leadership for 10 consecutive years in Islamic digital banking globally to rank among top and leading regional and international banking institutions. This is but the fruit of long years of hard work, successful strategies, and outlook with a vision about the changes in the Islamic digital banking scene, thus largely contributing to the successful investment in - and making the roadmap for - digital growth", he added.

He went on to elaborate: "Through Boubyan's strategy, we focused on setting digital innovation methodologies that contributed to the execution of

### Abdullah Al-Mejhem

- Today, we reinforce our global Islamic banking leadership for 10 years in a row among top financial institutions
- Setting digital innovation methodologies contributed to the execution of our digital transformation strategy and sustainable enterprise excellence

the digital transformation strategy and sustainable enterprise excellence. We made a comprehensive and integrated ecosystem of digital solutions and services, which made a leap and full transformation in the concept of digitalization by upgrading the infrastructure and reinforcing our operational performance in order to provide unique and cutting-edge offerings through Boubyan's platform for digital services, its ITMs, and branches' network, thus reinforcing our excellence in providing a smooth digital banking experience that caters for the financial needs of all segments of customers."

Al-Mejhem pointed out: "Despite the fierce competition among top financial institutions, we managed to innovate a group of digital services and solutions on a par with global ones in terms of efficiency and outstanding performance. This focused on shaping a more advanced future so that Boubyan's platform for retail, corporate, and SMEs' digital services and solutions may offer a diverse group of unique digital

solutions and state-of-the-art digital payment solutions to keep up with our customers' expectations and to meet the needs of their growing business in a manner that ensures swifter and smoother execution of transactions."

He added: "These digital awards confirm our success in exceeding all expectations, as we now stand with a new unprecedented digital achievement that puts many responsibilities and challenges ahead of us to maintain such a trust, and drives us to exert more efforts to make greater achievements across all levels."

### Best SME banking/SME platform in Kuwait

On his part, Al-Sadoun stated: "Boubyan has demonstrated excellence and keenness on providing its business banking customers with the best digital banking solutions. Ever since the formation of the Business Banking Department at Boubyan, we have managed to prove our leadership in providing the necessary financial and advisory support to entre-

preneurs to enable them to translate their ideas into reality. The bank further incentivizes their growth opportunities, considering them a key pillar to diversify the revenues of the national economy."

"The awards received by Boubyan Bank for its Business Banking Department, which serves SMEs, emphasize the bank's ceaseless efforts to enrich the experience of its entrepreneurial customers, and to give them more uniqueness, which adds value through more innovative and cutting-edge banking solutions and services to enable them to improve performance and increase productivity," he added.

In its report about the selection criteria for crowning Boubyan with both awards, Global Finance states that the bank managed over the past years to provide unique banking solutions to entrepreneurs in line with the latest developments, especially the digital ones, in order to incentivize the business environment, thus contributing to the growth special of their business across various sectors.

Al-Mejhem concluded: "We do understand that the future is yet to bring about more developments accompanied with challenges; however, we are ready to deal with any new developments related to the accelerating digital transformation in light of our track record and our creativity and innovative abilities to keep up with a comprehensive transformation of service digitalization to make services smoother, more convenient, and time-saving."

### Zaid Al-Sadoun

- The awards confirm that business banking digital solutions and services enrich the banking experience of our customers and make it more exceptional

### Why is Boubyan the best digitally across all levels?

**Global Finance recognized Boubyan Bank with the digital banking awards based on the following criteria:**

- Success of its strategy focused on investment and expansion of its digital services
- Enhancing its role in digital financial inclusion through the innovative digital solutions it offers
- Success in getting clients to use digital offerings
- Growth of customers who use digital banking services through their various channels, whether through online banking or smart phones

## Gold prices, poverty fuel illegal mining in Peru's Amazon

MISHANA, Peru: The Nanay River meanders through Peru's Amazon jungle supplying water to Iquitos city's half a million inhabitants. But there are growing concerns about the quality of this water as illegal gold mining, which uses the toxic metal mercury to extract gold, has surged in Peru's Amazon region since the COVID-19 pandemic. Villagers in the northern rainforest region of Loreto have become more dependent on illegal mining for their livelihood as the pandemic hit the economy and the illegal activity became more profitable. Gold prices have soared nearly 30 percent so far in 2024 and are on course for their biggest annual rise since 2010.

The problem is that illegal miners use the metal to extract gold particles from the river silt and then burn off the mercury, which turns to vapor and is absorbed by the surrounding plants, soil and river, said Claudia Vega, head of the mercury program at the Center for Amazonian Scientific Innovation.

Her team regularly tests communities and their main staple—river fish—for mercury. "(Miners) take the gold but the mercury stays here in the Amazon," Vega told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "What the miners don't like to talk about is that mercury is a poison."

Illegal mining has spread across Peru's Amazon

region and the Andes since the COVID-19 pandemic sent the economy into recession, fuelling unemployment and pushing millions of people back into poverty. About 29 percent of Peru's population struggled with poverty in 2023, up from 20.2 percent in 2019, according to the country's statistics institute. At the same time, rising gold prices have made illegal mining attractive in a poor region. A dredger operating for 24 hours can rake in 100g or \$8,000 worth of gold at \$80 per single gram, said Herman Ruiz, an official at the National Forestry and Wildlife Service (SERFOR) and head of the Allpahuayo-Mishana National Reserve.

Park rangers and local community patrols have managed to keep mining out of the Allpahuayo-Mishana National Reserve in the lower part of the Nanay River, but satellite images sourced by NGO Amazon Conservación show dozens of dredgers higher up in the Alto Nanay-Pintuyacu-Chambira protected area. Indeed, a 2023 report by the Monitoring of the Andean Amazon Project (MAAP) showed illegal mining was present in 11 of Loreto's largest rivers that year, including Nanay, but the latter had three times the number of dredgers than all other rivers combined.

According to the report, satellite images detected 98 dredgers in the Nanay River in the middle of 2023, having spotted none at the beginning of 2020. Ruiz said the illegal mining in Loreto is mainly led by criminal groups from Colombia who recruit locals and train them to build simple dredgers from a converted lorry engine and a wooden raft. Some Brazilians and Venezuelans working for criminal organizations are also involved, he said. A Colum-



YANAQUIHUA: Relatives of miners wait at the entrance of the La Esperanza mine, where at least 27 people died in the Yanaquihua district of Arequipa, southern Peru. — AFP

bian gang believed to include dissident members of the now-demobilized Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) rebels uses violence to enforce its rule in remote areas and dominates illegal gold and cocaine trafficking, according to a security official, who asked not be named because of the risk to his safety.

Carlos Castro, the chief environmental prosecutor for Loreto, said it is becoming increasingly difficult for authorities to curb illegal mining activity as it spreads to desolate areas.

He said it can take 12 hours to reach remote outposts by boat and it is even more difficult to reach them by air. "There is no place to land... because of the curves of this (river) basin," he said. The fact that the miners now have access to the internet and can warn one another that the police is coming also makes curbing the illegal mining harder, said Ruiz. The miners installed satellite dishes in the area in recent years, he said. Meanwhile, it has become increasingly risky to deal with the illegal miners. — Reuters



# ABK receives six prestigious awards from Global Finance

## Bank solidifies its position as a leader in the banking sector



Ahmad Al-Duwaisan, Abdulaziz Jawad, Khalil Al-Qattan and Sager Albenali during the Global Finance award ceremony.



The large attendance during the ceremony.

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is proud to announce that it has won six prestigious awards from Global Finance, solidifying its position as a leader in the banking sector. The awards include: Best Consumer Digital Bank in Kuwait; Best Consumer Digital Bank in the Middle East; Best Mobile Banking Adaptive Site in Kuwait; Best in Transformation in Kuwait; Best User Experience (UX) Design in Kuwait; and Best User Experience (UX) Design in the Middle East.

These accolades enhance ABK's record of achievements and demonstrate the effectiveness of its digital transformation strategy, aimed at creating a seamless customer experience across all channels. The awards are a testament to the Bank's commitment to innovation, per-



formance improvement, and implementation of state-of-the-art digital services. The award ceremony took place in London, attended by Ahmad Al-Duwaisan, Acting CEO-Kuwait; Abdulaziz Jawad, Chief Strategy Officer; Khalil Al-Qattan, General Manager of Digital Transformation and Innovation; and Sager Albenali, Chief Communications Officer. The event brought together banking professionals from around the globe to celebrate achievements in the industry.

Al-Duwaisan remarked, "We take pride in receiving this recognition from Global Finance, which reflects the significant trust we have gained from specialized institutions evaluating performance



### • Ahmad Al-Duwaisan:

This confirms our commitment to enhancing our operations and maintaining a strong competitive position in Kuwait's banking landscape.



### • Abdulaziz Jawad:

There is no doubt that these awards demonstrate the innovation of our team and their substantial achievements.



in the banking sector. This confirms our commitment to enhancing our operations and maintaining a strong competitive position in Kuwait's banking landscape." Al-Duwaisan highlighted that the awards signify continued growth in ABK's financial indicators, achieved through prudent planning and a strategic focus on innovation. "We are dedicated to keeping pace

with the rapid changes in the banking industry to ensure our customers receive exceptional service and to position ABK as their preferred banking partner." He added that these awards reflect the Bank's leading position amidst Kuwait's highly competitive banking sector. It also serves as testament to the professionalism of its employees, and the Bank's strive

to invest in developing their capabilities and enhance their ability to use digital technologies to bring about positive change in serving all customer segments and meeting their diverse requirements and needs. On his part, Jawad emphasized, "These awards are evidence of our excellence and commitment to improving customer service. We are dedicated to innovating new solutions for a seamless banking experience while maintaining the highest levels of security and reliability. Furthermore, it is a reflection of our commitment to offering simpler banking services to offer individuals and corporates with a worthwhile experience."

Jawad added, "We are keen to provide the best banking solutions according to the highest levels of quality and speed, and we work to study customers' needs in order to meet them in the best possible way. There is no doubt that these awards demonstrate the innovation of our team and their substantial achievements."

He also noted that ABK recently launched an updated website and is in the final stages of developing its mobile application, designed to enhance digital services for customers around the clock. By prioritizing customer needs and leveraging market insights, ABK aims to attract and engage a diverse clientele. This is part of its five-year strategy which insists on conducting research to attest to the success of the Bank's initia-



tives across various segments and sectors. In closing, Jawad expressed gratitude to Global Finance for recognizing the Bank's efforts, emphasizing ABK's commitment to achieving further milestones and contributing to the evolution of the banking industry in Kuwait. ABK remains dedicated to participating in local and regional events to enhance its competitive position and build trust with institutions worldwide.

## No signs of US labor market deterioration

WASHINGTON: US job openings unexpectedly increased in August after two straight monthly decreases, but hiring was soft and consistent with a slowing labor market that keeps the Federal Reserve on track to cut interest rates again in November. The Labor Department's Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, or JOLTS report, on Tuesday also showed layoffs declining. There were 1.13 job openings for every unemployed person in August compared to 1.08 in July.

Resignations were the lowest in four years, a sign that Americans are growing less confident in the jobs market. Though Fed Chair Jerome Powell on Monday pushed against investors' expectations for another half-percentage-point rate reduction, he described labor market conditions as having clearly cooled over the past year, noting that "workers now view jobs as somewhat less available than they were in 2019."

"Today's JOLTS estimates will be regarded as encouraging evidence that labor demand is stabilizing, implying that further increases in the unemployment rate are likely to be limited," said Jonathan Millar, a senior economist at Barclays. "The widening gap between hiring and separations likely keeps the Fed on course for a 25 basis points cut in November."

Job openings, a measure of labor demand, rebounded by 329,000 to 8,040 million by the last day of August, the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics said. Data for July was revised higher to show 7.711 million unfilled positions instead of the previously reported 7.673 million.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast 7.660 million job openings. The rise in vacancies was led by the construction industry, with 138,000 job openings. There were 78,000 unfilled positions in state and local government, excluding education. But job openings in the 'other services' category fell 93,000.

The job openings rate increased to 4.8 percent from 4.6 percent in July. Businesses with 10 to 49



NEW YORK: An employment sign is seen on the window of a FedEx store on August 2, 2024 in New York City. — AFP

employees reported 203,000 more job openings. Medium-sized and large companies saw a decline in vacancies. Hires slipped 99,000 to 5.317 million, pulled down by declines in retail trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities as well as manufacturing, healthcare and social assistance. Hires also fell at hotels, restaurants and bars.

The hires rate dropped to 3.3 percent from 3.4 percent in July. Hires dropped 180,000 among companies with 10 to 49 workers, suggesting a shortage of workers could be an issue. Layoffs declined by 105,000 to 1.608 million. There were decreases in layoffs in the retail trade and healthcare and social assistance sectors as well as at hotels, restaurants and bars. Layoffs, however, increased in the professional and business services industry. Small, medium-sized and large employers all reported a decline in layoffs.

Resignations dropped 159,000 to 3.084 million, the lowest level since August 2020. That pushed the quits rates to a four-year low of 1.9 percent from 2.0 percent in July, which should help to curb wage inflation. The slowdown in the labor market is being

driven by cooler hiring following 525 basis points worth of rate hikes from the US central bank in 2022 and 2023 to combat inflation. Price pressures have abated considerably allowing the Fed to shift focus to the labor market.

The central bank last month cut its benchmark interest rate by an unusually large 50 basis points to the 4.75 percent-5.00 percent range, the first reduction in borrowing costs since 2020, in a nod to rising concerns over the labor market's health. The Fed is expected to cut interest rates again in November and December. September's employment report, due on Friday is likely to show nonfarm payrolls increased by 140,000 jobs last month after rising by 142,000 in August, according to a Reuters survey. That would be well below the average monthly gain of 202,000 jobs over the past 12 months.

The unemployment rate is forecast to be unchanged at 4.2 percent. It has risen from 3.4 percent in April 2023 as a surge in immigration boosted labor supply. — Reuters

## Russia stops grain transit of Kazakh grain in retaliation

MOSCOW: Russia effectively banned the transit and import of Kazakh grain and some other agricultural products on phytosanitary grounds, which some Kazakh exporters viewed as retaliation for Kazakhstan's earlier ban on Russian grain supplies.

Kazakhstan plans to harvest a record 27.7 million metric tons of grain this year, with an estimated 9 million tons destined for export. Kazakhstan exports its grain to Europe and Turkey through Russian seaports. The Russian agricultural watchdog said in a statement that from Sept. 23, its systems would automatically block the issuance of phytosanitary certificates for grain, grain products, sunflower seeds, tomatoes, and peppers from Kazakhstan.

The absence of such certificates implies that the goods cannot cross the border. The agency stated that the measure aimed at "preservation of Russia's phytosanitary well-being, the development of greenhouse complexes, domestic seed production, and the volumes of export of Russian grain and fruit and vegetable products." Kazakhstan introduced a full ban on wheat imports, including from Russia, from Aug. 21, citing expectations of a record harvest and significant carry-over stocks from last year.

"I think it is an official warning that Russia will firmly defend its economic interests," Kazakhstan's Grain Union head, Evgeny Karabanov, told Reuters. He said Kazakhstan's agriculture ministry asked for an official clarification from its Russian counterpart. Kazakhstan's grain lobby groups also accused Russian exporters of illegally supplying grain to Kazakhstan for further re-export to other Central Asian countries and Afghanistan, thereby dodging Kazakh taxes. Russia, itself a major grain producer and the world's biggest wheat exporter, has been eyeing the Kazakh grain market as it seeks to bolster its position as a global agricultural superpower. Russian grain has also become more competitive in Central Asia due to the ruble's recent weakness. — Reuters



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2024

## Parkrun marks 20 years of a free weekly jog, run... or walk

When Paul Sinton-Hewitt created Parkrun, only 13 people turned out at a London park. Twenty years on, millions jog, run or walk five kilometers (3.1 miles) every week. Come rain or shine, runners from around the world brave the ever-constant 9:00 am start to race to the finish line at one of the 2,500 Parkruns across 23 countries. "If someone had said to me 20 years ago that Parkrun was going to be such a phenomenon, I would certainly have walked away, saying that it was too much for me," Sinton-Hewitt told AFP.

"What began as a small gathering has become a powerful force for good, promoting health, happiness and togetherness." On October 5, walkers, runners and the volunteers who give up their Saturday mornings to point the way, shout encouragement and dutifully clock times will mark two decades of Parkrun. On the green grass of Hampstead Heath in north London, some 400 people take part every week, arriving just before the start either on their own or as a group, with friends or to meet new ones. Afterwards, everyone is invited to the park cafe.

"It's the best way to start the weekend," said Olivia Unwin, a 26-year-old writer who took part in her first Parkrun last year and has since run 48. "I don't run fast but that's not a problem. I've met lots of friends. It gets me awake and I never regret going." Martin Boyle does Parkrun with his two teenage sons. "It's a family thing, a combination of fun and competition," he said. "It's good for them and they see their improvement." Some participants wear a blue t-shirt with "500" on it, signifying that they have



Competitors take part in a weekly Parkrun running event at Hampstead Heath in north London. — AFP photos



are now Parkruns from Australia and Zimbabwe to Germany and Ireland. Lithuania was the most recent country to join. The phenomenon, however, has failed to take hold in some countries, notably France, where a medical certificate to participate is compulsory. But in 20 years its growth has been astonishing: more than six million people have taken part, with over 100 million finishers, not to mention the 900,000 volunteers to organize events.

Parkruns only stopped during Covid -- and it has now branched out to children's events over two kilometers on Sunday morning and even to 25 prisons. The Christmas run is one of the biggest of the year and often sees runners in costume. "A lot of people are lonely on Christmas Day and this is an opportunity for lonely people to come together and meet," said Sinton-Hewitt. "There are families who now come out before they open their presents." —AFP

reached the Holy Grail of more than 500 Parkruns. Len Voralia is one of them. At 82, he has run 612. "I'm slowing down. I make an effort," he said, vowing to keep turning up every Saturday until he is at least 90.

### Mental health

Runners know exactly how long it has taken them to complete the course, thanks to an individual bar code they hand in at the finish. "If some want to compete, if they want to be the fastest, they're welcome and we celebrate that," said Sinton-Hewitt. But everyone of all abilities is welcome, he said. "If others just want to walk and get some exercise, they're just as welcome. Exercise is natural, it can be fun. It doesn't have to be hard," he added.

Sinton-Hewitt was 44 when he created Parkrun after getting injured while training for a marathon. "I was aware that I could use running as a very good tool to control my moods to help me deal with difficult times. Running helped me manage my mental health," he said. From the first event at his local Bushy Park, in southwest London, a second was organized in nearby Wimbledon. The first overseas event was in Denmark and there



Competitors' bags are pictured during a weekly Parkrun running event at Hampstead Heath in north London.



Competitors gather to take part in a weekly Parkrun running event at Hampstead Heath in north London.

## Cards to consoles: Nintendo opens first museum

Nintendo opened its first museum on Wednesday in a renovated factory in Kyoto, showcasing the long history of the Japanese video game giant from playing cards to "Super Mario". The company began life in 1889 producing Japanese playing cards called "hanafuda" as well as Western-style ones. Nintendo launched its first home video-game machines in 1977. Many exhibits at the museum in Kyoto's Uji city are interactive -- including an area where two people can play Mario and Donkey Kong games together on a giant console.

Other zones focus on Nintendo's vintage products. For example, there is a digital version of an ancient Japanese poetry game, and a workshop for fans to create their own hanafuda cards. Tickets, priced at 3,300 yen (\$22.60) for adults and less for children, are already sold out for October and November. "Visitors can learn about Nintendo's commitment to manufacturing that places importance on play and originality," Shigeru Miyamoto, the renowned creator of "Super Mario" and other games said in a video in August.

The "Super Mario" games were launched in 1985, two years after the company began selling its classic Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) console. The museum is part of efforts by Nintendo to broaden its brand exposure, including with a smash-hit animated movie last year featuring the Italian plumber and his colorful crew. The company has also built a "Super Nintendo World" zone at the Universal Studios Japan theme park, featuring a Mario Kart ride with a real-life Bowser's Castle.



This file photo shows signage in the courtyard of the new Nintendo Museum, located inside a renovated old factory, during a media preview in suburbs of Kyoto. — AFP photos

A similar area is set to open at the park's huge Orlando location next year. Nintendo first announced plans for the museum in 2021. Kensaku Namera, an analyst at Nomura Securities, told AFP that the museum fits into Nintendo's strategy as a place where "people can interact" with its gaming franchises. Re-

purposing an old factory built in 1969, which was once used by Nintendo for producing playing cards and later repairing consoles, is also a canny move, he said. "It's an effective reuse of assets" by Nintendo, Namera said. —AFP



This file photo shows large console-shaped pillows in the gift shop during a media preview of the new Nintendo Museum.



This file photo shows visitors playing the shooting game "Zapper and Scope SP" during a media preview of the new Nintendo Museum.





A visitor looks at a painting titled "Composition (Les velours)" (center) by French artist Henri Matisse during a press visit of the exhibition "Matisse - invitation au voyage" at the Beyeler foundation in Riehen near Basel.—AFP



A visitor looks at a painting (left) titled "Interieur, bocal de poissons rouges" by French artist Henri Matisse during a press visit of the exhibition "Matisse - invitation au voyage" at the Beyeler foundation in Riehen near Basel.

## Matisse retrospective traces journey through artist's career

A new Henri Matisse retrospective in Switzerland offers visitors a rare chance to follow his artistic journey via works from throughout the career of one of modern art's godfathers. The Fondation Beyeler museum on the outskirts of Basel has brought together 72 works by the French artist, who died in 1954 aged 84.

They include paintings, sculptures and cut-out paper collages from major international museums and private collections, some of which have not been seen in Europe for more than three decades. The exhibition is the first Matisse retrospective in Switzerland and the German-speaking world in almost 20 years.

### Open invitation

The "Matisse -- Invitation to the Voyage" exhibition is named after Charles Baudelaire's poem, from which the artist took the phrase "Luxe, Calme et Volupte" for the title of his pivotal 1904 oil painting. "The invitation to travel expresses in a particular way the quintessential aesthetic of Matisse," the exhibition's curator Raphael Bouvier told AFP, noting that the painter referred to Baudelaire's poem "several times in his artistic work".

Travel is an "essential subject" in his life, with Matisse having worked and drawn inspiration in the south of France, Tangiers, New York and Tahiti. "The exhibition as a retrospective is really conceived as an invitation to voyage into the work of Henri Matisse,"

Bouvier said. It traces the artist's footsteps from his beginnings in Paris to Collioure in southwest France, where he began to revolutionize art in his Fauvism period "by liberating color", Bouvier said. It continues up to his late period, inspired by memories of his trip to the South Pacific.

### Blue Nudes

Towards the end of his life, after undergoing abdominal surgery for cancer, Matisse turned to paper cut-out collages, with the birds and seaweed inspired by the fauna and flora he observed during his trip to Tahiti in 1930.

Matisse occupied a special place in the collection of Ernst Beyeler, the Basel art dealer and collector behind the museum. A bookseller in his early days, Beyeler launched himself into the art market by selling Japanese prints in his shop before transforming it into a gallery in the early 1950s, where Pablo Picasso and Matisse featured prominently.

Beyeler, who died in 2010 aged 88, particularly liked Matisse's late works because he saw a "great artistic revolution" in paper cut-outs, Samuel Keller, the foundation's director, told AFP. The exhibition notably covers his iconic "Blue Nudes" cut-out series.

### 'Complete picture'

Though Matisse exhibitions regularly cover certain aspects of his work, retrospectives of his entire career are "more rare", Keller said. In 2020, the Centre Pompidou in Paris dedicated a major exhibition to the artist, but it was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and



A visitor looks at a paintings titled 'La berge' (left) and 'Nature morte au pelagronium' by French artist Henri Matisse during a press visit of the exhibition "Matisse - invitation au voyage".



A visitor reads the introductory text of the exhibition "Matisse - invitation au voyage" during a press visit.

its lockdowns, meaning relatively few people saw it. "With major artists like Matisse or Picasso, we could put together many different exhibitions because there are so many aspects to their work," for example focusing on the 1930s, or the paper cut-outs, Keller said.

"But in each generation, it is important that the public has the chance to see a retrospective, to have a complete picture of the development from young artist to old master." The exhibition runs until January 25. —AFP



A visitor stands next to (from left) busts Jeannette (IV), Jeannette (V) and Jeannette (III) by French artist Henri Matisse during a press visit of the exhibition "Matisse - invitation au voyage".

## Russian pianists to play in Chopin competition under neutral flag

Russian pianists will only be allowed to enter the prestigious Chopin competition under a neutral flag and if they don't support Moscow's aggression in Ukraine, the Polish organizers said on Tuesday. Held each five years since 1927, the Frederic Chopin International Piano Competition draws pianists from across the globe to Warsaw. Winning the event opens the door to playing at prestigious venues around the world. The forthcoming event in October 2025 will be the first since Russia launched its full-scale war in Ukraine.

Host country Poland staunchly supports Kyiv's efforts to fend off the invasion. If Russian pianists "are admitted to the competition... they will perform under a neutral flag, just as athletes did at the Paris Olympics," the Chopin Institute spokesman Aleksander Laskowski told AFP. "They will also have to sign a statement in which they categorically condemn the violation of international law," Laskowski added.

Qualification for next year's contest opens on Wednesday and pianists have until December 15 to submit a video of their performance. The jury is expected to announce the contestants in March 2025,



Music enthusiasts line up to buy tickets for the XIX Frederic Chopin International Piano Competition in front of the Chopin's Institute in Warsaw. — AFP photos

when "we will find out whether... there are Russian citizens who have been admitted to the competition," Laskowski said. Tickets for the 2025 competition sold out within 30 minutes of their release online on Tuesday, the organizers said.

"The finals sold out in two minutes," Laskowski said, adding that the Chopin Institute saw people queueing for several hours for the batch of tickets only available at the box office. Previous winners of the Chopin Competition

include some of the greatest names in classical music, including Maurizio Pollini, Martha Argerich and Krystian Zimerman. The last event, held in 2021 after being deferred because of the COVID pandemic, ended with Canadian pianist Bruce Xiaoyu Liu clinching the top prize.—AFP



A woman checks tickets for the XIX Frederic Chopin International Piano Competition.



Music enthusiasts line up to buy tickets for the XIX Frederic Chopin International Piano Competition.

## Spain welcomed record number of tourists this summer



Tourists queue between the Royal Palace and the Almudena cathedral (left), in the center of Madrid, on July 6, 2024. — AFP

Spain welcomed a record 21.8 million international visitors to its shores this summer, official data showed on Wednesday, an influx of tourism that triggered some protests in the country. That figure was a 7.3 percent rise on the summer of 2023, the national statistics institute (INE) said. Spain, which is the second most popular tourist destination in the world, welcomed 10.9 million visitors in July and as many again in August, INE said.

The deluge of tourists has not pleased all Spaniards, though, with protesters making their feelings known in recent months, notably in Barcelona, Malaga in Andalusia, the Balearic Islands and the Canaries. Protesters complained about a strain on infrastructure, pollution and noise pollution. They were also angered at rising rental prices due to many properties being let out short-term to tourists at lucrative prices.

Several regions have reacted, with Barcelona saying it would end apartment rentals to tourists by 2029.

The socialist government of Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez is working on creating a register of tourist and seasonal lodgings. The most common nationality of tourists in Spain over the summer was British, with 4.17 million UK visitors. Next up were France (3.75 million), Germany (2.49 million) and Italy (1.35 million).

There was also a 13 percent increase in US tourists to 850,000. Spain hosted a total of 64.8 million tourists over the first eight months of the year—another record, according to INE. The most popular destinations they visited were Catalonia, the region that includes Barcelona, the Balearic Islands and the Canaries. With more visitors came more money and tourism revenues rose by 17.6 percent over the eight-month period to 86.7 billion euros (\$95.9 billion). —AFP



# Netflix war epic opens Asia's largest film festival



This general view shows people attending the opening ceremony of the 29th Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) at the Busan Cinema Center in Busan.

A Netflix period war drama produced by South Korean filmmaker Park Chan-wook opened Asia's largest film festival Wednesday, the first time a streaming title has kicked off the event. Directed by Kim Sang-man and featuring Korean megastar Gang Dong-won in a lead role, "Uprising" is one of 224 official entries at this year's Busan International Film Festival (BIFF), which runs until October 11. The film has attracted significant attention ahead of its world premiere thanks largely to the involvement of Park, best-known for ultra-violent thrillers like 2003's "Old Boy", which played a key role in bringing South Korean cinema to the global forefront.

Park was a screenwriter and producer on "Uprising", a story set during Korea's Joseon Dynasty about two friends who grow up together — but become enemies when war breaks



South Korean singer and actor Kwon Yuri arrives on the red carpet.

out in the country. "I believed it was a work that could appeal to the public (the most) among all the (BIFF) opening films in history," Park Do-shin, the festival's acting director, has said of the choice. Streaming-only content like Netflix's "Squid Game" and the Apple TV+ series "Pachinko" have contributed to a significant surge in the global visibility of Korean and Korean diaspora stories in recent years.

Busan's 2024 line-up reflects how that content has become an "important part of our culture," BIFF programmer Jung Han-seok said. Unveiled to the press prior to the opening ceremony, "Uprising" was a war flick that occasionally leans into the realm of gore, while exploring whether human bonds can truly transcend class and division. According to organizers, around 4,500 guests attended the opening ceremony at the Busan Cinema Center where stars like Lee Jung-jae, Gang Dong-won, Song Joong-ki, and Kim Min-ha were greeted by fans as they walked the red carpet.

### Why streaming?

The decision to open this year's edition with a major streaming title has sparked criticism within South Korea's cinema community, as BIFF has long been dedicated to supporting emerging talents in Asia as well as small-scale, independent films. "I find it disappointing that a streaming title was selected as the opening film," Kay Heeyoung Kim, who owns film studio K-Dragon, told AFP. "The challenges confronting the theatre-based physical film market and filmmakers can be partly attributed to the streaming platforms."



South Korean actor Jung Sung-il speaks during a press conference for the opening film 'Uprising' at the 29th Busan International Film Festival (BIFF).



Japanese actor Yutaka Matsushige arrives on the red carpet.



Japanese film director Kiyoshi Kurosawa arrives on the red carpet.



(From left) South Korean director Kim Sang-man, South Korean actors Gang Dong-won, Park Jeong-min, Cha Seung-won, Kim Shin-rock, Jin Sun-kyu and Jung Sung-il pose for a photo during a press conference for the opening film 'Uprising' at the 29th Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) in Busan on October 2, 2024. — AFP

Other critics contend that streaming content diminishes the cinematic experience that is best enjoyed on the big screen in theaters. But "Uprising" director Kim said: "We need to examine such controversy." "Shouldn't we consider whether a film must always adhere to specific screening conditions?" he told reporters at a press conference ahead of the opening ceremony. This year's edition also comes as organizers grapple with the fallout from former festival director Huh Moon-yung, who resigned last year amid accusations of sexual misconduct. The director position remains vacant. The South Korean government's budget for supporting film festivals including BIFF was also slashed by half this year. Despite those setbacks, the 29th edition is presenting about 15 more films than last year, organizers said, with 86 world premieres.

### Award winners

BIFF will posthumously honor South Korean actor Lee Sun-kyun, screening six of the actor's film and television works, including "Parasite", "Our Sunhi" (2013) and a portion

of TV series "My Mister" (2018). Best known globally for his starring role in Bong Joon-ho's 2019 Oscar-winner "Parasite", Lee was found dead in an apparent suicide last year after a two-month investigation into suspected drug use, sparking public outrage over what many perceived as an excessive police interrogation. Meanwhile, filmmaker Kiyoshi Kurosawa, best known for his contributions to the Japanese horror genre, will receive the festival's Asian Filmmaker of the Year award. The Japanese filmmaker is showcasing two new films at BIFF this year: the violent thriller "Cloud" and "Serpent's Path", a French-language remake of his 1998 film of the same name. BIFF also awarded its first Camellia Award along with the French fashion house CHANEL, which was created to honor women in the cinema industry, to acclaimed South Korean production designer Ryu Seong-hie.

"When I first started my career, there weren't many female production designers, and genre films were considered a male domain," Ryu said after receiving the prize. "I wanted to prove that genre films made by women can also be creative, intense, rough and terrifying." BIFF's industry



South Korean actor Kim Gyu-ri arrives on the red carpet during the opening ceremony of the 29th Busan International Film Festival (BIFF).



South Korean actor Lee Jung-jae arrives on the red carpet.

platform, the Asian Contents and Film Market, will host a conference focused on the integration of AI in content production — a current hot-button issue in Hollywood. — AFP



(From left) South Korean director Kim Sang-man, South Korean actors Park Jeong-min, Jung Sung-il, Jin Sun-kyu, Cha Seung-won, Kim Shin-rock and Gang Dong-won arrive on the red carpet.



(From left) South Korean actors Kim Min-ju, Roh Yoon-seo and South Korean film director Jo Seon-ho arrive on the red carpet.



## Sports

# Tigers, Royals, Mets, Padres win MLB playoff openers

## Kansas City edge host Baltimore 1-0

LOS ANGELES: Detroit's Tarik Skubal pitched six scoreless innings and the Tigers held off a late fightback to defeat Houston 3-1 on Tuesday as the Major League Baseball playoffs began. The visiting Tigers took a 1-0 lead in their best-of-three American League wild card series, which continues Wednesday in Houston.

Skubal, a 27-year-old left-hander, struck out six while allowing four hits and a walk in his first playoff start. The American was the first pitcher to complete a pitching Triple Crown sweep in a full season since 2011, leading the AL with 18 wins, 228 strikeouts and a 2.39 earned-run average.

Houston, seeking a second MLB crown in three seasons, produced drama in the ninth inning, pushing across a run and loading the bases before Jason Heyward flew out to Tigers first baseman Spencer Torkelson to end the game.

"That ninth inning was crazy," Detroit catcher Jake Rogers said. "But we got through it and got the win." The Tigers are in the playoffs for the first time since 2014 under the guidance of manager A.J. Hinch — who led Houston to the 2017 World Series crown.

In the other AL wild card opener, Kansas City edged host Baltimore 1-0, dealing the Orioles a ninth consecutive playoff loss since they last won a postseason game in 2014. "It's huge," said Royals slugger Bobby Witt Jr., who drove in the winning run in the sixth inning. "It just shows the team's relentlessness and how we play every pitch until the end."

In Milwaukee, the New York Mets scored five runs with two outs in the fifth inning and held on

for an 8-4 victory over the Brewers in game one of their National League series. The Brewers had jumped to a 2-0 lead in the first inning, and after the Mets responded with three runs in the second, the Brewers regained the advantage with two runs in the bottom of the fourth. Mets starting pitcher Luis Severino gave up eight hits and four runs but settled down to make it through six innings.

Jose Butto pitched two scoreless innings and Ryne Stanek sent down three straight in the ninth to close out the win for the Mets, who had rallied late on Monday to beat the Atlanta Braves in game one of a make-up double-header to claim their playoff spot.

### Tatis sparks Padres

The San Diego Padres became the first home team to post a victory, beating the Braves 4-0 thanks to home runs from Fernando Tatis and Kyle Higashioka and an inspired performance from starting pitcher Michael King.

Tatis electrified the Petco Park crowd with a two-run homer in the second at-bat of the night, belting the first pitch he saw from Braves starter AJ Smith-Shawver into the left field seats. Higashioka delivered a sacrifice fly for a run in the second and belted a solo homer in the eighth.

That was all the scoring required by King, who struck out 12 without a walk, allowing five runs over seven innings before relief pitchers Jason Adam and Robert Suarez closed it out. "We had the energy today," Tatis said. "I just got lucky enough to put my bat on the ball and the next thing we know this place is going crazy."

Tatis said he wasn't surprised by King's dom-



SAN DIEGO: Jurickson Profar #10, Jackson Merrill #3 and Fernando Tatis Jr. #23 of the San Diego Padres celebrate after defeating the Atlanta Braves in Game One of the Wild Card Series at Petco Park. — AFP

inant performance against a Braves team that clinched their post-season spot with a win over the Mets in Monday's second make-up game. "This guy has been amazing for us since the beginning of

the year," said Tatis, who was already looking forward to game two on Wednesday. "This is the first step of what we can do, and we're going to come tomorrow and do it again," he said. — AFP

## China tennis hope Bu takes hard path to face world's best

BEIJING: Bu Yunchaokete ultimately lost to top-ranked Jannik Sinner but his journey from rescued child to the semi-finals captivated the China Open and earmarked him for a bright future.

Playing at home, the all-action 22-year-old has enjoyed a breakthrough fortnight and recorded a number of personal firsts. He reached the last four in Hangzhou last week for his best performance on the ATP Tour, before losing to fellow Chinese player Zhang Zhizhen.

With his confidence growing and the Beijing crowd behind him, Bu then defeated Lorenzo Musetti and sixth-ranked Andrey Rublev, both in straight sets, on the way to the semi-finals in the Chinese capital. Bu came into Beijing on a career-high ranking of 96 and made life difficult for the world number one Sinner before going down fighting 6-3, 7-6 (7/3).

The 23-year-old Italian, the defending champion and recent US Open winner, called it "a very tough and tricky match". It was the first time they had faced each other on tour and Sinner was impressed with Bu, who will break into the world's top 70 for the first time after his Beijing exploits.

"He was very solid. He doesn't really have big weaknesses — forehand, backhand, good serve, also the return game is very good. "You have to earn every point you play (against him). Physically he's good."

Sinner is only a bit older than Bu and has already won 16 ATP titles, two of them Grand Slams. But unlike many tennis stars who are earmarked for the top from a young age and get the treatment to match it, Bu's path has been very different.

More recently, the pandemic also stunted his development on court at a crucial moment. Much more is to come, he says. "This is only my third year in the professional tour," he said after the biggest match of his life on Tuesday. "I started quite late. I turned pro quite late."

### 'Desire and spirit'

Bu has amassed a legion of new fans not only with his exploits, but also because of the route he took from humble and difficult beginnings. "The path I have taken is different from others," he said. His name is Mongolian and he is from the far-western region of Xinjiang. According to Chinese media, his father died and, after his mother remarried, he lived with his grandparents. In hope of a better life, a young Bu was sent to a children's charity.

It was the start of a tortuous route towards elite tennis that took him to eastern China aged five and ended with him as the first Chinese man to reach the Beijing semi-finals. "You could see the desire and fighting spirit in his eyes," Yu Jinxing, who would become his life-long coach, told Xinhua news agency.

Bu's idol is the three-time major champion Andy Murray, who recently retired after a series of injuries and was renowned for his never-say-die attitude. "His belief in success despite failures resonates with me," Xinhua quoted Bu as saying. "Starting from the ground up has grounded me," he added. "It may be slower, but it's solid." Bu will be in action again this week at the Shanghai Masters. — AFP

## Djokovic hopes Sinner doping case 'resolved'

SHANGHAI: Novak Djokovic said Wednesday that he hoped current world number one Jannik Sinner's steroid case would be "resolved as soon as possible", as he again bemoaned the tennis anti-doping system's "inconsistencies".

Sinner failed two doping tests in March but was cleared of wrongdoing and allowed to keep playing by tennis authorities. But the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) said Saturday it had mounted an appeal, and was seeking a ban of up to two years.

Djokovic had previously said he could "understand the sentiments of a lot of players" who were questioning whether Sinner's rank had protected him. On Wednesday, speaking at a press conference at the Shanghai Masters, the former world number one acknowledged it must be "very tough" for the Italian.

"I think it's quite obvious that we have a system that is not working well... There's way too many inconsistencies, way too many governing bodies involved and, you know, just this whole case is not helping our sport at all," the 37-year-old said.

"Whatever is going to happen at the end of the day, just I wish for it to be resolved as soon as possible." Tennis authorities accepted Sinner's explanation that trace amounts of a steroid unintentionally entered his system from a physiotherapist who used a spray containing it to treat a cut, then provided massage and sports therapy to the player.

The WADA appeal has reignited the case, with Sinner saying he has had sleepless nights over the issue. The 23-year-old has pushed through the controversy to win the US Open, as well as progressed to the final of the China Open, facing world number three Carlos Alcaraz.

"It's impressive what (Sinner's) been doing in the whole process of what's been happening, that he's playing on such a high level," Djokovic said. Both Sinner and Alcaraz will also head to



Novak Djokovic

Shanghai for the Masters, where they and Djokovic are among the favorites.

The Serbian is aiming for a 100th singles title — which he said was "extra motivation" — but admitted he had "some catching up to do" as he hadn't played many tournaments recently. "Hopefully I can use that freshness in a

way, and also the past experiences and success I had," he said.

Djokovic is a four-time champion in Shanghai, but has not played there for five years. Asked what the secret to his previous success was, he laughed: "I love dumplings and the Chinese language, I think that helps!" — AFP



GALLE: New Zealand's captain Tim Southee (L) is clean bowled by Sri Lanka's Prabath Jayasuriya during the fourth day of the second Test cricket match between Sri Lanka and New Zealand at the Galle International Cricket Stadium in Galle. — AFP

## Southee quits as N Zealand Test captain

COLOMBO: Tim Southee stepped down as New Zealand's Test captain on Wednesday after their 2-0 defeat to Sri Lanka and handed the reins to opening batsman Tom Latham for the India series. Veteran pace bowler Southee has struggled for form since the home summer when he took six wickets at an average of more than 70 against a second-string South Africa and Australia.

The Sri Lanka sweep, capped by a humiliating innings and 154-run loss in Galle last week, was the Black Caps' fourth Test defeat in succession either side of the washed-out match against Afghanistan. It left Southee with a record of six wins, six losses and two draws from his 14 Tests in charge after taking over from Kane Williamson in late-2022.

The 35-year-old said he had resolved to quit the captaincy after a discussion with head coach Gary Stead and was hopeful of getting back to his best without the burden of leadership. "It was my decision to move aside and it's now Tom's time to keep moving this team forward," Southee told reporters at Auckland airport after arriving home from Sri Lanka.

Asked if the captaincy was behind his decline in form, Southee said: "You look at results and it hasn't been ideal the last wee while. You could probably marry the two up and say that. "But it was a job I really enjoyed doing."

Latham, who has captained the Test side on nine previous occasions, will lead a 15-strong squad including Southee to India. "He's obviously had a taste over a period of time as well," said Southee, New Zealand's second-highest Test wicket-taker of all-time with 382 victims. "He's a great leader amongst the guys and I wish him all the best. I'll be there to support him along the way." India, riding a record winning streak of 18 Test series on home soil after a 2-0 defeat of Bangladesh, host New Zealand in three Tests starting in Bangalore on Oct. 16.

Since winning the inaugural World Test Championship in 2021, New Zealand have been a fading force in the sport's longest format and struggled to regenerate following the international retirements of seasoned campaigners.

Southee was New Zealand's leading bowler with eight wickets on the last tour of India in 2021 when the hosts won the two-match series 1-0. However, his haul was dwarfed by the tallies of India's leading spinners and underlined New Zealand's dearth of quality slow bowlers.

"My record in the subcontinent's been pretty good over the years," he said. "I'd like to think that I could still contribute in that part of the world." — Reuters

## Pakistan white-ball skipper Azam resigns

KARACHI: Pakistan's limited-overs team was leaderless on Wednesday after captain Babar Azam resigned, compounding a management crisis experts say has badly affected the team's international performance. Pakistani cricket is flailing in all formats after a series of stinging losses, with a revolving door of bosses and allegations that nepotism has seeped into the sport.

Azam announced his resignation on his personal social media just before midnight on Tuesday, before an official Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) statement more than 12 hours later. Pakistan cricket has ploughed through four coaches, three board heads and four captains in the past two years, at the same time sliding down international standings.

"It's a leadership crisis," former Pakistan captain Rashid Latif told AFP. "Pakistan cricket is in the ICU with no specialist for treatment." Azam's resignation came hours before England touched down on Wednesday for a three-match Test series that follows Pakistan's humiliating 2-0 home series defeat to lowly ranked Bangladesh last month.

It was 29-year-old Azam's second turn as captain after a flip-flop saw him resign in all three formats following Pakistan's early exit from the ODI World Cup in November. He returned in March to captain white-ball competitions but lasted just six months, leaving Pakistan leaderless with four major series coming up and the Champions Trophy next year.

Azam was captain when Pakistan crashed out of the T20 World Cup after a bruising loss to newcomers the United States. He said he stood down to focus on his playing role as a batsman. "He should not have accepted captaincy again," Latif said.

"Neither the team was performing nor was he scoring big," he said. "This resignation has come very late and that has not only cost him badly, but also the team." The PCB said on Wednesday the national selection committee would begin the hunt for a successor.

"He believes that dedicating himself fully to his batting will enable him to play a more decisive role in the team's success in the shorter formats," a PCB statement said. Wicketkeeper-batsman Mohammad Rizwan is considered the front-runner for the job.

Azam is slated to play in the England Test series starting in Multan on Monday, but red-ball skipper Shan Masood is also facing calls to step down over dire performances. Pakistan has lost all five matches under his tenure, which began last year. — AFP



Sports

# Lewandowski hits brace as Barcelona crush Young Boys

## Boys are in relegation zone of their domestic league

**BARCELONA:** Robert Lewandowski struck twice for Barcelona as they demolished Young Boys 5-0 in a one-sided Champions League clash on Tuesday. The Catalan giants, five-time winners, made amends for their defeat by Monaco in their first match by thumping their Swiss visitors.

Raphinha and Inigo Martinez strikes as well as an own goal helped Hansi Flick's side secure a sizeable victory and boost their goal difference significantly. "We knew after the game against Monaco in the Champions League we had to give a quick reply in the next game, which was this one, and we did that well," Raphinha told Movistar.

"A couple of days ago we lost a game in La Liga too (at Osasuna) and we had to give a quick response, and we did that. "It's much easier playing here at home because of the joy (the fans) give us," Raphinha said with the expanded Champions League format and one table for all the teams, it was useful to build a good goal difference.

"It's important to score so many goals because at the end of the eight games, it will be handy," he added. Barca coach Flick rolled out arguably his strongest available team after the loss at Monaco, despite the Swiss side's struggles.

Young Boys are in the relegation zone of their domestic league with just one win in eight games and were thrashed at home by Aston Villa on their European debut this season. It took Barcelona just eight minutes to move ahead, with Lewandowski applying a poacher's finish to Raphinha's cross-shot.

Jules Koude hammered over and Ferran Torres had a shot saved as Barcelona dominated, but Young Boys carved out a first opening after 30 minutes when Ebrima Colley pulled an effort wide. Raphinha, enjoying a strong start to the campaign, doubled Barcelona's lead from close range after Pedri's shot was blocked but the ball ricocheted to his feet. Centre-back Martinez headed home Barca's third from



**BARCELONA:** Barcelona's French defender #23 Jules Koude (C) and Young Boys' French defender #04 Tanguy Zoukrou (R) vie for a header during the UEFA Champions League, league phase day 2 football match between FC Barcelona and Young Boys at the Estadi Olimpic Lluis Companys in Barcelona. — AFP

Pedri's free-kick shortly afterwards as the Catalans overran their ragged visitors.

### Barca romp

Torres wasted a fine chance for the fourth when he fired straight at Young Boys goalkeeper Marvin Keller when well placed to score. Lewandowski netted his second with a close-range header after Mar-

tiniez had nodded Lamine Yamal's corner back across the face of goal as Barcelona began the second half just how they finished the first.

It was the 36-year-old's ninth goal in 10 games this season as he enjoys a revival under his former Bayern Munich coach Flick. Young Boys winger Joel Monteiro struck the crossbar but that was as close as the visitors came to joy in Catalonia.

Barcelona fans were pleased to see Dutch midfielder Frenkie de Jong come on as a substitute for his first appearance since an ankle injury in April as the game petered towards a close. "For Frenkie today was an important step, to come back to the team after having suffered such a serious injury, playing some minutes today was important for him," said Flick. — AFP

## Inter sweep past Red Star to claim first CL win

**MILAN:** Inter Milan won their first match of this season's revamped Champions League on Tuesday by sweeping aside Red Star Belgrade 4-0 at the San Siro. A stunning free-kick from Hakan Calhanoglu opened the scoring in the 11th minute under a downpour in northern Italy, before Marko Arnautovic rolled in his first goal of the campaign on the hour.

Captain Lautaro Martinez added a third in the 71st minute and shortly afterwards won the penalty from which Iran forward Mehdi Taremi completed a comfortable home success. Martinez, who was in line to take the spot-kick with Calhanoglu already substituted, handed Taremi the chance to score his first Inter goal past Israel international goalkeeper Omri Glazer.

"I'm glad to score tonight, to play good. Thanks to my teammates. It was great," Taremi said to Sky before suggesting he expected a deep run from his new team. "Our goal as a big club

is to reach the final, as Inter must try to win every game. We'll take it step by step." Tuesday's win moved the Italian champions up to four points and into the top eight positions of the new league phase of the elite club competition, from which teams qualify directly for the last 16, ahead of Wednesday's matches.

It's too early to say whether Inter will avoid the play-offs come next year but Simone Inzaghi's side were too good for Red Star even with seven changes from the team which beat Udinese at the weekend. And Inter have already shown that they can tangle with the best in their goalless draw at Manchester City a fortnight ago.

"It's a win that we needed after playing well in Manchester, but we need to keep moving in this direction," said Inzaghi. Red Star are in 32nd place after losing their first two matches and coach Vladan Milojevic lamented an error strewn performance. "We gave away four goals, I said after the Benfica game (lost 2-1) that we can't concede those sorts of goals... when you make these kinds of errors you can't do much else," he told reporters.

The match was played against the backdrop of mass arrests of leading figures within both Inter and AC Mi-



**MILAN:** Crvena Zvezda Beograd's Burkinabe defender #24 Nasser Djiga fights for the ball with Inter Milan's Argentine forward #10 Lautaro Martinez during the Champions League football match between Inter Milan and Red Star Belgrade (Crvena zvezda) at the San Siro stadium in Milan. — AFP

lan's hardcore ultras fan groups for a variety of crimes relating to illegal profits made around matches. Police arrested 19 people, almost all ultras, on Monday for "criminal conspiracy aggravated by mafia methods, extortion, assault and other serious crimes".

The alleged crimes involve activities around the San Siro stadium on matchdays, ranging from ticket touting to control of parking, sales from concession stands and taking payment from people without tickets and letting them into the stadium. — AFP

## Football is still king in Greenland

**NUUK:** Despite being covered by ice and largely desolate, football is still king in Greenland, whose players want to compete with other nations, but it remains a pipe dream until they join a continental federation. Until now, footballers in the Danish autonomous territory have mostly played among themselves, and the national team—made up of amateurs—has relied on the goodwill of opponents to organize matches.

The territory's football association, KAK, announced on May 28 that it had applied to join the Confederation of North, Central American and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF), since it was unable to join the European football association UEFA. UEFA statutes stipulate that membership can only be granted to federations "based in a country which is recognized as an independent state by the majority of members of the United Nations".

"It's the only place on Earth right now who's not member of any football association," Green-



**MANITSQOQ:** A goal net is pictured on a football pitch in Manitsqoq, Greenland on September 3, 2024. It is a virtually uninhabited territory, covered mainly in ice, and yet, in Greenland, football is king and fans, in search of recognition, want to be able to measure themselves against other nations. — AFP

land coach Morten Rutkjaer told AFP. Nevertheless, football—and in particular the English Premier League—is very popular for the some 57,000 inhabitants of the world's largest island which covers

an area of two million square kilometres.

In the streets of Greenland's towns and cities, many children play football in the summer, and as soon as the weather permits, the pitches fill up—with one of the most eye-catching being the one in the northern village of Uummanaq which lies in the shadow of nearby icebergs.

"It's the biggest sport in Greenland," secretary-general of KAK Ungaaq Abelsen, who estimates that more than 10 percent of the population play, told AFP. "If we get into for example CONCACAF or FIFA in general, then we can play in official tournaments a lot more matches against others," he added, explaining what counts is being able to join FIFA, which requires you to belong to a regional confederation. Although it was not involved in the bid, the Danish Football Association (DBU) "strongly" supports it.

"We are getting closer to our goal, to play more international matches and to show that Greenland is among those countries who can play football," Greenland captain Patrick Frederiksen said. The 30-year-old has played just 10 friendlies since his first cap in 2017, most recently on June 1 against Turkmenistan, which Greenland lost 5-0. — AFP

## Al Hilal enjoy AFC CL romp after Neymar boost

**RIYADH:** Former Fulham striker Aleksandar Mitrovic was on target as Al Hilal, buoyed by Neymar returning to training this week, swept past Al Shorta 5-0 in the AFC Champions League Elite late Tuesday in Riyadh.

Brazil superstar Neymar announced his return to club training with the Saudi champions on Monday after a year out with a left knee injury. Al Hilal took the lead in the 11th minute against their Iraqi opponents through Marcos Leonardo with Mitrovic adding the second four minutes later. Salem Al Dawsari, Nasser Al Dawsari and Mohammed Kanno completed the romp in the second half.

Neymar, 32, moved from Paris Saint-Germain in August 2023 but ruptured his meniscus and anterior cruciate ligament on international duty in October 2023. "Happy to be back in the group," Neymar posted on Instagram, with pictures of him running and kicking the ball, watched by Al Hilal's Portuguese coach Jorge Jesus.

Al Hilal have not yet registered Neymar for the current Saudi Pro League season which began in August but he has been included in their AFC Champions League squad. Neymar could make his competitive return in Al Hilal's next Champions League Elite match against title holders Al Ain on October 21 in the UAE.

Al Ain have made a stuttering start to their Champions League title defence. Hernan Crespo's side have just one point from two West Zone games after being beaten 4-2 by Al Gharafa in a rollercoaster match at the Al Bayt Stadium in Qatar on Tuesday.

Former Real Madrid and Newcastle United striker Joselu put Al Gharafa ahead on the stroke of half-time before doubling the lead with a header three minutes after the break. Al Ain got one back through Kaku Romero's penalty on 56 minutes, before Soufiane Rahimi equalized with a smart finish 10 minutes later. Pedro Martin's side quickly hit back to regain the lead through Seydou Sano in the 72nd minute before Yacine Brahimi secured their first win in the competition four minutes later. — AFP

# Classifieds

### Clinics & Hospitals

#### Clinics

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

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

### Change of Name

**I, Hussain Shabbir Hussain**, holder of Indian Passport No. N0422293 having permanent address of Aabedin Colony, Opposite Saiyiah School Play Ground, Sagwara (Rajasthan) PinCode 314025, I hereby declare that my name will be read as (given name) Hussain, (father name): Shabbir, (surname): Shayer. (# 6151 03/10/2024)

**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)



## Arsenal beat PSG in Champions League duel, Dortmund hit Celtic for seven

Manchester City and Inter Milan claim one-sided victories



BRATISLAVA: Manchester City's Norwegian striker #09 Erling Haaland (L) runs for the ball before scoring his team's third goal past Slovan Bratislava's Slovak goalkeeper #71 Dominik Takac (C) and Slovan Bratislava's Slovenian defender #12 Kenan Bajric during the UEFA Champions League football match between SK Slovan Bratislava and Manchester City in Bratislava. — AFP

PARIS: Arsenal beat Paris Saint-Germain 2-0 in their heavyweight Champions League duel on Tuesday, while last season's beaten finalists Borussia Dortmund gave Celtic a brutal reality check with an emphatic 7-1 win in Germany. Dortmund were the biggest winners on a night which also saw Barcelona, Manchester City and Inter Milan claim one-sided victories and Champions League debutants Brest won 4-0 at Red Bull Salzburg.

The clash between Arsenal and French champions PSG in London was the big game of the day as the second round of matches in the new format of European football's elite club competition got underway. The Gunners were worthy winners with Kai Havertz heading in from a Leandro Trossard cross to open the scoring on 20 minutes and Bukayo Saka doubling their lead before half-time as his free-kick delivery from the right evaded everybody on its way in.

PSG saw Nuno Mendes strike the outside of the post from range in the first half while Joao Neves hit the

woodwork after the break, but the visitors could not get back into the game. It is a first win in the Champions League this season for Mikel Arteta's Arsenal, who drew 0-0 away to Atalanta on matchday one two weeks ago.

"Really, really happy with the performance," Arteta told broadcaster Amazon Prime. "The Champions League brings different demands but I think we handled it really well."

### Adeyemi hat-trick

Dortmund are currently on top of the 36-team league after they followed a 3-0 win at Club Brugge in their first game by trouncing Scottish champions Celtic in Germany. Karim Adeyemi scored a hat-trick in the first half for Dortmund, who were 5-1 ahead at half-time. Emre Can opened the scoring from the penalty spot before Dazhen Maeda equalized, but Adeyemi then took centre stage.

Serhou Guirassy netted a penalty before the interval and made it 6-1 midway through the second half, with substitute Felix Nmecha wrapping up

the victory late on. It is Dortmund's biggest winning margin in the Champions League alongside a 6-0 win away to Legia Warsaw in 2016.

"There's no such thing as a perfect game, but it was very, very good," said Can. "This has to be the standard we aim to set."

### Man City win

Winners of the Champions League in 2023, Pep Guardiola's City were comfortable 4-0 winners away to Slovan Bratislava in Slovakia, with Ilkay Gundogan, Phil Foden, Erling Haaland and James McAtee getting the goals. Inter, who lost to City in the final in Istanbul two seasons ago, won by the same scoreline at home to Red Star Belgrade.

Hakan Calhanoglu set Inter on their way with a stunning early free-kick before Marko Arnautovic, Lautaro Martinez and Mehdi Taremi all netted in the second half, the latter from a penalty. German champions Bayer Leverkusen got their second straight win in this season's competition as a Victor Bon-

iface goal early in the second half allowed them to beat AC Milan 1-0.

### Brest surprise

Meanwhile Brest, the French Champions League newcomers, also made it two wins out of two with a remarkable 4-0 victory away to Salzburg in Austria. Senegal striker Abdallah Sima, the forward on loan from Brighton who got their winner against Sturm Graz two weeks ago, scored twice.

Mahdi Camara and Mathias Pereira Lage also found the target with Brest scoring three of their goals in the space of 10 second-half minutes. Salzburg, Slovan Bratislava and Young Boys are the bottom three in the early standings.

VfB Stuttgart and Sparta Prague drew 1-1 with Enzo Millot putting the German side ahead and Finnish international Kaan Kairinen equalising before the interval. PSV Eindhoven and Sporting Lisbon also drew 1-1. Jerdy Schouten's opener for the Dutch champions was cancelled out by Daniel Braganca's late leveller. — AFP



BEIJING: Spain's Carlos Alcaraz celebrates with the trophy after winning the men's singles final against Italy's Jannik Sinner at the China Open. — AFP

## Alcaraz outlasts Sinner in thriller to win China Open

BEIJING: Carlos Alcaraz roared back from a set down to beat world number one Jannik Sinner in a thriller and win his first China Open title on Wednesday. The four-time Grand Slam champion from Spain edged a captivating final 6-7 (6/8), 6-4, 7-6 (7/3) for his fourth ATP crown of the year and 16th overall.

Alcaraz, who is set to return to number two in the world behind Sinner, was 3-0 down in the final-set tie break only to fight back and win in three hours, 21 minutes. The dramatic triumph ended Sinner's run of 14 victories in a row and saw him deposed as the Beijing champion after an almighty fight. "What can I say about the year you're having, it's unbelievable," Alcaraz told Sinner at the victory presentation. "I respect you a lot as a player, but even more as a person." US Open champion Sinner has been playing in Beijing under fresh scrutiny.

The Italian has admitted to sleepless nights over his doping case, which was reignited at the weekend when the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) said it had appealed the decision to clear him. In front of a packed house in the Chinese capital, the early exchanges were nervy with both players under immediate pressure on their service games.

Sinner, 23, was the first to blink, with second-seeded Alcaraz breaking for a 3-1 lead and celebrating with a fist pump. The Spaniard held easily for 4-1 and had his opponent uncharacteristically rattled. Alcaraz, 21, served for the set but US Open champion Sinner grabbed the break back when he needed it most.

Sinner then saved set point on his own serve to force the tie break, and saved another in the tie break before taking the set at his first opportunity when Alcaraz fired long. It was the first set Alcaraz had dropped all week. The second set was just as tight. Both players saw chances come and go but they went with serve until Alcaraz broke for 5-4, before holding with ease to send the final into a third set. — AFP

## HH the Crown Prince Shooting Grand Prix to begin from Nov 8

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah Annual Shooting Grand Prix will be held November 8th until 16th, with 400 participants from Kuwait and Arab countries, said President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations, Chairman of the organizing committee Eng. Duajj Al-Otaibi.

He said this tournament will launch the Kuwait Shooting Sport Club season 2024-2025, and will include all Olympic Shooting competitions for men and women. These include skeet, trap, pistol and rifle, in addition to Olympic archery, adding that an Arab tournament will be held alongside the Crown Prince Grand Prix. Al-Otaibi appreciated the patronage of HH the Crown Prince of the tournament that became one of the most important events, second HH the Amir Annual International Grand Prix, adding that the continued support by the political leadership of the Kuwait Shooting Sport enabled it to make many major achievements.

Acting Director General of Public Authority for Sports (PAS) Bashar Abdullah told journalists that (PAS) is keen on supporting the tournament, and to bring out as best as can be, adding that he is confident the club will succeed in having this tournament in an outstanding fashion.

He said PAS supports the tournament strong-



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti shooters who won medals in the recent Asian Championship in Kazakhstan seen with the officials.

ly, and removes all obstacles, because it is always making sports achievements for Kuwait. Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Secretary General Obaid Al-Osaimi said the organizing committee is working on preparing all ranges of the club, to be at its best for the competitions, with Kuwaiti and Arab officiating teams running them.

The club meanwhile honored Kuwaiti shooters who won medals in the recent Asian Championship

in Kazakhstan, as they won (5) gold and (5) silver medals. Shooter Nasser Al-Miqldid said his winning (3) gold medals in the trap and double trap events was the result of good preparation the club had for the national team.

Al-Miqldid said the tournament had a high technical level and strong competition, but the high concentration of Kuwait shooters enabled them to make such good results.