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# Genocidal Zionists ravage Gaza

400 killed in 2-week assault • Hezb strikes Bibi's home • Khamenei hails Sinwar



**GAZA:** Gaza's civil defense agency said on Saturday that a sweeping Zionist military operation has killed more than 400 people in two weeks in the territory's north, where the Zionist entity kept hammering targets while fighting Hezbollah in Lebanon. Hamas ally Hezbollah has vowed to intensify attacks on the Zionist entity weeks into an all-out war that erupted on Sept 23, launching on Saturday rocket barrages at the Zionist entity's north, where rescuers said one man was killed by shrapnel.

According to the office of Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, a drone attack from Lebanon targeted his residence in the coastal town of Caesarea, though the family were not there at the time and there were no injuries. Later, Zionist media published a video of Netanyahu walking in a park.

The latest attacks come as Hamas, Hezbollah and allied groups in the region have vowed to keep fighting after Zionist troops killed the Palestinian movement's leader Yahya Sinwar in Gaza, more than a year into the war. Analysts said Sinwar, accused of masterminding the Oct 7 attack on the Zionist entity, was pivotal to ending the Gaza war and securing the release of Zionist captives.

The Zionist entity, vowing to stop Hamas fighters from regrouping in northern Gaza, launched a major air and ground assault on Oct 6, tightening its siege on the war-battered area and sending tens of thousands of people fleeing. Civil defense agency spokesman

Mahmud Bassal said that "we have recovered more than 400 martyrs from the various targeted areas in the northern Gaza Strip", including Jabalia and its refugee camp, since the Zionist operation began.

The actual death toll may be higher, Bassal told AFP, as "there are dozens of bodies scattered in the streets of Jabalia". Contacted by AFP, the Zionist military said it was looking into the civil defense agency's reports out of Gaza, including that an overnight air raid on Jabalia killed 33 people. The violence has dashed hopes Sinwar's death on Wednesday might bring the war closer to an end.

The Zionist genocidal campaign has killed 42,519 people in Gaza, mostly civilians. The Zionist entity has faced mounting criticism over the civilian toll and lack of food and aid reaching Gaza, where the UN has warned of famine. As fighting raged on in northern Gaza, witnesses told AFP that air strikes continued to pound the area during the day. Medics said Zionist forces were shelling the Indonesian Hospital in north Gaza. The military reported troops operating near the facility but said "no intentional fire" was directed at it.

"Another 20,000 people were forced to flee Jabalia camp" on Friday, said the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA. On social media platform X, UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini reported "critical shortage of fuel and medical supplies... in the last remaining hospitals".

**GAZA:** A man reacts as he stands near a shrouded body in the courtyard of the Al-Maamadani hospital, where the victims of a Zionist strike that hit a UN school in the Al-Shati refugee camp near Gaza City in the northern Gaza Strip were transported, on Oct 19, 2024. — AFP

Continued on Page 6

## Harris, Trump spar over stamina, woo Arab Americans



**HAMTRAMCK, Michigan:** Hamtramck Mayor Amer Ghalib introduces former US President Donald Trump as he visits a campaign office on Oct 18, 2024. — AFP

**DETROIT:** Democrat Kamala Harris raised questions about Republican Donald Trump's physical stamina to serve effectively as president as the two rivals tore through the deadlocked battleground state of Michigan on Friday, with Trump lashing back about the energy he's shown on the campaign trail.

Harris, who turns 60 on Sunday, pressed the case to raise doubts about the 78-year-old Trump. Age had been an issue when President Joe Biden, 81, was still in the race, but had faded after he dropped his election bid. Harris said on Friday news reports that former President Trump was skipping interviews because he was tired and had passed on the chance of a second debate with her raised questions about his fitness for office.

"It should be a concern. If he can't handle the rigors of the campaign trail, is he fit to do the job?" she told reporters before a rally in Grand Rapids.

Continued on Page 6

## Kuwait defends UNRWA, backs Palestinians

**NEW YORK:** Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN headquarters in New York, Ambassador Tareq Al-Bannai, affirmed that UNRWA is a lifeline agency serving millions of Palestinian refugees in the region and occupied Palestine. This affirmation came following a press conference at the UN headquarters late Thursday where 123 nations reiterated support to UNRWA. This came in connection to an initiative launched by Kuwait, Jordan and Slovenia in May to display support for UNRWA.

Bannai reaffirmed a joint global

commitment towards the agency, warning of dire consequences of suspending UNRWA's operations and obligations towards Palestinians. On his part, Jordan's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Mahmoud Hmoud stressed that there was no replacement to UNRWA, which has helped generations of Palestinian refugees. He expressed his infatuation towards the Zionist occupation's efforts to hinder UNRWA including a recent push in the Knesset to formulate a law that forbids the agency from continuing its mission in occupied Palestine. He also highlighted the report by the independent review committee on UNRWA, commending the commitment by UNRWA to implement recommendations mentioned in the document.

Continued on Page 6



**NEW YORK:** Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN Tareq Al-Bannai speaks during a press conference at the UN headquarters. — KUNA

## Sinwar's heroic battlefield death hailed by Gazans

**CAIRO:** For one Gazan father, Yahya Sinwar's death in battle trying to beat back a drone with a stick was "how heroes die". For others, it was an example for future generations. Sinwar, the architect of Hamas' Oct 7, 2023, attack on the Zionist entity, was martyred on Wednesday in a gunfight with Zionist forces after a year-long manhunt, and his death was announced on Thursday.

A video of some of his final minutes,

showing him masked and wounded in a shell-smashed apartment trying to hurl a stick at a drone filming him, inspired pride among Palestinians. "He died a hero, attacking not fleeing, clutching his rifle and engaging against the occupation army at the front line," a Hamas statement mourning Sinwar's death said. In the statement, Hamas vowed his death would only strengthen the movement, adding that it wouldn't compromise on conditions to reach a ceasefire deal with the Zionist entity.

"He died wearing a military vest, fighting with a rifle and grenades, and when he was wounded and was bleeding he fought with a stick."

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**GAZA:** This screen grab from drone footage shows Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar throwing a stick at the approaching drone during his final moments in the neighborhood of Tel al-Sultan in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip. — AFP

## World cholera vaccine stockpile is empty: WHO

**GENEVA:** There are no more oral cholera vaccines left in the global stockpile, the World Health Organization said Friday, with the shortage jeopardizing work to stop the disease's spread. Global vaccine production is operating at full ca-

capacity, but demand is outpacing supply, the UN health agency said in its monthly situation report.

"As of October 14, the global stockpile of oral cholera vaccine is depleted, with no remaining doses available," the WHO said. "Although more doses are expected in the coming weeks, this shortage poses significant challenges to outbreak response efforts and hampers efforts to control the spread of the disease."

The WHO said that between Sept 1 and Oct 14, the International Coordinating Group on vaccine provision received

requests for oral cholera vaccines from Bangladesh, Sudan, Niger, Ethiopia and Myanmar. The requests amounted to a total of 8.4 million doses, but due to limited availability, only 7.6 million doses could be shipped.

The WHO said there had been 439,724 cholera cases and 3,432 deaths reported this year up to Sept 29. "Although the number of cases in 2024 is 16 percent lower than last year, the 126 percent spike in deaths is deeply concerning," it said. The WHO said the mortality increase might be partially down to

where the outbreaks are located. Those include conflict-affected areas where healthcare access has been severely compromised and areas hit by flooding.

Since last month's report, new cholera outbreaks have been reported in Niger (705 cases and 17 deaths) and Thailand (five cases with no deaths), pushing the total number of affected countries in 2024 to 30, said the WHO. In September, 47,234 new cholera cases were reported from 14 countries. And this month, a cholera case was detected in conflict-hit Lebanon. — AFP



## Local

# Zain sponsors Watheefti career fair

## Upskilling national talent in emerging technologies a core pillar of Zain's strategy: Bourisli



KUWAIT: Dr Nader Al-Jallal poses for a photo with Zain Kuwait's Nawal Bourisli, Hamad Al-Marzouq and Waleed Al-Khashti during the opening ceremony of Watheefti.



Zain's team poses for a photo at the event.

KUWAIT: Zain announced Saturday its sponsorship of the third edition of Watheefti – the largest career gathering in Kuwait, which took place over the weekend at The Arena under the patronage and presence of Dr Nader Al-Jallal, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and Acting Minister of Education. The opening ceremony was attended by Zain Kuwait Chief Purpose and Human Resources Officer Nawal Bourisli, Chief Enterprise Business Officer Hamad

Al-Marzouq, Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti, along with senior HR executives from organizations participating in the event.

"Attracting national talent to the private sector and enhancing their skills is a cornerstone of our strategy, particularly in emerging technologies and digital innovations, which are at the heart of what we do in Zain," Nawal Bourisli said.

"Zain has adopted a comprehensive purpose and human resources strate-

gy focused on investing in our people. We continuously work to enhance our employees' skills and talents across various domains to ensure sustainable career growth, especially in technologies like digital transformation, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, big data, and more."

Bourisli further explained: "Boosting the presence of national talent in the private sector contributes to achieving the country's developmental goals, en-

hancing competitiveness, diversifying the economy, and fostering sustainable growth. This is why we remain committed to supporting initiatives like Watheefti that energize the job market and bring together major organizations from various vital sectors to showcase career opportunities to graduates and job seekers."

As the official sponsor, Zain supports over 15 engaging sessions and more than 40 workshops held alongside the event, covering crucial topics such as the use of

AI in interviews, workplace ethics, time management, CV preparation, career path planning, leadership skillsets, building career loyalty, success in the private sector, corporate culture, career development, and much more. Watheefti is the largest career fair in Kuwait and was held over the past weekend at The Arena Kuwait, with the participation of dozens of companies and employers from various vital sectors, catering to thousands of job seekers.

## Arab-Turkish trade could grow to \$150bn: Official

ISTANBUL: Removing commercial barriers would enhance cooperation between Turkey and the Arab world, with a possibility of facilitating Kuwaiti investments in Turkey, said Kuwait's Finance Minister Noura Al-Fassam during Kuwait's participation in the 15th Turkish-Arab Economic Forum on Thursday.

Minister Al-Fassam led the country's delegation at the forum, which was attended by ministers, experts, representatives, and economists from various institutions and the private sector. Turkish Minister of Treasury and Finance Mehmet Simsek said there are opportunities for substantial economic partnerships between Turkey and the Arab world, as well as potential for integration across various sectors despite significant challenges in the region.

Among the challenges, he said, are the "state of uncertainty at the global level regarding monetary and financial policies, conflicts, and geopolitical tensions that threaten the economic system."

Arab League Secretary-General Ahmad Aboul Gheit pointed out that Turkey has substantial know-how that can leverage opportunities arising from the Arab world. The forum, he said, serves as a platform that strengthens dialogue and provides an opportunity to debate problems. Aboul Gheit pointed to growing Turkish and Arab economic relations.

He revealed that Turkey's exports to the Arab world has totaled \$46 billion annually, with imports of \$36 billion. Turkey and the Arab world could achieve a bilateral trade volume of \$150 billion, said Aboul Gheit underscoring Turkey's well-developed infrastructure, including Turkish contractors who are involved in infrastructure projects across Asia and Arab countries.

He stressed the need of signing free trade deals as soon as possible, elaborating that they would help boost investments between the two sides. Tunisian Minister of Economy and Planning, Samir Abd Al-Hafiz stressed the need for joint efforts to protect the region from economic shocks.

Egyptian Finance Minister Ahmed Kouchouk said relations between the two sides are based on a "win-win scenario," asserting that cooperation in multiple areas can "bring significant benefits to all parties."

He noted that Turkey serves as a gateway to Asia and Europe, calling for important steps to enhance the presence of the Arab world and Turkey in Asian countries and North Africa, while Egypt continues to play its role as a strategic gateway to Africa.

Regarding bilateral relations between Egypt and Turkey, Kouchouk described the level of cooperation as "very good," as efforts are underway to implement "important joint projects" in the private sector. He confirmed that Egyptian exporters have established "strong relationships" with Turkish companies, with four major Turkish construction firms signing agreements to undertake significant projects in Egypt. The one-day forum discussed some key topics, including managing financial policy amid unstable economic conditions, and bolstering Turkish-Arab economic ties.

It touched upon new opportunities in the emerging sectors such as green energy, financial technology, and logistic services. Aboul Gheit called for strengthening Arab-Turkish economic cooperation to "go beyond the scope of trade exchange to broader horizons that benefit the economic development and sustainable development of both sides." — KUNA



KUWAIT: Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi poses with health ministry workers at an awareness event held by the ministry at The Avenues. — KUNA photos

## MoH affirms safety of mammograms, urges regular tests

KUWAIT: The National Early Detection Program for Breast Cancer has received approximately 40,000 women since its launch in 2014, during which around 400 cancer cases were identified after mammograms, Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi said Friday. He emphasized that early detection significantly increases recovery rates to about 98 percent.

In a statement to the Kuwait News Agency on Friday during an awareness day held by the Ministry of Health at The Avenues as part of the ministry's activities for Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Minister Al-Awadhi noted that this national program is one of the ministry's most important initiatives in combating cancer and detecting it in its early stages before it advances. He highlighted the ministry's commitment to providing mammograms in centers across the country, in addition to all hospitals, throughout the year. He affirmed that treating cancer patients is among the ministry's top priorities, which demonstrates significant interest in combating the disease through various programs for early detection, treatment, and support for scientific research, in addition to ensuring a reliable supply of medications, including cancer drugs.

### Mammograms safe, quick

Breast imaging centers are spread across most governorates, including centers in Al-Zahra, Al-

## Comms minister talks cloud data centers with Google officials

WASHINGTON: Kuwait is keen on developing and incentivizing its digital economy transformation in cooperation with globally renowned partners and companies, said a Kuwaiti minister on Saturday. Speaking to KUNA during Kuwait's participation in the Google Public Sector Summit 2024 held in Washington, Minister of State for Communication Affairs Omar Al-Omar affirmed that Kuwait adopted digital strategies aiming at developing public services within state institutions. Minister Al-Omar, part of a Kuwaiti delegation representing the supervising committee for the partnership between Kuwait and Google Cloud, indicated that the participation in the summit aimed at boosting digital transformation and innovation within the public sector.

During his visit to Washington, Al-Omar met with CEO of Google Cloud Thomas Kurian and top brass at the company, conveying to them Kuwait's interest in further partnerships with global compa-



People interact with ministry workers at the breast cancer awareness booth.

Naem, South Khaitan, Surra, and Eqaila. Dr Asmaa Hussain, head of the National Early Detection Program for Breast Diseases, told KUNA that women aged 40 years and older can get their mammograms done at these centers provided they are not pregnant or breastfeeding. Women can book a breast cancer screening appointment through the Sahel and Q8Seha apps. She explained that if additional tests are needed, they are conducted at the main center until a diagnosis is reached, after which patients are referred to the appropriate facility.

Mammograms are usually quick procedures, taking less than 30 minutes to complete, Dr Buthaina Al-Kandari told KUNA, urging women to undergo regular examinations, which allow for the early diagnosis of small tumors before symptoms

appear. The earlier the disease is detected, the higher the chances of successful treatment, and early-stage discoveries offer multiple treatment options for complete recovery.

Dr Latifa Al-Kandari, head of the Radiology Department at Adan Hospital and a member of the program's high committee, pointed out several misconceptions circulating on social media, such as the idea that mammograms may cause thyroid cancer or spread it if present. She clarified that these claims are entirely false and affirmed the safety of mammograms, noting that X-ray imaging of the breast exposes patients to very small amounts of radiation that do not have negative effects. She said the benefits of mammography far outweigh any potential risks from radiation exposure. — KUNA



WASHINGTON: Minister of State for Communication Affairs Omar Al-Omar is seen with officials during Kuwait's participation in the Google Public Sector Summit 2024. — KUNA

nies. He indicated that the meetings focused on the executing framework agreement between the two sides as well as developing projects for soon to be established data centers in addition to exchanging views on the latest developments in the world and ways to enhance cooperation.

Minister Al-Omar stressed the importance of Cloud computing in increasing operational capacity and pushing for creativity, pointing out that Kuwait adopted a digital strategy that improved government transactions and institutional performance in line with Kuwait Vision 2035. During his visit to Washington, Minister Al-Omar also met with leading tech companies, discussing with them cooperation within digital economy.

Google Cloud announced back in January 2023 that it had signed a framework agreement with the Kuwaiti government to set a roadmap for the development of digital transformation programs for various state sectors enhancing government operations as well as cybersecurity. Google Cloud works in cooperation with Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) and Kuwait Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT). Google Cloud offers various and advanced Artificial Intelligence services within its infrastructure allowing institutions to implement their digital transformation plans with ease. Google Cloud is a trusted technological partner for clients in over 200 countries and regions around the globe. — KUNA



KUWAIT: (Left) Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Kuwait Times Abdullah Boftain speaks during an Australian University TEDx event titled "Mindset: Shaping Tomorrow" on Oct 19, 2024. — Photos by Faten Omar

# ABDULLAH BOFTAIN SHARES 'POLE POLE' PHILOSOPHY, REFLECTS ON LOSS AND RESILIENCE

Kuwait Times' Deputy Editor-in-Chief speaks at Australian University's 'Mindset: Shaping Tomorrow' TEDx event

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The Australian University held a TEDx event on Saturday, focusing on ideas worth spreading and exploring how mindset shapes personal and professional development. The event, titled "Mindset: Shaping Tomorrow", highlighted diverse experiences aimed at inspiring change.

### Life's lessons through mountains and loss

Abdullah Boftain, Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Kuwait Times, shared his philosophy, "Pole Pole" (Swahili for "slowly, slowly"), which he adopted after a journey of loss and resilience. He reflected on how the death of his brother Aziz, a teacher deeply beloved by his students despite not being famous, shaped his outlook on life. One of Aziz's students eventually followed in his footsteps and became part of their family. "It was as if fate and God's will placed Aziz in the student's life, shaping him into someone who would carry on his legacy," Boftain said.

Boftain also recounted how his grieving process led him to running and climbing mountains, which became sources of strength. He recalled donating his kidney to his mother and, 10 years later, his sister's willingness to donate hers. Although she faced the joy and sorrow of a pregnancy followed by a miscarriage, she was still able to proceed with the donation. Yet, their mother passed away three months later. "Despite everything, we grew stronger and adapted," Boftain said.

Turning 40 during the pandemic, he decided to celebrate by climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. "It took five days to reach the top, and when I did, it felt like I was on another planet. I felt an overwhelming sense of strength and accomplishment," he said. During his climb, he met Adnan Shehab Al-Deen from KFAS, who was 79 at the time and taught him the "Pole Pole" philosophy — to pace oneself and trust in the journey. "The last mountain I climbed was Djebel Samhan in Oman, this time with my children. Life is like a mountain, full of ups and downs. God knows our strength, and we are constantly being tested," Boftain added.

### Future thinking as a transformational tool

Dr Manal Al-Hasawi, Chairman of



Ali Najim



Asrar Al-Ansari

the Kuwait Society for Strategic Planning, discussed how adopting future thinking changed her life. She described a period 10 years ago when she struggled with ADHD, and her usual coping mechanisms stopped working. "I found myself questioning: Is this really what I want to do? Even as a parent, I was riddled with anxiety," she said. Through future thinking — imagining various possible outcomes to influence present behavior — she transformed her approach to life. "There are countless potential versions of your story, and this approach allows you to think in multipliers," she explained.

This shift allowed her to realign her passions and values with her work and parenting. "Instead of asking my children the typical questions, I asked, 'What do you think school will look like

when your kids go to school?' They envisioned schools open 24 hours with students as teachers, learning from diverse sources. They imagined cafes, art shops, and libraries run by students. It was a better version of the future," she said. Al-Hasawi concluded that by changing how we think about the future, we can create a better present and tomorrow.

### Overcoming bad advice and finding balance

Asrar Al-Ansari, Public Relations and Media Department Team Leader, shared her journey of overcoming bad advice that led her to pursue strengths she didn't enjoy. "I once listened to a podcast where the guest said, 'The more skilled you become, the more people need you, and the less you

need them.' It reminded me of the worst advice I ever received: To be successful, work on your weaknesses until they become strengths," she said.

After years of striving to excel at things she didn't love, she reconnected with her passion for writing. "I was told that to be a successful writer, I had to focus on one field. The last literary work I produced was over 10 years ago," she said. After her resignation was rejected, she took seven months to write and rediscover her passion. "We need to find balance for ourselves. It's okay to feel lost at times, but eventually, we realize that our existence has meaning," she concluded.

### Embracing maternal bonds without shame

Ali Najim, podcast host and social media influencer, reflected on the importance of mothers and the stigma surrounding the term "mama's boy". "I am my mother's son. Some say it's a flaw to be known by my mother's name, but she had a profound impact on my life," he said. Najim challenged the notion that being close to one's mother indicates weakness, noting, "In some households, there is unnecessary shame in this bond. But I've made it my mission to express my appreciation for my mother, even in front of others." He urged people to embrace their emotions and recognize the significance of mothers. "I'm here today because of her blessings, prayers, and guidance," he added.

### Progress through passion and persistence

Majed Al-Zaabi, wildlife photographer, emphasized the importance of progress and perseverance. "Never belittle anyone, embrace progress, and avoid hostility," he said. Al-Zaabi began his photography career in Kuwait and later achieved over 100 global awards in Kenya. He discussed facing rejection in international competitions but

encouraged persistence. Now a judge for the largest bird photography competition worldwide, his work has been published in National Geographic. He also recounted how his Direct Aid Organization website was initially rejected by Dr Abd Al-Rahman Al-Sumait. "After gifting my friend the only book I printed, Sumait contacted me to collaborate. Today, the website has over 250,000 registered users, allowing donations within five seconds," he said.

### Education beyond employment

Dr Mohammed Al-Saddani, Assistant Director at the Ministry of Education, highlighted the need to rethink education as a tool for personal growth, not just employment. "Knowledge has become something we pursue solely for jobs and financial gain, rather than for values and self-improvement," he said. He argued that education should foster positive change and help people love and respect others. "The goal is to embrace the good, correct the negatives, and overcome flaws that prevent us from practicing true humanity," he said, emphasizing that education helps build advanced societies.

### Finding meaning amid adversity

Rola Mourdaa, manager at the Teaching and Learning Center, shared personal reflections on standing firm in one's values. She recounted how, during her childhood, her father refused to donate to a political party, leading to threats and the destruction of their home by rockets. "That experience taught me that no harm can come without God's will. True survival lies in standing firm in your values," she said. Although she now lives safely in Kuwait, she explained that peace comes from meaningful moments with loved ones, not material success.



Majed Al-Zaabi



Dr. Manal Al-Hasawi



Rola Mourdaa

## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: The C/2023 A3 (Tsuchinshan-ATLAS) comet is captured next to the Liberation Tower in Kuwait City. — Photo by Kuwaiti Astrophotographer Abdullah Al-Harbi

## News in Brief

## Navy to carry out shock trials

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwaiti Army announced on Friday that the naval forces will set off trial explosions in Kuwait's designated firing range starting Sunday. The explosions, known as "shock trials" will go on from Sunday until next Thursday, from 7 am to 6 pm. In a press release published by KUNA, the army said the shock trials will take place in the designated firing range, located 16.5 nautical miles east of Ras Al-Jlaiah, extending toward Failaka Island, and six nautical miles east of Ras Al-Zour, extending to Umm Al-Maradim Island. In a shock trial, live explosives are detonated underwater to confirm that warships can continue to meet demanding mission requirements. A trial consists of a series of detonations that propagate a shock wave through a warship's hull under deliberate and controlled conditions simulating near misses from underwater explosions. The trials help the navy assess the ability of the ship and crew to withstand near-miss situations. The army urged all citizens and residents, including sea-goers and fishing enthusiasts, to avoid the mentioned area during the specified period to ensure everyone's safety.

## 23 arrested for drug possession

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Interior arrested on Friday 23 suspects in possession of 42 kilograms of narcotics and 9,000 hallucinogen and cash. A statement said the suspects confessed to the possession of the illicit material, which they were planning to use and sell, adding that they would be referred to legal authorities for due process. Over the weekend, Ministry of Interior personnel issued 2,220 various traffic violations during a security campaign in Al-Fahaheel area in Kuwait's southern Al-Ahmadi Governorate, the ministry announced in a press statement to KUNA. The campaign was carried out under the direction of First Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah. During the campaign, three drug cases were registered, 13 people were arrested for breaking various laws, and 16 cars and motorcycles were seized. In its statement, the ministry urged citizens and residents to report any violations they come across to police. — KUNA

# International partnerships key to global security: Diplomat

## Kuwaiti official calls for leveraging partnerships to provide aid to Gaza, Lebanon

**NEW YORK:** The State of Kuwait emphasized on Friday that international partnerships are key to promoting global security, peace and justice. Shabib Al-Ajmi, Diplomatic Attache of the Kuwaiti Mission to the UN, said this at a special session of the UN Economic and Financial Committee on global partnerships. Kuwait will continue to support all international efforts aimed at realizing the interests and aspirations of the peoples and promoting justice and stability worldwide, Al-Ajmi said. The Kuwaiti diplomat pointed out that in light of recent tragic developments in many parts of the world, global partnerships emerge as a pivotal tool for achieving stability and addressing the dangerous repercussions.

In this regard, the State of Kuwait is a leading supporter of these partnerships and could do so through its active role in many international and regional organizations, he said. He reaffirmed Kuwait's firm commitment to supporting conflict-affected countries and strengthening global stability in order to contribute to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Over the past decade, the State of Kuwait has provided humanitarian and development assistance to many countries affected by conflicts and disasters, contributing to reconstruction and funding infrastructure, education and healthcare sectors in these countries, Al-Ajmi indicated. The Diplomatic Attache shed light on the suffering of the Palestinian people, especially in the

Gaza Strip, due to the fierce Zionist assault on the territory that led to the widespread destruction of infrastructure, agricultural land, health and education sectors and the mass displacement of the civilian population.

He also spoke about the suffering of the Lebanese people, who are facing the same fate as a result of the ongoing "barbaric" attacks by the Zionist occupation. "We must use global partnerships to address these tragic situations by providing urgent humanitarian aid to Gaza and Lebanon and intensifying efforts to achieve a lasting ceasefire," he said. Al-Ajmi emphasized that strengthening global partnerships is not an option, but rather a must to achieve economic, social and security



Shabib Al-Ajmi

stability at global and regional levels. He called for broadening international cooperation, through innovative financing mechanisms, for humanitarian and reconstruction efforts in developing and war-affected countries. — KUNA

## Kuwaiti-Bahraini committee to follow up on trade deals

**MANAMA:** Kuwait Ambassador to Manama Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah said Saturday that the Kuwaiti-Bahraini joint committee reflected mutual desire for cooperation in line with the directives of both countries' leaderships.



LONDON: GCC Secretary General Jasem Al-Budaiwi shakes hands with UK Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa Hamish Falconer.

This came in a statement by the ambassador to KUNA, on the occasion of the 11th session of the Kuwaiti-Bahraini high joint committee that would be held in Kuwait, Sunday, headed by Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya and his Bahraini counterpart Dr Abdullatif Al-Zayani. He pointed out that the meeting would follow up on the implementation of previously signed investment, economic and trade agreements. He added that it would also witness the signing of more accords and Memoranda of Understandings that would serve the common interests and enhance security, stability and prosperity of both sides. — KUNA



Secretary General Al-Budaiwi meets with Lord Michael Mainelli, Lord Mayor of the City of London. — KUNA photos

## GCC, UK discuss free trade deal, economic ties

**LONDON:** GCC Secretary General Jasem Al-Budaiwi met with UK Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa Hamish Falconer late Thursday to discuss enhancing bilateral ties. The two sides also discussed several topics, including the latest developments in the negotiations for a free trade agreement between the GCC and the UK, as well as the recent developments in the Middle East, particularly the Zionist occupation's serious violations against civilians in Gaza, and the impact of this crisis on regional and global security and stability, said the GCC General Secretariat in a statement on Friday. It added that both parties under-

scored the importance of the Zionist occupation facilitating the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza. It also noted that both sides affirmed the necessity of resolving this crisis in accordance with relevant UN resolutions and discussed ways to address regional challenges and enhance stability and security in the region.

During his time in London, Budaiwi also met with Lord Michael Mainelli, Lord Mayor of the City of London. During the meeting, several topics of mutual interest were discussed, particularly those related to financial and economic matters, as well as investment cooperation between the GCC countries and the United Kingdom, the GCC Secretariat General said in a statement. The two sides also explored ways to enhance economic partnership and expand cooperation in trade, energy, and innovation, as well as available investment and economic opportunities that would serve mutual interests and support sustainable development for both parties, it added. — KUNA



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Manila's car counters help address 'world's worst traffic'

## North Korea troop deployment locks in Russia military alliance

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BEIRUT: A cloud of smoke erupts following a Zionist airstrike on Beirut's southern suburbs on October 19, 2024. — AFP

# Foreign workers trapped and terrified in Lebanon's conflict

## Foreigners beg their nations to fly them home; Many lack proper documents

**MANILA:** Cici Brinces came to Lebanon as a domestic worker 14 years ago, married a Palestinian, had a son, survived leukaemia and was building a new life. Then bombs began falling in Beirut and now she wants to go home to the Philippines. "I feel that the end is near for me - worse than when I had cancer," said Brinces, 46, who fled her home near the airport two weeks ago and lived on the streets for days before moving into a shelter with her 10-year-old son.

Nazmul Shahin, who works at a supermarket in Beirut's Achrafieh neighborhood, says explosions jolt him awake at night. "My heart begins pounding - and it feels like something is gnawing at my entrails," the 30-year-old Bangladeshi citizen, who has been living in Lebanon for about a year, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in a phone interview from Beirut. Md Al Mamun loves the job he got at a Beirut bakery three months ago, but now he too wants to go home to Bangladesh. "I really like it here - the pay and the environment are so much better - but since the bombing began, I have been badly missing home," he said.

A nearly year-long conflict between Zionists and the Hezbollah militant group has intensified in recent weeks, with Zionists bombing southern Lebanon, Beirut's southern suburbs and the Bekaa Valley, killing many of Hezbollah's top leaders, and sending ground troops into southern Lebanon. Iran-backed Hezbollah has fired rockets into Zionist territory. Lebanese authorities say at least 1.2 million Lebanese have been displaced and more than 2,300 people killed since last October, the majority in recent weeks. Most of the country's 900 shelters are full and people are now sleeping in the open or in Beirut's parks. Among them are many foreign workers. The In-

ternational Organization for Migration says Lebanon hosts more than 177,000 migrant workers, primarily from Africa and Asia. Human Rights Watch has quoted Lebanon's Labour Ministry as saying the number is around 250,000. They mostly comprise women who work in the domestic and hospitality sectors and are employed under the kafala system, a sponsorship model also common in Gulf nations where employers control the legal status of any migrants who work for them.

Uganda-based activist Safina Virani, who is fundraising online to get food and shelter to African migrants, said many women had been cut adrift by their employers, who fled when the Zionist attacks began. "Many said their employers took their passports at the airport as soon as they arrived, and they didn't give (them) to them again. They have no money, and their employers abandoned them as soon as the war broke, and they didn't give them their documents," Virani told the Thomson Reuters Foundation from Uganda's capital Kampala.

"Most of them don't have bank accounts or documents that can identify them officially," Virani said, explaining that this made it difficult for relatives back home to send money. Virani said stranded Africans also faced discrimination. "African migrants are being treated as second-class citizens, and this has a lot to do with racism, and that is why governments need to take the protection of the citizens seriously," she said.

### 'Please Send Airplanes'

There are more than 11,000 documented Filipino workers in Lebanon. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr has ordered the government to prepare for a safe and timely repatriation of its citizens. This is exactly

what Brinces, whose husband is working in Nigeria, wants. "President Marcos, please send airplanes here for us, like what other nationalities did for their countrymen," she said.

Some 500 Filipinos have been repatriated since last year and by Oct. 8, the Philippines embassy in Beirut had received more than 1,700 applications for repatriation. The embassy has set up temporary shelters for Filipino workers, but Brinces said many people were reluctant to use them as cellphones were at times restricted so they could lose contact with home.

Some Filipinos say the embassy has been slow to help. "My sister only got repetitive replies from government chatbots, until they asked her to go to the embassy in Beirut which was impossible for her because her employer won't allow her to and she did not have her passport," said Mark Anthony Bunda, whose sister works in Lebanon as a domestic helper. Brinces' situation is different: she has her documents but her passport has expired and she needs exit clearance from the Lebanese authorities as a foreign worker.

When she first fled her home, she sent her son to live with her mother-in-law in the relative safety of the mountains outside Beirut. She wanted to stay close to the embassy in case there was news of repatriation. "The embassy told me they can't respond to our requests all at once. Especially since the government here has been slow to process our applications," she said. She has now been reunited with her son and is living in a shelter in the capital.

Among many African workers in Lebanon, there are some 26,000 Kenyans, according to foreign ministry data, many a direct result of an agreement between Kenya's National Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Lebanese companies. — AFP

## 'Timebomb' ship highlights hazard of dangerous cargoes

**PARIS:** A damaged ship, spurned by European ports because of its potentially explosive cargo, has been stranded in the North Sea for weeks while authorities work out what to do with it. The Maltese-flagged Ruby is the latest example of an unwanted vessel left in limbo because no-one dares to handle it. Such vessels, sometimes nicknamed "timebombs", remain stuck for weeks, even months. Ruby, a Handymax bulk carrier, has 20,000 tons of ammonium nitrate on board. That is more than seven times the amount of ammonium nitrate - used in fertilizers as well as in explosives - that detonated in Lebanon in 2020, devastating the port of Beirut.

After the vessel set off from the Russian port of Kandalaksha on August 22, it ran into a storm in the Barents Sea and limped, damaged, into the Norwegian port of Tromsø for damage inspection. It was subsequently ordered to leave and proceed with the aid of a tug to another port elsewhere for repairs. It was turned away by Lithuania, which insisted the ship must offload its volatile cargo first, and continued southwards. Since September 25, it has been anchored off southeastern England near the Dover Strait, which is one of world's busiest shipping lanes.

British coastguards said the Ruby was seaworthy, stressing: "The vessel has appropriate safety certificates approved by the vessel's flag state and is able to make its own way." But it has remained stuck in mooring since September, with its mainly Syrian crew still on board. The Ruby's Dubai-based managers said they hoped to offload the cargo in a UK port so the vessel could be put in dry dock for repairs. "It has been logistically challenging to find an adequate solution, which partly explains the delay," the managing company told AFP. Ports willing to accept a potentially hazardous load are few and far between. "People associate it (the Ruby) with Beirut but I think it's entirely possible to manage this situation," said Eric Slominski, an expert in shipping dangerous goods.

The Ruby's cargo was destined to make fertilizer while the ammonium nitrate in Beirut had been specifically intended to manufacture explosives, he pointed out. "It's not a product you can mess around with but it isn't explosive," Nicolas Tanic, from French marine pollution organization Cedre, said of the Ruby's cargo. "It's a combustion agent for fuelling fires," said Tanic, whose organization has analyzed the ship's load.

He said the chemical compound's Russian origins and haunting memories of the Beirut port disaster had triggered alarm and a media frenzy. But the French shipowners' body said ports could have other reasons too for spurning the Ruby. "If a vessel gets grounded in your channel, it shuts your port. If it grounds at one of your docks, the dock's unusable for a couple of months. It's a big risk to accept a vessel in difficulty," said managing director Laurent Martens.

In addition, unloading a cargo like the Ruby's is a lengthy operation that "costs hundreds of thousands of euros", Martens explained. In the wake of the Erika disaster in 1999 - when an oil tanker of that name broke apart off the western coast of France - the European Union tightened its laws on maritime safety. — AFP

## G7 defense summit considers Lebanon, Gaza as war rages

**NAPLES:** G7 defense ministers convened Saturday against a backdrop of escalation in the Middle East and mounting pressure on Ukraine as it faces another winter of fighting. Italy, holding the rotating presidency of the Group of Seven countries, organized the body's first ministerial meeting dedicated to defence, staged in Naples, the southern city that is also home to a NATO base. Invited to the one-day talks were NATO chief Mark Rutte and the EU's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell.

Borrell told reporters the group had much to discuss, including recent strikes on the UN's peacekeeping mission in Lebanon, and the possibility of a ceasefire in Gaza. The summit comes two days after Zionist entity announced it had killed Hamas chief Yahya Sinwar, mastermind of the October 7, 2023 attacks. "Certainly after the killing of Yahya Sinwar a new perspective is open and we have to use it in order to reach a ceasefire, to release the remaining hostages and to look for a political perspective," Borrell told journalists.

A morning session included discussions over recent strikes on UNIFIL, the UN's Lebanon peacekeeping mission in Lebanon, where Zionist entity is also at war with Hamas ally Hezbollah. Borrell suggested the peacekeepers' mandate should be beefed up by the UN Security Council to give them more scope to act amid repeated attacks on their positions they say are being conducted by Zionist forces. "They cannot act by themselves, it is certainly a limited role," he said. Earlier Saturday, Borrell wrote on social media that "a more robust mandate for UNIFIL" was needed.



NAPLES: (From left) Ukraine's Defense Minister Rustem Umerov, France's Defense Minister Sebastien Lecornu, Great Britain's Defense Minister John Healey, Japan's incoming Defense Minister Gen Nakatani, Italy's Defense Minister Guido Crosetto, Canada's Defense Minister Bill Blair, German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius, US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell and NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte pose for a family photograph as part of the Group of Seven (G7) Defense Ministers Summit at the Palazzo Reale in Naples, Italy, on October 19, 2024. — AFP

In Lebanon Friday, Italy's prime minister, Giorgia Meloni slammed as "unacceptable" the recent strikes on UNIFIL. Italy has around 1,000 troops in the UN peacekeeping force in Lebanon, which has soldiers from more than 50 countries. As the Naples talks began, Italian Defense Minister Guido Crosetto told the group that the "critical situation in the Middle East", Russia's war in Ukraine, "profound instability" in sub-Saharan Africa and "increasing tension" in the Asia-Pacific region "highlight a deteriorated security framework with forecasts for the near future that cannot be positive".

### Ukraine prospects

On Ukraine, the ministers will contemplate Kyiv entering a third winter at war, battlefield losses in the east - and the prospect of reduced US military sup-

port should Donald Trump be elected to the White House next month. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, under mounting pressure from Western allies to forge a winning strategy against Russia, on Thursday presented what he called a "victory plan" to the European Union and NATO.

Its main thrust is a call for immediate NATO membership, deemed unfeasible by alliance members. It also demands the ability to strike military targets inside Russia with long-range weapons, and an undefined "non-nuclear strategic deterrence package" on Ukrainian territory. Under discussion will also likely be reports, based on South Korean intelligence, that North Korea is deploying large numbers of troops to support Moscow's war against Ukraine. NATO was not as yet able to confirm that intelligence, Rutte said on Friday. — AFP

## International

# North Korea troop deployment locks in Russia military alliance

## Russia pulled deeper into Korean peninsula security

### Zionist airstrikes near Lebanon border choke off Syria lifeline

**DAMASCUS:** When Zionists bombed the Lebanese-Syrian border, it cut off a key route for many in Syria who rely on it as a vital link to the outside world. For years, Lebanon's main border crossing with Syria has served as a key access point for international travel, healthcare and purchasing imported goods. Today, those who wish to use the crossing known as Masnaa must climb down into and walk across a massive crater in the road, which is 10 meters deep and 30 meters wide.

Zionists hit near the crossing on October 4, accusing Lebanese militant group Hezbollah of using it to transport military equipment from its main backer Iran, through its ally Syria, and into Lebanon. But the strike has made it harder for thousands of people trying to flee war in Lebanon to Syria. The Zionist-Hezbollah war erupted late last month after nearly a year of exchanges of fire over the war in Gaza. Earlier this month, after undergoing surgery in the Syrian capital, Reem Al-Ajami, a 67-year-old Syrian woman, hired a car to drive to the crossing to try to reach Beirut for a flight to visit her daughter in Greece.

#### Vital for trade

Athens, like many other international destinations, has not been serviced by Syria's airports since the start of the country's civil war in 2011. "When we reached the crater, Red Crescent volunteers helped me cross it in a wheelchair," Ajami told AFP, saying she saw hundreds of people travelling in the opposite way to escape the war in Lebanon. Her luggage was carried by hired help across the ditch that was so ragged that she said she almost fell off her wheelchair as she was pushed through. Another driver was waiting on the other side to transport Ajami to Beirut's airport.

The land journey cost Ajami \$400 dollars — more than the \$320 plane ticket she purchased from Beirut to Athens, she said. The crossing is located on the main international road linking Beirut and Damascus. In Lebanon, warplanes have pounded the area around the road as part of their campaign against Hezbollah. Despite the strikes, Lebanon says more than 460,000 people have crossed into Syria since September 23, most of them Syrian nationals. "Before, the trip cost between \$100 and \$150. Today, it is between \$400 and \$500," Ali al-Mawla, a 31-year-old taxi driver, told AFP.

"You have to change cars, cross the crater and face the dangers on the road," Mawla said, explaining why no driver would accept less than triple the journey's initial cost. Business, however, has not slowed because the road is vital "for both countries", Mawla said, as it acts as the key artery for Lebanon's exports. With their country under sanctions, Syrians have relied on the crossing to travel to Lebanon, where they can submit a visa application in embassies that have deserted Damascus, or stock up on medicines and consumer products they can't find back home. — AFP

## Genocidal Zionists ravage Gaza...

### Continued from Page 1

Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, whose country supports Hamas, said the regional "resistance front" against the Zionist entity "will not end at all with the martyrdom of Sinwar", the latest in a series of militant leader killings. "Hamas is alive and will remain alive", he said in a statement.

Sinwar "was the shining figure of resistance and struggle", Khamenei said in his first remarks on Sinwar since he was killed on Wednesday. "He stood with unwavering determination against the cruel and aggressive enemy and slapped them with tact and courage," he added. "He left behind the irreparable blow of October 7, 2023 as his legacy in the history of this region, and then he soared with honor and pride to the ascension of the martyrs."

In Lebanon, where the Zionist entity last month ramped up air raids and deployed ground forces after nearly a year of cross-border exchanges with Hezbollah, state media said a strike hit the group's south Beirut stronghold on Saturday. AFP footage showed plumes of

## Kuwait defends UNRWA, backs...

### Continued from Page 1

Permanent Palestinian Representative to the UN Riyad Mansour lauded UNRWA, deeming it as a success story for multifaceted joint UN cooperation.

He affirmed that all efforts would be dedicated to protect UNRWA based on resolution 194, which states: "Refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or equity, should be made good by the governments or authorities responsible."

Meanwhile, Kuwait has been supporting Palestinians' cause and rights through political, diplomatic and humanitarian channels, a Kuwaiti official said

**SEOUL:** North Korea's decision to deploy thousands of soldiers to Ukraine's front lines cements Pyongyang's contentious military alliance with Moscow, experts told AFP, and pulls Russia deeper into Korean peninsula security. About 1,500 North Korean special forces soldiers are already in Russia acclimatizing, likely to head to the front lines soon, Seoul's spy agency said Friday, with thousands more troops set to depart imminently. Pyongyang's first such deployment overseas.

The move demonstrates that the military deal signed by the North's Kim Jong Un and Russian President Vladimir Putin in June, which included a mutual defense clause, was not just for show. "This establishes a framework where Russia's intervention or military support will automatically occur if North Korea is attacked or faces a crisis," Hong Min, a senior analyst at the Korea Institute for National Unification, told AFP. The fact that North Korean soldiers will fight alongside Russia in Ukraine proves how "solid" the Putin-Kim deal really is, Hong said. And the boost of troops from Pyongyang could help Moscow to hold "occupied territories or aid in further territorial gains", he added.

North and South Korea remain technically at war as the 1950 to 1953 conflict ended with an armistice, not a peace deal. But while Kim has built up a nucle-

## N Korea recovers remains of South Korean drone

**SEOUL:** North Korea claimed Saturday it had discovered the remains of at least one crashed South Korean military drone in the capital Pyongyang, releasing images of the aircraft that some analysts confirmed as South Korean, while a lawmaker suggested it might be a replica. The nuclear-armed North recently accused Seoul of using drones to drop anti-regime propaganda leaflets on the capital. Pyongyang's defense ministry spokesman said security authorities found the remains of a crashed drone during a search of the North Korean capital on October 13, the official KCNA news agency reported.

The North's investigation "scientifically proved that the drone came from the ROK", the unnamed spokesman said, using South Korea's official acronym. South Korea's military initially denied sending drones, but has subsequently declined to comment. "There is no value in verifying or responding to North Korea's unilateral claims," it said in a brief statement Saturday.

North Korea has previously warned it would consider it "a declaration of war" if another drone was detected. The North Korean official claimed the drone was of the same type as a vehicle-mounted drone displayed by the South Korean military during an Armed Forces Day event in Seoul last year. KCNA released several images of what it claimed was the recovered drone, including one showing it lodged in a tree and others featuring North Koreans who appeared to be officials.

Hong Min, a senior analyst at the Korea Institute for National Unification, said that based on the images released by the North, the drone was "clearly

smoke rising over the area, less than an hour after the Zionist military issued an evacuation order.

A strike on the eastern Bekaa Valley killed four people including a town mayor, said Lebanon's official National News Agency, and the health ministry reported two dead in a Zionist attack on a vital highway north of Beirut. Hezbollah said it fired "a rocket salvo" at the northern Zionist town of Safed, shortly after announcing attacks on an army base near Haifa city. The Zionist army reported 115 projectiles launched from Lebanon.

Since late September, the war has left at least 1,418 people dead in Lebanon, according to an AFP tally of Lebanese health ministry figures. EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell called to beef up the mandate of the UN peacekeeping mission in southern Lebanon, to give UNIFIL more scope to act amid repeated attacks on their positions.

World leaders again called for an end to the war after Sinwar's death, which Netanyahu called "the beginning of the end". US, German, French and British leaders urged "immediate" action to "bring the hostages home", end the violence and "ensure humanitarian aid reaches civilians" in Gaza. In August, Netanyahu said Sinwar was "the only obstacle to a hostage deal". On Friday, Qatar-based Hamas official Khalil Al-Hayya reiterated that the group would not free Zionist hostages "unless the aggression against our people in Gaza stops". — Agencies

on Friday. Delivering Kuwait's speech before the UN second committee of economic affairs on Palestine, Abdullah Bu Abbas, Kuwait's diplomatic attache, said "My country is supporting recognizing Palestine in the international community and taking part in international political initiatives aiming to find a fair and permanent solution to Palestine's cause and end the (Zionist) occupation".

Kuwait has spared no efforts for this purpose by all means, he said, calling on the international community to back Palestinians who have been facing Zionist occupation aggression for years. Palestine has been facing grave economic challenges, which hinder its stability and development, he stressed. Bu Abbas referred to ongoing disputes and political instability as well as the blockade imposed by the Zionist occupation that badly affected vital sectors in Palestine like agriculture, industry and trade.

According to a UN report issued in May, more than 80 percent of Gaza's population is below the poverty level, Bu Abbas stated. He noted that about 5.8 percent of agricultural and food industries in the West Bank have almost been suspended. — KUNA

ar arsenal, Seoul lacks nukes of its own. The South is protected by the so-called US nuclear umbrella, and Seoul and Washington routinely conduct large-scale joint military drills, which infuriate Pyongyang. By sending troops to Russia, Kim could be hoping to create a more integrated North Korean and Russian military deterrent, akin to the US-South Korea alliance, potentially "resulting in a significant shift" in the Koreans' security dynamics, Hong said.

#### 'Significant shift'

Ukraine's state-run Centre for Strategic Communication on Friday released a video that purportedly shows North Korean soldiers in what looks like a Russian military camp preparing to join Moscow's war in Ukraine. In the footage, one of the soldiers appeared to say "move over" to his colleagues with a North Korean accent. Seoul's spy agency told AFP that it was "inappropriate" for them to comment on materials released by another country's government.

Experts said the deployment gives North Korea's elite soldiers a chance to experience modern warfare, and see how the country's home-grown weaponry — which Seoul has long accused Kim of sending to Russia — fares on the battlefield. It could also be a bid by Kim to enhance his international stature and negotiating position ahead of the US elections next month, Lee Sang-min, a re-

searcher at Korea Institute for Defense Analyses, told AFP. "One way to attract global attention by doing something reprehensible is by sending troops to support the war in Ukraine, which could prolong the conflict or shift it in Russia's favor," he said.

#### War economy

For Russia, the benefit of the North Korean deployment is clear, said Vladimir Tikhonov, professor of Korea studies at the University of Oslo. "Russia's main bottleneck is shortage of both military and labor manpower, and North Korea has a great unexplored potential to alleviate both," he told AFP. Relations between the two Koreas are at one of their lowest points in years, with Kim on Thursday stressing the country had jettisoned the "unreasonable idea of reunification".

Experts said Pyongyang could also be using Ukraine as a means of re-aligning its foreign policy. By sending soldiers, North Korea is positioning itself within the Russian war economy as a supplier of weapons, military support and labor — potentially even bypassing its traditional ally, neighbor and main trading partner, China, according to analysts. "It means that Pyongyang won't be motivated to seek improvements in relations with Japan, South Korea and the US," Tikhonov said. "It means a constant state of tension on the Korean Peninsula." — AFP



**PYONGYANG:** This undated picture released from North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) via KNS on October 19, 2024 shows what is claimed to be a South Korean drone in a tree, found in an area of Pyongyang. — AFP

a long-range reconnaissance small drone used by... the South Korean military". "It is the same model that our military showcased during the Armed Forces Day event last year," he told AFP. The North said the drone was found in Pyongyang's Hyongjesan district, which Hong said was close to the North's Sam-nong-dong missile research centre.

Given the location, the drone "may have been used (by the South Korean military) for reconnaissance", he said. But South Korean lawmaker Yu Yong-weon, who sits on the defence committee in parliament, suggested it was possible North Korea released images of a replica of Seoul's military drones, noting that many drones used by civilians also resemble the one Pyongyang claims was sent from the South. The North has previously unveiled drones that appeared to be visual copies of the US-

made RQ-4 Global Hawk and MQ-9 Reaper, Yu's office said in a statement sent to AFP.

Yang Moo-jin, president of the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul, said if the North's allegations were true, it could mean the South "had been conducting reconnaissance with military drones". North Korea on Saturday reiterated it would regard the detection of another drone as "a declaration of war" and would respond with an immediate retaliatory attack. But the defense ministry official appeared to slightly amend Pyongyang's previous claim that the South used the drones to drop propaganda leaflets over the North Korean capital. "It is quite likely that the drone is the one which scattered leaflets over the centre of Pyongyang Municipality," he said, but added: "But the conclusion has not yet been drawn." — AFP

## Sinwar's heroic battlefield death...

### Continued from Page 1

"This is how heroes die," said Adel Rajab, 60, a father of two in Gaza. "I have watched the video 30 times since last night, there is no better way to die," said Ali, a 30-year-old taxi driver in Gaza. "I will make this video a daily duty to watch for my sons, and my grandsons in the future," said the father of two.

Sinwar's own words in previous speeches, saying he would rather die at the Zionist entity's hands than from a heart attack or car accident, have been repeatedly shared by Palestinians online. "The best gift the enemy and the occupation can offer me is to assassinate me and that I go as a martyr at their hands," he had said.

Now some Palestinians are wondering whether the Zionist entity will regret allowing the fulfillment

of that wish to be broadcast as a potential recruiting tool for an organization it has sworn to destroy. "They said he was hiding inside the tunnels. They said he was keeping (Zionist) prisoners next to him to save his life. Yesterday we saw that he was hunting down (Zionist) soldiers in Rafah, where the occupation has been operating since May," said Rasha, a displaced 42-year-old mother of four children. "This is how leaders go, with a rifle in the hand. I supported Sinwar as a leader and today I am proud of him as a martyr," she added.

Rajab, who praised Sinwar's death as heroic, said he had not supported the Oct 7 attacks, believing Palestinians were not prepared for all-out war with the Zionist entity. But he said the manner of his death "made me proud as a Palestinian". In both Gaza and the West Bank, where Hamas also has significant support and where fighting between Zionist occupying forces and Palestinians has increased over the past year, people wondered whether Sinwar's death would hasten the war's end. — Reuters

## Harris, Trump spar over stamina...

### Continued from Page 1

"That's a legitimate question." While he has been appearing on friendly TV networks, Trump has canceled sitdowns with media outlets including NBC, CNBC and CBS. He has also refused a second debate with Harris, after being soundly bested in the first. Politico reported that a Trump aide had told producers at a website negotiating an interview that the ex-president was "exhausted" and refusing some appearances — a claim described by his campaign as "detached from reality".

Trump reacted angrily to Harris' jab, telling reporters that he had canceled nothing and calling his Democratic opponent a "loser" who "doesn't have the energy of a rabbit". Trump, talking to reporters as he arrived in Detroit, rejected such talk. "I've gone 48 days now without a rest," he said. "I'm not even tired. I'm really exhilarated. You know why? We're killing her in the polls, because the American people don't want her."

Polls in the election's most competitive states are effectively tied with just 18 days remaining until the election. In a Fox & Friends interview, Trump also griped about negative television ads on Fox about

him and said he would ask Rupert Murdoch, the founder of News Corp and who also launched Fox News, to ensure such ads are not broadcast until Election Day on Nov 5. "I'm going to say, 'Rupert, please do it this way and then we're going to have a victory, cause everyone wants that,'" Trump said.

Trump visited a campaign office in Hamtramck, where he heard praise from the Detroit suburb's first Muslim mayor, Amer Ghalib. Trump was seeking support from Arab Americans in Michigan disenchanted with Democrats, Harris and Biden over US support for the Zionist entity in the Gaza conflict. "We all ultimately want one thing. We want peace in the Middle East. We're going to get peace in the Middle East. It's going to happen very fast. It can happen with the right leadership in Washington," Trump said, without elaborating.

In Oakland County, Harris welcomed members of the Arab American community to her rally and touted prospects for peace in the aftermath of the death of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar. In the evening, Trump returned to Detroit, Michigan's largest city, for a rally after saying on Oct 10 that the rest of the US would turn into Detroit if Harris won. There, Trump's microphone stopped working and the former president roamed around the stage for some 20 minutes. "I won't pay the bill for this stupid company that rented us this crap," Trump said after the audio started working again. — Agencies

## International

# Manila's vehicle counters help address 'world's worst traffic'

## Carmageddon plays out each day in the Southeast Asian metropolis

**MANILA:** Perched on a flowerbox at a busy intersection in the Philippine capital, Ina Laprizza's eyes jump from one car to the next, her fingers flying across manual tally counters as she logs each passing vehicle. Rain or shine, through floods and car exhaust pollution, the 41-year-old holds the fort as car-mageddon plays out each day in the Southeast Asian metropolis infamous for its terrible gridlock. Her tallies end up with the traffic engineers of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), who design and propose inexpensive traffic solutions. "We're happy with this job because we know how important it is. We don't mind it when people belittle what we do," Laprizza told AFP.

Her pink manicured hands rest on six linked cylindrical counters – each for a different type of vehicle. She routinely logs about 7,000 cars, motorbikes and more during an eight-hour shift that earns her around 17,000 pesos (\$303) a month. Laprizza has been at it for 10 years, even though she gets the occasional headache from prolonged exposure to the tropical sun. The city government employs just 34 manual car counters, who wear reflective yellow safety vests and are deployed to at least 16 major roads. "The data our traffic surveyors get from

counting cars on Metro Manila roads is very important," said Mar Anthony Santos, head of the MMDA's traffic survey section. "It serves as the foundation for our traffic engineering interventions and policies."

Based on the counters' data, Santos said the MMDA installed a dedicated motorcycle lane and succeeded in reducing the frequency of accidents at Commonwealth Avenue, a northern Manila thoroughfare used by 408,000 motorists per day. Vehicle speeds on the avenue, previously notorious for crashes, also improved by 24 seconds over the roughly seven-kilometer (four-mile) stretch. It takes Laprizza 45 minutes to commute the same distance to work every day by jeep in another part of Manila.

Santos said tests showed a manual count was more accurate than using artificial intelligence, as CCTVs cannot count accurately at night or during heavy rain due to glare from headlights. Manila, a sprawling metropolis of 13 million people, has the world's worst traffic gridlock, according to one survey. The average travel time is 25 minutes and 30 seconds over 10 kilometers, according to traffic data provider Tomtom's 2023 traffic index report. "That's why we are so determined to do this job well, because I also suffer from the traffic jams," Laprizza said. — AFP



**MANILA:** This photo taken shows heavy traffic along the Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA) highway during evening rush hour in Manila. — AFP

## Mexico seizes record 8.3 tons of drugs in the Pacific

**MEXICO CITY:** The Mexican navy announced Friday it had seized more than 8.3 tons of drugs in the Pacific Ocean, a record for a single operation at sea. "Navy personnel seized 8,361 kilograms of illicit cargo, which represents the largest amount of drugs seized in a maritime operation, unprecedented in history," said a statement from the Ministry of the Navy. It did not specify the type of the drugs, but said they were valued at 2.099 billion pesos (about \$105 million). Twenty-three people were arrested during the bust which took place southwest of the port of Lazaro Cardenas, off the western coast of Mexico.

The drugs were distributed in six small boats and one of the vessels was a submersible, which implied a "complex" action on the part of the sailors, added the ministry. The largest drug seizure in Mexico's history was 23 tons of Colombian cocaine in November 2007. Mexico has for decades been the hub of drug trafficking to the United States, with a large number of cartels fighting for control of the trade. The state of Michoacan, off the coast of which the seizure took place, is the scene of clashes between criminal gangs, including the powerful Jalisco Nueva Generacion cartel, one of Mexico's most powerful and violent criminal groups.

The latest raid reported on Friday was carried out "days ago" by surface units backed by a helicopter, the ministry said. Some 8,700 liters of fuel, another of the illicit trades controlled by drug cartels, were also found on the raided vessels. On August 23, authorities reported they had impounded about seven tonnes of drugs in two separate operations in the same area of the country. The Mexican navy, which conducts surveillance operations on a permanent basis, has discovered all kinds of drug shipments, including one of cocaine stuffed in 217 barrels of chili sauce in 2016.

Mexico has for decades been a drug trafficking route to the United States, which has sparked disputes between different narco groups. The country's first woman president Claudia Sheinbaum, who took office on October 1, faces a major challenge to tackle the drug cartels and related crimes. She has pledged to stick with her predecessor Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's "hugs not bullets" strategy of using social policy to tackle crime at its roots. Across Mexico, more than 450,000 people have been killed and tens of thousands have gone missing in a spiral of violence since the government deployed the army to combat drug trafficking in 2006. — AFP

## Chinese drone maker DJI sues Pentagon over blacklisting

**SHANGHAI:** Chinese drone maker DJI, which dominates the global consumer market, said Saturday it was suing the US Department of Defense, complaining that Washington had "erroneously" included the company on a Chinese military company blacklist. It has faced scrutiny from Washington in recent years, including for its alleged role in surveilling ethnic minorities in China, and DJI drones have reportedly been used extensively by both sides in the war in Ukraine.

"On October 18, DJI filed a lawsuit to challenge the Department of Defense's (DoD) erroneous designation of the company as a 'Chinese Military Company'," DJI said in a statement sent to AFP. The Pentagon added DJI to its list of Chinese military-linked companies in 2022. It said at the time that it was seeking to "highlight and count-

er (China's) Military-Civil Fusion strategy, which supports the modernization goals of the People's Liberation Army (PLA)".

China did that by "ensuring its access to advanced technologies and expertise are acquired and developed by PRC (People's Republic of China) companies, universities, and research programs that appear to be civilian entities", the Pentagon said then. DJI said Saturday it had attempted to "engage with the DoD for more than sixteen months" and had now "determined it had no alternative other than to seek relief in federal court." "DJI is not owned or controlled by the Chinese military, and the DoD itself acknowledges that DJI makes consumer and commercial drones, not military drones," the company said. "DJI is a private company and should not be misclassified as a military company."

### Tech fears

Washington has for years rolled out measures targeting Chinese tech companies over national security concerns and fears that technology could be used by Beijing for military purposes. The US Commerce Department last month moved to ban the sale of vehicles able to connect to other devices

or the Internet that incorporate Chinese technology, citing national security risks. Meanwhile, export restrictions on chip-making equipment are intended to prevent China from acquiring sensitive inputs that could be used in cutting-edge weapons and tech such as AI.

Founded in 2006, DJI is the world's biggest maker of consumer drones and also accounts for a large global share of higher-end unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). Its UAVs have been praised globally for rapid innovations that have helped push the worldwide explosion in drone use in everything from aerial photography to filmmaking, crop-dusting, search-and-rescue operations, and public safety applications.

In 2022, the Ukrainian government accused DJI of helping Russia with its AeroScope system, which Kyiv says Moscow uses to guide its missiles. The company strongly denied it has allowed Russia to use its products for military purposes. In April 2022, DJI said it was temporarily suspending business in both Russia and Ukraine while it "internally reassess(ed) compliance requirements". DJI was previously blacklisted by the US Department of the Treasury in 2021 for allegedly supporting the surveillance of the Uyghur minority in China's Xinjiang region. — AFP

## 'Molotov-like bombs' tossed at Japan ruling party headquarters

**TOKYO:** A man was arrested after throwing several suspected petrol bombs at the headquarters of Japan's ruling party Saturday and ramming his car into a fence outside the prime minister's office, police said. No injuries were reported in the incident, which comes just over a week before a general election in which new Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba hopes to shore up his mandate. A Tokyo police spokeswoman said a 49-year-old man from Saitama, north of the Japanese capital, was "arrested on the spot on suspicion of obstructing public duties".

At around sunrise on Saturday, "he approached the headquarters of the Liberal Democratic Party in a vehicle, got out and threw what appeared to be Molotov cocktails," the spokeswoman told AFP. "He also drove into the road in front of the prime minister's office, crashing into a fence to prevent vehicles from entering, and then threw what appeared to be a smoke bomb towards police officers after getting out of the car," she added.

Public broadcaster NHK said the five or six Molotov cocktail-like objects hit a riot police vehicle, but the fire was soon extinguished and no one was injured. Several plastic tanks usually used to carry liquids were found in the man's small white car, according to the Asahi Shimbun daily and other media outlets. The prime minister's office is located about 15 minutes' walk from the LDP headquarters in central Tokyo. Images from the after-



**TOKYO:** Officials investigate a vehicle (bottom right) which appears to have crashed into a barricade near the prime minister's official residence in central Tokyo on October 19, 2024, after a man threw Molotov cocktail-like objects outside the ruling party's headquarters building. — AFP

math of the incident showed a dark blue riot police van whose front section was partly burned away, as firefighters and police officers gathered at the scene.

"Democracy must never succumb to violence," LDP head Ishiba said while campaigning in southern Kagoshima region, according to local media reports. "This happened during the election campaign, but we will do everything to ensure that elections and democracy are not destroyed by violence," the prime minister said. Japan will hold a general election on October 27 in a test for Ishiba, who took office after winning the LDP's leadership vote last month. Violent crime is rare in Japan, which has strict gun control laws. But the country was shaken in 2022 by the assassination of former prime

minister Shinzo Abe, who was shot in broad daylight on the campaign trail by a man with a makeshift gun.

Ishiba's predecessor Fumio Kishida was also targeted in 2023 by a man who threw an apparent homemade pipe bomb towards the then-premier, who was unharmed in the incident. The conservative LDP has been in power for most of Japan's post-war history, albeit with frequent leadership changes. Low voter turnout and a divided opposition mean the party and its junior coalition partner are likely to win this month's election, although the size of their majority could shrink. The policies of former defense minister and confessed security policy "geek" Ishiba, 67, include plans to "re-create" ageing Japan by revitalizing depopulated rural areas. — AFP

## King Charles given military honors in Australia

**SYDNEY:** King Charles was granted five-star rank in each branch of Australia's armed forces Saturday, a ceremonial gesture to mark the first full day of his landmark tour Down Under. Charles, in addition to being king of realm can now call himself field marshal of Australia's army, marshal of its airforce and admiral of the fleet. It was not a bad day's work for the 75-year-old monarch, who spent Saturday recuperating and without public engagements after a marathon flight from London to Sydney.

The monarch — who received the life-changing cancer diagnosis just eight months ago — and Queen Camilla have begun a nine-day visit to Australia and Samoa, the first major foreign tour since being crowned. They landed in Sydney on Friday and were greeted by local dignitaries and posy-bearing children, before a quick private meeting with Australia's staunchly republican Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and his fiancée. "We are really looking forward to returning to this beautiful country to celebrate the extraordinarily rich cultures and communities that make it so special," the royal couple said in a social media post ahead of their arrival.

Royal tours to far-flung domains are a vital way of kindling local support for the monarchy, and the political stakes for the royals are high. A recent poll showed about a third of Australians would like to ditch the monarchy, a third would keep it, and a third are am-



**SYDNEY:** Britain's King Charles III speaks to Australia's Governor-General Sam Mostyn (right) after he and Queen Camilla arrived at Sydney International Airport in Sydney on October 18, 2024, for a six-day royal visit to Sydney and Canberra. — AFP

bivalent. Visiting British royals have typically embarked on weeks-long visits to stoke support, hosting grand banquets and parading through streets packed with thrilled, flag-waving subjects. This visit will be a little different. The king's health has caused much of the usual pomp and ceremony to be scaled back.

A planned stop in New Zealand was cancelled altogether, and he will be in Sydney and Canberra for just six days before attending a Commonwealth summit in Samoa. There are few early morning or late night engagements on his schedule and aside from a community barbecue in Sydney and an event at the city's famed Opera House, there will be few mass public gatherings. There had been rumors that he may attend a horse race in Sydney on Saturday, but he was not to be seen. When

the time came the well-hydrated crowd belted out Australia's anthem "Advance Australia Fair" rather than the royal anthem "God Save the King".

### 'Old white guy vibes'

It is not just age, jetlag and health worries that the king has to contend with Down Under. Australians, while marginally in favor of the monarchy, are far from the enthusiastic loyalists they were in 2011 when thousands flocked to catch a white-gloved wave from his mother Queen Elizabeth II. "I think most people see him as a good king," said 62-year-old Sydney solicitor Clare Cory, who like many is "on the fence" about the monarchy's continued role in Australian life.

"It's a long time. Most of my ancestors came from England, I think we do owe something there," she said, before adding that multi-cultural Australia is now more entwined with the Asia-Pacific than a place "on the other side of the world". Some are less charitable, seeing no reason to retain a king whose accent, formal get-up and customs have little to do with the daily lives of easygoing antipodeans. "He just gives old white guy vibes," said home school teacher Maree Parker. "We don't need a king and queen, we can just do our own thing."

### The lucky country

Still, Australia is a land of many happy memories for Charles, and he can be sure to find some support. He first visited as a gawky 17-year-old in 1966, when he was shipped away to the secluded alpine Timbertop school in regional Victoria. "While I was here I had the Pommy bits bashed off me," he would later remark, describing it as "by far the best part" of his education. Bachelor Charles was famously ambushed by a bikini-clad model on a later jaunt to Western Australia, who pecked him on the cheek in an instantly iconic photo of the young prince. — AFP

## India ex-official in US murder plot had been arrested in Delhi

**NEW DELHI:** A former Indian government official charged in the United States this week for allegedly directing a foiled murder plot had been arrested in New Delhi in December in an attempted murder case, according to court records and a police officer. The US Justice Department unsealed the indictment of Vikash Yadav, 39, on Thursday, alleging he led a plot to murder a Sikh separatist in New York.

From May 2023, the US indictment alleges, Yadav, described as an Indian government employee at the time, worked with others in India and abroad to direct a plot to kill Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, a dual US-Canadian citizen. Delhi Police had arrested Yadav on Dec 18 in the Indian capital, the police officer told Reuters on condition of anonymity. Yadav and an associate were charged with attempted murder and other crimes, according to a filing in a Delhi district court.

Yadav's lawyer, R K Handoo, called the Indian charges "fallacious", adding there was "an international plot to bring shame on the government of India and my client". Handoo declined to comment further. He and the police did not respond to questions on Yadav's whereabouts. The Washington Post, citing American officials, reported on Thursday that Yadav was still in India and that the US was expected to seek his extradition. — AFP

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2024

# IMF chief calls for unity on shared challenges in 'deeply troubled times'

Georgieva uses a speech to celebrate progress made on inflation



WASHINGTON: International Monetary Fund managing director Kristalina Georgieva speaks before a Curtian Raiser speech on the outlook for the global economy in Washington, DC, October 17, 2024. — AFP

WASHINGTON: The international community must come together despite the "difficult geopolitical environment" to tackle shared challenges like lackluster growth and the existential threat posed by climate change, the head of the IMF said Thursday.

Kristalina Georgieva, who has just started her second five-year term as the International Monetary Fund's managing director, spoke ahead of the Fund and the World Bank's annual gathering of financial leaders in Washington next week. She used a speech in the US capital to celebrate the progress made on tackling inflation — while warning of the dangers ahead for the global economy.

"The big global inflation wave is in retreat,"

she said, noting that "a combination of resolute monetary policy action, easing supply chain constraints, and moderating food and energy prices is guiding us back in the direction of price stability." "And this has been done without tipping the global economy into recession and largescale job losses," she added. But while the inflation rate is falling, "the higher price level that we feel in our wallets is here to stay," she said, adding that higher prices were hitting the world's poorest economies and individuals the hardest.

Georgieva also confirmed that a new third chair for Africa on the IMF's executive board would be held by Ivory Coast. Her speech comes just a few days before the IMF and World Bank's annual meet-

ings get underway in Washington against the backdrop of growing conflict in the Middle East, and shortly before the US presidential election, in which the Republican former president Donald Trump is running against Democratic vice president Kamala Harris. Trump has repeatedly threatened to hike tariffs, while also suggesting the president of the United States should have a greater say over monetary policy — a task currently reserved for the Federal Reserve, the independent US central bank.

In her speech, Georgieva praised the independence of central banks around the world, along with international financial institutions like the IMF, which provided financial support during the COVID-19 pandemic. But she warned that the world is facing

"a difficult geopolitical environment," with the expanding conflict in the Middle East adding to the challenges facing policymakers looking to tackle an "unforgiving combination" of lackluster global growth and high levels of public debt.

"We live in deeply troubled times," she said, warning that the peace dividend from the end of the Cold War "is increasingly at risk." "In a world of more wars and more insecurity, defense expenditures may well keep rising while aid budgets fall further behind the growing needs of developing countries," she added. "We must not allow this reality to become an excuse to do nothing to prevent a further fracturing of the global economy," she added. — AFP

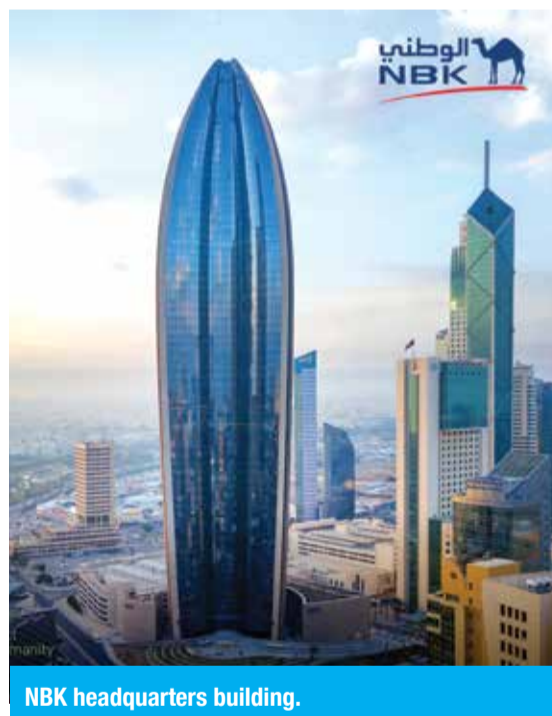
## NBK to participate as strategic partner in FII conference in Riyadh

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) is participating in the eighth edition of the Future Investment Initiative (FII 8th Edition) with a high-level delegation. The event will take place under the Royal Patronage of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, at the King Abdulaziz International Convention Center in Riyadh, from October 29 to 31.

NBK's role as a strategic partner in the conference aligns with this year's theme, "Infinite Horizons: Investing Today, Shaping Tomorrow." The focus of this edition is on developing new strategies to tackle global challenges, exploring Africa's role in the global economy, and developing women's leadership in both internal structures and practical investment initiatives.

The NBK delegation is headed by Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group CEO, and Zaid Al-Sager, Deputy Head of the International Banking Group, representing IBG. Joining them are Meshari Bin Salamah, Deputy General Manager and Head of International Corporate & Commercial Real Estate within the International Banking Group, as well as representatives from NBK's international branches and subsidiaries. Additionally, Faisal Al-Hamad, Chief Executive Officer of NBK Wealth, Malek Khalife, CEO - Global Private Banking & Switzerland, and Musaad Al-Sudairy, Board Member and CEO of NBK Wealth - Saudi Arabia, will be present, along with several senior executives from the bank.

During the conference, Deputy Group CEO Shaikha Al-Bahar will engage in several key panel



NBK headquarters building.

discussions alongside senior bankers from around the globe. These discussions will focus on critical topics such as women's leadership in driving global economic growth, as well as competition with AI and fintechs. Furthermore, Faisal Al-Hamad, Group Chief Wealth Officer at NBK, will participate in a panel dedicated to the financial industry's role in prioritizing social impact.

The Bank's delegation will hold a series of bilateral meetings with senior international officials at its pavilion during the conference. Alongside these discussions, the delegation will sign several agreements. Additionally, the Bank will host a reception bring-

ing together officials, investors, and senior bankers to explore the latest developments in the financial and banking sectors and to discuss potential opportunities for collaboration in finance and investment. The conference is anticipated to draw over 5,000 attendees and feature 500 speakers covering a wide range of contemporary topics. With more than 200 sessions planned, discussions will focus on economic stability, equitable development, climate change mitigation, as well as artificial intelligence, innovation, health, and geopolitical issues. Discussions at the conference will be data-driven, ensuring that insights are rooted in facts and actionable strategies. Through its annual gathering, the Future Investment Initiative Institute aims to foster dialogue on how investment can serve as a catalyst for a prosperous and sustainable future, expanding the possibilities for what can be achieved for humanity.

The 8th Edition of the FII 2024 Conference aims to transcend limitations and unlock boundless opportunities for advancement. Discussions will center on transforming investment into a catalyst for a prosperous and sustainable future, inspiring attendees to think beyond traditional boundaries and explore investment opportunities that bridge current gaps with future potential.

NBK has recently entered into a strategic partnership with the Future Investment Initiative (FII), a global non-profit organization committed to fostering growth and innovation in investment both regionally and internationally, aimed at creating a positive impact on humanity.

NBK is dedicated to actively participating in international forums to remain abreast of the latest developments in the global economy, international development, and the global financial system. This commitment reflects the bank's strategic focus on understanding and adapting to the evolving landscape of global finance and economic trends.

## US budget gap widens to \$1.8 trillion

WASHINGTON: The United States on Friday reported a budget deficit of \$1.8 trillion for the past year, widening from 2023's level on greater spending, including for interest on the public debt. The overall deficit expanded by \$138 billion for the year ending September 30, said the Treasury Department. The nation's debt remains a key concern for voters ahead of November's presidential election.

This year marks the third highest US deficit, behind 2021 and 2020, according to the Treasury. In the 2020 budget year, the deficit hit a record of \$3.1 trillion as spending soared to help the economy weather the COVID-19 pandemic. In the latest fiscal year, there was a near 30 percent rise in spending on interest on the public debt, largely due to higher interest rates, the Treasury noted. It topped \$1 trillion.

But the department added that the widened deficit overall was partly due to a reversal of over \$330 billion in costs last year, when President Joe Biden's student loan forgiveness program was struck down by the Supreme Court. The latest fiscal year also saw an increase in Social Security spending and that on defense. The rise in receipts, meanwhile, was mainly due to increases in the amount of individual and corporate income tax collected, among other areas.

Although receipts rose from fiscal year 2023, "they remain below historical averages as a share of GDP," said the Treasury and Office of Management and Budget (OMB). As a percentage of GDP, the deficit was 6.4 percent, up from 6.2 percent in the fiscal year of 2023. — AFP

## Power plant failure triggers blackout across Cuba

HAVANA: Cuban Tania Ramirez walks alone along Havana's famous Malecon promenade to relieve the stress wrought by the massive blackout that has plunged the entire island into darkness.

"I feel very disappointed, frustrated and hopeless," said the 39-year-old housewife. "It's not only the lack of electricity but also of gas and water," she told AFP, 11 hours after the unplanned shutdown of Cuba's main thermal power plant triggered the col-

lapse of the country's grid. With a frown, she said her "generation wants to continue trusting" in the 1959 revolution that brought Fidel Castro to power, but her "resilience has limits".

Cuba is in the throes of its worst economic crisis in 30 years, marked by sky-high inflation and shortages of food, medicine, fuel and water. And for the past three months Cubans have been battling chronic blackouts that have become longer and more frequent. Cuban authorities were trying since Friday night into Saturday to restore electricity.

The unexpected shutdown of the Antonio Guterres power plant, the biggest of the island's eight decrepit coal-fired power plants, caused the national grid to fail. Lazaro Guerra, director general electricity at the Ministry of Energy and Mines, told state television. When the power plant shut down,

"the system collapsed," he said, adding that the government was working to restore service as soon as possible to the island's 11 million people. By nightfall, the only lights illuminating the capital of two million people were those from hotels, hospitals and a few private businesses with their own generating plants. The streets were almost empty, with no public transport and traffic lights out of service.

Small groups of people could be seen, their cell phones lit, chatting with family and friends. Some came out of their homes to cool off from the night heat, with temperatures hovering around 30 degrees Celsius (86 degrees Fahrenheit). "We have a little baby girl and we live in a building that isn't in the best condition. We have to go downstairs and sit here," said self-employed Betsabe Valdes, 40, in the downtown Paseo del Prado. Her biggest fear is that

the food in her refrigerator could spoil if power is not restored soon. "It hurts me a lot," she said. The grid collapsed a few hours after the government declared an "energy emergency" and announced the stoppage of business activities in the country.

Some provinces have in recent weeks endured up to 20 hours without electricity. "What we want is electricity, not the explanation they give us," complained Pablo Reve, a 61-year-old teacher who took the blackout with less annoyance than others. "Now we are playing dominoes and even laughing at our own luck," added Reve. "To keep going forward is what we have left," he said with a sense of resignation. By the end of Friday the power company had managed to restore a minimum level of supply with annexed "microsystems", which will be used to start up the thermal and floating plants. — AFP



## Business

# Boubyan Bank's net profits grow to KD 73.5 million until Sept end 2024

## Net profits increase at 20% rate • The earnings per share amount to 16.1 fils

KUWAIT: Boubyan Bank has announced KD 91.1 million in operating profits until the end of last September, as the bank recorded KD 73.5 million in net profits at a growth rate of 20 percent compared with last year, while the earnings per share amount to 16.1 fils.

Key financial indicators until the end of Q3 of this year show that the bank's assets grew to KD 9.1 billion at a growth rate of 11 percent compared with last year, while the bank's financing portfolio grew by 12 percent to reach KD 6.8 billion, and operating income grew by 12 percent to reach KD 183 million, whereas the bank's market share of local financing increased to 12 percent.

Adel Al-Majed, Boubyan Bank's Vice-Chairman & Group Chief Executive Officer, stated: "As we approach the end of this year with the lapse of 9 months already, the bank's financial results are very favorable and promising that we will be ending this year very well, which brings good news to our shareholders and customers who placed their confidence in Boubyan over the past years."

"Over the past years, Boubyan Bank Group expanded beyond the concept of banking services, as it now comprises of strong entities that offer retail and corporate services locally and internationally, side by side with Sharia-compliant insurance and wealth management services, as well investment solutions providing many options to customers," he added.

Al-Majed emphasized that the accelerated growth over the past decade confirmed the success of the bank's strategy focusing on the future, especially as the bank now ranks third locally in terms of financial indicators, in addition to being the first and favorite choice of various segments of customers owing to the leap in digital banking services.

### A game-changing plan

He added: "Results of this period are attributed to our strategy of focusing on new markets with promising growth opportunities and positive financing investments with profitability for the bank's investing customers and its shareholders. This is added to focusing on digital innovation and growth of the bank's operational performance and efficient liquidity, along with the great improvement of our state-of-the-art banking solutions and excelling in innovative offerings that meet the needs of various customer segments."

Al-Majed went on to add: "To continue our success journey, we developed a visionary strategy for the next 5 years titled 'Game-Changer', which activates our group-wide wealth management plan to expand our investment solutions and opportunities, and to explore new markets in order to accelerate the attraction of more wealth to manage in order to offer the best to our customers with an investment appetite."

"Boubyan's wealth management is not merely about offering investment advice; rather, it is a holistic process and an approach that integrates strategic and investment partnerships that ensure full understanding of the investor's financial position as well as the most significant goals, proper planning and management of risks in order to safeguard and grow wealth", he pointed out.

### International awards

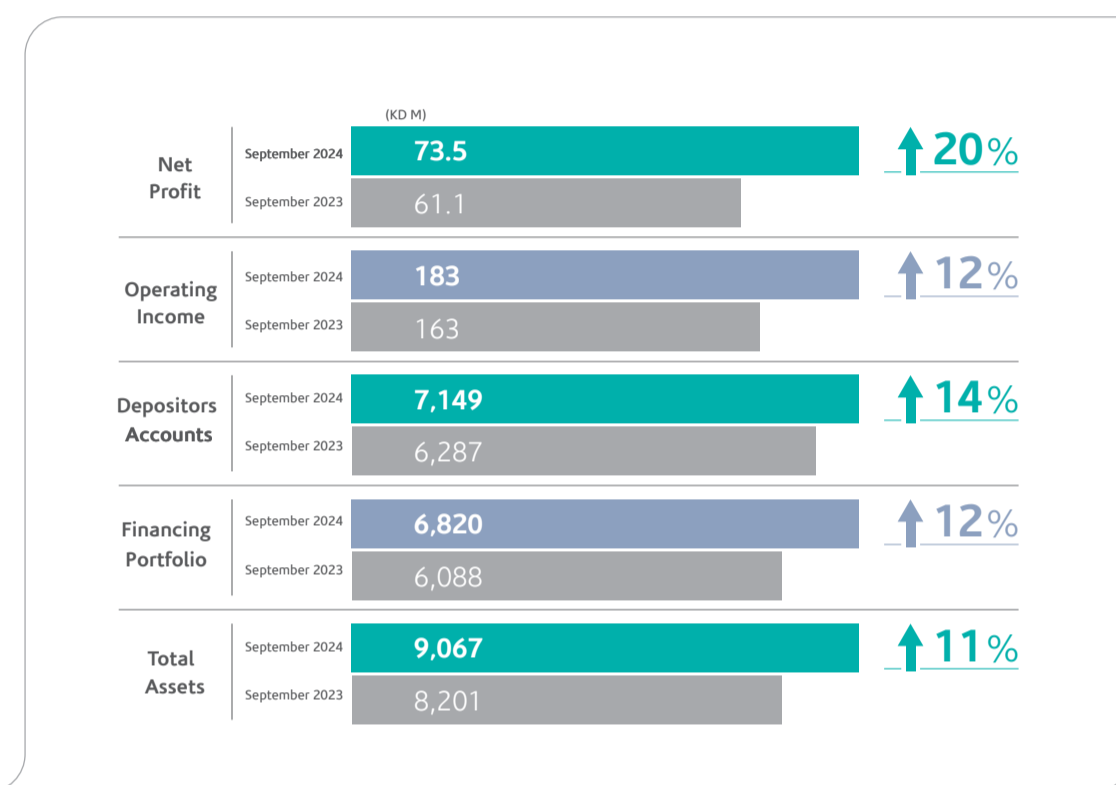
In a new achievement that reflects Boubyan's leadership, the bank has recently received six prestigious global, regional, and domestic banking awards by Global Finance, the internationally renowned publication, as part of its annual awards that recognize the most outstanding and innovative financial and banking institutions in offering consumer and digital banking services for the year 2024.

"These awards are a strong motivation for the bank to move forward with more excellent and innovative



Adel Al-Majed

- Q3's profits promise an outstanding year of financial results, reinforcing the confidence of our shareholders
- We take pride in Boubyan Group's expansion at the levels of banking, investment, insurance, and wealth management services
- Ranking as the third largest bank domestically brings more challenges in terms of offering the best service levels and quality of products
- The bank's leadership has been reinforced by a group of outstanding international banking awards globally, regionally, and locally



Towards perfection

### Key financial indicators until Sept end 2024

banking services as part of the bank's ongoing journey towards digital transformation. Moreover, the "Straight Through Processing Award" given by Citi Bank highlights the outstanding and exceptional performance of Boubyan Bank in processing USD payments, as the bank scored 99.8 percent for commercial payments and 100 percent for treasury payments.

Mastercard International recognized Boubyan with the award for the "Fastest Growing in Kuwait" for the outstanding growth of its Premium customers' base, thus celebrating the bank's efforts that focus on innovating unique banking services and solutions to give customers an exceptional banking experience - coupled with the highest service levels - that befits their modern lifestyle and exceeds their expectations. Boubyan's partnership with Mastercard complements the bank's accomplishments in the field of digital payments over the past years, which can be seen through its special tech-solutions boosted by Mastercard's advanced technology. Such accomplishments included a number of innovations launched for the first time in the local market.

### Strategic partnerships

Boubyan Bank has recently concluded a series of strategic partnerships that reflect its commitment to offering exceptional experiences that add value to the lifestyle of its customers and enhance their satisfaction levels. The bank already announced its collaboration with Acico Group through a strategic partnership that includes providing innovative financial promotions and flexible credit facilities up to KD 70,000 over tenures extending up to 15 years to its customers who are interested in high-quality construction and engineering services. The agreement secures a 10 percent discount offered by Acico to Boubyan Bank's customers on Super Deluxe construction packages. In return, Acico's customers get special financing rates by Boubyan Bank on the same package.

Moreover, Boubyan's strategic partnership with Enabill, the leader in the business of restaurants' digitalization, reflects the bank's focus on incentivizing business environments to embrace digital innovation and to boost the capabilities of startups' entrepreneurs to offer the best level of daily services in a smooth man-

ner. The agreement targets the achievement of two key goals, namely improving the performance of fintech and enhancing the overall digital transformation ecosystem, coupled with supporting entrepreneurs and tech startups, while opening new growth opportunities and horizons to develop their entrepreneurship and enhance their operational efficiency.

### Solutions reflecting added value to customer experience

To reinforce the bank's strategic approach towards improving its business environment and to empower local entrepreneurs, Boubyan gave the business banking customers an unlimited cashback benefit up to 1.5 percent on using their business banking Visa card, in addition to offering them a new package of exclusive solutions, as well as newly introduced and updated benefits to enhance their banking experience and to make it more exceptional.

Furthermore, the bank concluded its 2024 summer credit cards' campaign, which achieved a great success and saw great participation with the announcement of 20 winners of Boubyan's credit and digital cardholders, who made purchase transactions inside and outside Kuwait or through online shopping or digital wallets' payments.

### Leadership in CSR

Boubyan reaffirms its commitment to offering a model to follow in CSR, which reinforces its mission that emanates from its identity as a leading banking institution in CSR. The calendar of Boubyan's CSR events and contributions during Q3, 2024 saw a significant activity across all levels. The bank concluded the 5th edition of Boubyan FC 24's E-CUP; the largest tournament in Kuwait that is approved by Kuwait Olympic Committee. It saw the participation of 1,000+ participants, where 3 winners received valuable cash prizes in addition to an opportunity for the winner of the first place to represent the Kuwait National Team for Electronic Games. As regards sports and fitness, Boubyan WHOOP Showdown continued through the "Recovery Challenge" to encourage participants to improve their fitness performance numbers, and to simulate the body functions to recover, which helps change the lifestyle of users.

Additionally, there were also other events that stood as optimal opportunities to engage with the public and to interact with them such as Boubyan Escape Room and Boubyan Mind Games, which saw instant prizes and valuable gifts offered by the bank, while participants of various age groups enjoyed the events.

### Enriching human resources

Boubyan managed to maintain its status as a banking institution that is keen on attracting the best national cadres and striving to improve its business environment, evident by receiving the Award for "Excellence in Manpower Nationalization", awarded to the bank for its success and excellence in increasing the percentage of national manpower across the Kuwaiti banking sector in 2024, where the bank achieved 82 percent at the level of empowering and recruiting national manpower, as it supports and instills this social culture in a real and sustainable manner, which reflects positively on the future job market and reaching the desired results.

Boubyan's human resources are one of its key pillars since they are the main driver for ongoing success. Boubyan spares no effort to improve communication with them through listening to their views and studying all their proposals, while taking into account the possibility of execution by employing the best scientific and technical approaches in a manner that contributes to instilling more loyalty to the bank in the employees.

## Indonesia's Prabowo targets growth spurt with big projects

JAKARTA: Indonesian President Joko Widodo leaves office Sunday with high approval ratings thanks to strong economic growth, but his successor Prabowo Subianto has bigger ambitions, including an eye-catching \$28 billion free meal plan for students.

While the country regularly enjoys about five percent annual expansion, the former general has pledged to capitalize on his predecessor's policies to reach eight percent by tapping the nation's huge human resources. "From prosperity, we can bring justice to all Indonesian people. We must unite to eliminate poverty and eliminate hunger, and eliminate suffering from our people," Prabowo said in his victory speech in March.

To do that, he is banking on big national projects, the archipelago's vast natural resources and attempts to lower a poverty rate of more than nine percent. He has pledged to largely carry on the popular economic program of Widodo, better known as Jokowi, but he has also signaled a more direct attempt to alleviate poverty in the nation of around 280 million. His big campaign pledge is a \$28 billion plan to supply tens of millions of schoolchildren and pregnant women nationwide with free meals.

He says the scheme — to be rolled out in January — will halt stunted growth in a country where more than a fifth of children up to five years old are affected and create several million more jobs. Yet the plan has faced criticism over logistical and cost issues, with

some wondering how he can pull off the plan and keep spending within the annual fiscal deficit limit of three percent of GDP, which is mandated by law.

Jokowi focused on large infrastructure projects including roads, bridges and airports aimed at better connecting the archipelago. But experts say Prabowo will deviate from that in his bid to realize a campaign promise to turn Indonesia, a G20 member, into an "advanced and developed" economy.

"He won't be blindly following Jokowi's footsteps, but he also won't completely abandon or neglect everything, so he will be somewhat in the middle," said Yose Rizal Damuri, an economist at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies. "It seems like he has a slightly different approach from Jokowi. The priority is no longer infrastructure development, but more to human capital development."

His agenda will also focus on agriculture, observers say, with a food estate program aimed at achieving food self-sufficiency, land clearing for bioethanol projects in the restive eastern region of Papua, and a green fund selling carbon emission credits.

### Capital crunch

At the same time, Prabowo is inheriting Jokowi's legacy project — a \$32 billion move of the capital from traffic-clogged and sinking Jakarta to Nusantara, a planned green city in eastern Borneo where construction is under way. The city will not be ready until 2045, but its rapid construction



JAKARTA: A woman walks past pictures of Indonesia's president-elect Prabowo Subianto and vice president-elect Gibran Rakabuming Raka ahead of their October 20 inauguration, at a stall in Jakarta on October 19, 2024. — AFP

is already eating into state coffers.

Prabowo has pledged to continue the project despite speculation he would put it on hold or keep Jakarta as the capital. He has also supported Jokowi's resource nationalism, particularly in the nickel sector, where Jakarta has imposed export restrictions in a bid to become a key player in the electric vehicle supply chain. Indonesia is one of the world's biggest fossil fuel polluters and Prabowo has backed gradually reducing the country's reliance on them. But his family retains ties to the coal industry, and processing vast sums of nickel requires coal-fired power plants.

China's Southeast Asian investments last year were the biggest in Indonesia, and Prabowo met President Xi Jinping in his first foreign meeting after winning the election. It signaled

the importance he has placed on continuing to attract Beijing's money, which has proven crucial to Indonesia's economic growth. On top of his early trips abroad, Prabowo's cabinet choices and his first budget after inauguration will also give a better indication as to his economic plans.

Current finance minister Sri Mulyani said this week that she had been asked to retain her role in the next government, which experts say is a signal to markets that there will be continuity. "With Sri Mulyani joining his cabinet, it shows that Prabowo will be very careful in terms of fiscal issues," said Bhima Yudhistira Adhinegara, an economist from the Center of Economic and Law Studies.

"That's why Jokowi's people are now hired again, it shows that Prabowo will be disciplined." — AFP

## US single-family homebuilding hits 5-month high

WASHINGTON: US single-family homebuilding surged to a five-month high in September, but permits for future construction rose only marginally amid excess supply of new homes on the market and prospective buyers holding out for lower mortgage rates. Despite the second straight monthly increase in single-family housing starts, economists expected that residential investment, which includes homebuilding and sales, remained a drag on third-quarter economic growth.

Homebuilding suffered a setback following a surge in mortgage rates in the spring. Mortgage rates initially dropped after the Federal Reserve began cutting interest rates last month, but they have risen over the past three weeks as solid economic data, including retail sales and annual revisions to national accounts, forced traders to abandon expectations for another 50 basis-point rate cut next month.

"Residential construction activity is not helping the economy grow at its potential rate," said Carl Weinberg, chief economist at High Frequency Economics. "Falling" interest rates are different than "low" interest rates until they have been falling for a while. For builders and buyers, the promise of more rate cuts to come will encourage delaying new construction projects and purchases."

Single-family housing starts, which account for the bulk of homebuilding, increased 2.7 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.027 million units last month, the Commerce Department's Census Bureau reported on Friday. Data for August was revised higher to show single-family homebuilding rebounding to a rate of 1.0 million units from the previously reported 992,000-unit pace. — Reuters

## Business

# Gulf Bank sponsors and participates in third edition of 'Watheefti' career fair

## Event brings together over 100 companies from a wide range of sectors



Salma Al-Hajjaj and Bader Al-Ali pose for a group photo with the bank team.



Minister of Higher Education and Acting Minister of Education Dr Nader Al-Jallal at Gulf Bank's booth.

**KUWAIT:** Demonstrating its commitment to nurturing young talent and attracting top local expertise, Gulf Bank successfully concluded its sponsorship and participation in the third edition of the "Watheefti" career fair. Held from October 17 to 19, 2024, at the Arena located within 360 Mall, the event brought together over 100 companies from a wide range of sectors. The three-day career fair offered a variety of workshops focused on job market trends, professional consultations, CV writing strategies, and interview preparation, along with other interactive activities. Throughout the event, Gulf Bank representatives showcased the essence of the banking profession as practiced at the bank, providing job seekers with in-depth information about banking careers and the growth opportunities available at Gulf Bank.

The bank's booth attracted a large number of visitors eager to explore its various departments and work culture. Many attendees took the opportunity to submit job applications, motivated by Gulf Bank's strong reputation as a top employer in Kuwait known for attracting young talent.

**Salma Al-Hajjaj: The career fair is a valuable opportunity to attract young talent and help them make critical decisions regarding their career paths and future.**

On this occasion, Salma Al-Hajjaj, General Manager of Human Resources at Gulf Bank, emphasized the bank's dedication to recruiting young talent across various fields, viewing them as the generation capable of keeping pace with modern advancements and rapid technological innovations in the banking sector, both locally and globally.

"We are pleased to participate in the "Watheefti" career fair for the third consecutive year, which provides a valuable opportunity for companies to attract young talent and help them make critical decisions regarding their career paths and future," said Al-Hajjaj. Al-Hajjaj reaffirmed Gulf Bank's dedication to supporting Kuwait's vision, which focuses on boosting employment in the private sector and empowering Kuwaiti youth to grow and thrive. She noted the increasing number of national employees at Gulf Bank in recent years as a testament to this ongoing commitment.

"Our employees are the driving force behind our success and the key to what sets us apart," Al-Hajjaj stated. "We are committed to continually improving our systems and processes to empower our team to thrive and advance in their careers, ensuring that Gulf Bank remains a top choice for both employees and job seekers."

Young people are apply for jobs at Gulf Bank.



Young people are apply for jobs at Gulf Bank.

## Putin: BRICS, not the West, will drive global growth

**MOSCOW:** The BRICS group will generate most of the global economic growth in the coming years thanks to its size and relatively fast growth compared with that of developed Western nations, Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Friday. Putin hopes to build up BRICS - which has expanded to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates as well as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa - as a powerful counterweight to the West in global politics and trade.

The Kremlin leader is due to host a BRICS summit in the Russian city of Kazan on Oct 22-24. "The countries in our association are essentially the drivers of global economic growth. In the foreseeable future, BRICS will generate the main increase in global GDP," Putin told officials and businessmen at BRICS business forum in Moscow. "The economic growth of BRICS members will increasingly depend less on external influence or interference. This is essentially economic sovereignty," Putin added.

Next week's summit is being presented by Moscow as evidence that Western efforts to isolate Russia over its actions in Ukraine have failed. Russia wants other countries to work with it to overhaul the global financial system and end the dominance of the US dollar. China, India and the UAE confirmed on Friday that their leaders would attend the summit in Kazan.

Putin said 30 countries around the world had expressed interest in cooperation with the BRICS

## Case for quick ECB rate cuts mounts as growth weakens

**FRANKFURT:** Eurozone inflation could ease more quickly than previously thought and economic growth is also likely to remain weak, ECB policymakers and fresh surveys said on Friday, reinforcing the case for a rapid pace of interest rate cuts in the months ahead. The ECB lowered interest rates for the third time this year on Thursday on moderating price pressures. Investors now see rate cuts at each of the central bank's next four or five meetings as inflation is within striking distance of its 2 percent target and the bloc flirts with recession. Sources close to the ECB's deliberations said that inflation could ease to 2 percent a few quarters sooner than earlier thought. This prompted some rate setters to make the case on Thursday for dropping a pledge to keep policy tight, the sources said, an implicit signal that more rate cuts are coming.

Speaking in blog post on Friday, Estonian central bank Governor Madis Mülller also argued that the outlook had changed markedly in since the ECB's last projections in September. "Economic growth will be more modest than could have been expected just a month or two ago, and this will probably also reduce the pressure for price increases," Mülller said. This view was reinforced by the ECB's own Survey of Professional Forecasters, which showed inflation getting back to 2 percent much more quickly than ECB staff now expect.

It predicted price growth at 1.9 percent next year, below the 2 percent predicted three months ago and well below the 2.3 percent the ECB had pencilled for the year as a whole. The ECB only sees inflation at 2



In this pool photograph distributed by the Russian state agency Sputnik, Russia's President Vladimir Putin meets with the heads of leading media outlets from the BRICS member countries in the Moscow region on October 18, 2024. — AFP

grouping and that next week's summit would consider possible options for the group's further enlargement. "The doors are open, we are not barring anyone," Putin told reporters from BRICS countries. Putin cited some of the initiatives that Russia has previously outlined ahead of the summit, including a joint cross-border payments system and a reinsurance company.

Putin said that group members were working on a SWIFT-like financial messaging system immune to Western sanctions and the use of national digital currencies in financing investment projects with high growth potential inside and outside BRICS.

He stressed that Russia's financial initiatives for the summit implied the extensive use of national currencies, while talk of creating a single currency for

the BRICS grouping was "premature". He called on the New Development Bank, the BRICS' only functioning multilateral development institution, to invest in technology and infrastructure across the countries of the Global South. "As a development institution, the bank already serves as an alternative to many Western financial mechanisms, and we will naturally continue to develop it," Putin said. He called for more investment in e-commerce and artificial intelligence.

Putin sought to promote Russia's new transport megaprojects such as the Arctic Sea Route and the North-to-South corridor, linking Russia to the Gulf and Indian Ocean through the Caspian Sea and Iran.

"It is the key to increasing freight transportation between the Eurasian and African continents," he said. — Reuters

## Reeves to stress stability on IMF trip as finance minister

**LONDON:** Rachel Reeves will stress a commitment to stability in her first trip as Britain's finance minister to the International Monetary Fund's annual meetings in Washington next week, two years after the country was at the centre of a bond market storm. Reeves does not risk the same fate as her Conservative predecessor Kwasi Kwarteng, who was summoned home early from the IMF and fired by then Prime Minister Liz Truss after bond prices plummeted following their unfunded tax cut plans.

But Reeves will aim to close the door decisively on that episode, which shook investor confidence in the world's sixth-largest economy and contributed to Labour's sweeping July election victory.

"The relative orthodoxy on fiscal policy that the government seems to have brought in, and the relatively benign (economic) outcomes of the UK have bought them a lot of goodwill," Adam Posen, president of the Washington-based Peterson Institute of International Economics, said.

Reeves herself is no stranger to Washington, having worked at the British embassy there as a Bank of England economist. Last year she gave a speech at the Peterson Institute on "securoconomics" - her approach to industrial strategy that was inspired by US President Joe Biden's Inflation Reduction Act.

Now Reeves is barely a week away from presenting Labour's first budget in 14 years, which looks set to raise taxes to fund higher day-to-day government spending while borrowing more to finance longer-term investment. Given hefty investment needs identified in the European Union by former European Central Bank President Mario Draghi and the large deficits run by the United States, Britain's approach will be watched carefully, Posen said. "The public investment, accounting and fiscal rules question is a hot topic across the board," he said.

The IMF in July said the last British government's budget rules were "insufficiently constraining in the near-term and encourage unrealistic assumptions further out", while the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development said last month that they discouraged public investment.

Britain's new government has been keen to attract private investment and said a summit in London on Oct. 14 had led to 63 billion pounds (\$82 billion) in investment pledges in areas such as infrastructure and technology. A finance ministry spokesperson said Reeves in Washington would stress how the new government was "prioritizing economic stability" as "the essential precondition for the secure and resilient growth needed to address...global challenges". — Reuters

## Fitch lifts Italy outlook from stable to positive

**WASHINGTON:** Fitch Ratings raised Italy's outlook from stable to positive on Friday, nodding to stronger fiscal performance recently and commitment to European Union fiscal rules. Those factors point to a possible reduction in risks coming from the country's exceptionally high debt levels, the agency said.

In the same report, Fitch affirmed Italy's credit rating at "BBB." The verdict came days after Italian lawmakers adopted a draft 2025 budget financed partially by a new tax on insurance companies and a temporary freeze on tax credits for banks. The budget also includes tax cuts for low-income families - a key issue for far-right Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. As in last year's budget, ministers sought to balance electoral promises with the need to reduce deficits and avoid adding to Italy's mounting debt.

Targeted by the European Union for its "excessive" deficits, Italy is under pressure to balance its books and reduce a debt close to three trillion euros. On Friday, Fitch noted that Italy's positive outlook "is reinforced by signs of stronger potential growth and a more stable political context."

"In our view, Italy's fiscal credibility has increased, and the 2025 budget underscores the government's commitment to EU fiscal rules," Fitch added. It expects the country's fiscal deficits to narrow to 3.2 percent of GDP next year, and to 2.7 percent in 2026. — AFP

percent in the final quarter of 2025 but the survey suggests this could happen much quicker especially since underlying price growth will also slow.

Many economists have revised their own forecasts since inflation eased to 1.7 percent last month, its lowest rate in over 3 years and weak energy prices along with anaemic growth foreshadow muted price pressures ahead. "We see inflation heading back up to 1.9 percent in October and crossing 2 percent again in December," HSBC said in a note. "It should then hover between 1.6 percent and 1.8 percent for most of first half of 2025."

Part of the reason why policymakers and financial investors see rapid rate cuts is that economic growth continues to falter. Indeed, a separate ECB survey of leading firms recorded a further slowdown in business momentum, even if they still saw some modest growth ahead as the expansion in services offsets a manufacturing recession. The souring mood among the 95 large non-financial firms surveyed reflected growing concerns about competitiveness, uncertainty about the green transition, high costs and worries over political developments. "This was causing businesses to scale back investment and focus on cost cutting, which also weighed on consumer confidence," the ECB said, based on a survey of 95 large firms in late September.

All this adds up to a further moderation in price growth, the firms said, possibly bolstering the case for the ECB to cut interest rates quickly. The ECB has spent the past three years fighting the worst bout of inflation in over a generation but some policymakers now think there is a realistic risk the bank could return to undershooting its 2 percent target. "The (policy) direction is to my eyes clear - we should continue to cut our restrictive monetary policy in an appropriate way," French central bank chief Francois Villeroy de Galhau said on Friday. "But the pace must be guided by agile pragmatism." — Reuters

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2024



## CZAR Fragrances reaches finals in prestigious 2024 Beautyworld competition



**C**ZAR Fragrances is pleased to announce its selection as a finalist in the 2024 Beautyworld competition, held in Dubai, which is considered one of the most prestigious perfume competitions in the world. This achievement is a testament to the company's efforts in delivering innovative, high-quality products to both local and global markets, positioning it at the forefront of the perfume industry in the region.

The fragrance "Gardenia", designed by world-renowned perfumer Nathalie Feisthauer, was selected as one of the top perfumes in the Niche Perfumes category, from over 500 participating products in the competition. Ahmed Salah Al Heid, Vice CEO of CZAR Fragrances, stated: "Reaching the finals in such a prestigious competition is not only a recognition of the excellence of our products, but

also a testament to the strength of the company's strategy to develop unique perfumes that can compete with the world's leading brands."

Al Heid added: "We believe this achievement is just the beginning of our journey toward realizing our 2029 vision, which aims to target international markets by offering our luxurious perfumes to connoisseurs while preserving our Kuwaiti roots and identity."

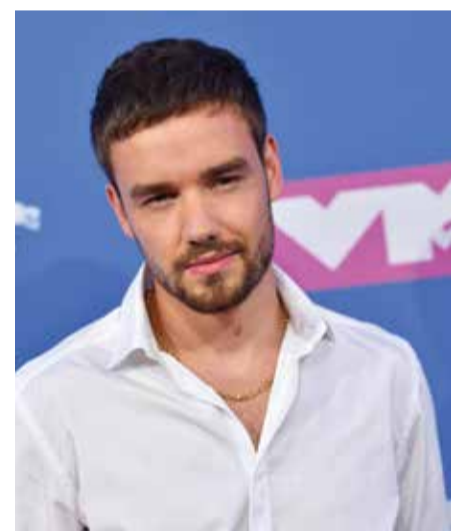
We are proud to be the first Kuwaiti company to reach this global level in the competition, and we look forward to achieving even more successes in the future. This achievement comes as part of CZAR Fragrances' commitment to unique innovation in the perfume field through collaborations with top global perfumers, including Antoine Lie and Olivier Cresp.



Forensic workers take the body of British singer Liam Payne on a fire van from the hotel where he died in Buenos Aires on October 16, 2024.



Fans of British singer Liam Payne lit candles next to the hotel where he died in Buenos Aires on October 16, 2024.



British singer Liam Payne attends the 2018 MTV Video Music Awards at Radio City Music Hall on August 20, 2018 in New York City.

## Liam Payne: One Direction singer swept up by teenage stardom

**L**iam Payne, who died aged 31 after plunging from a hotel balcony in Buenos Aires, spent more than half his life in the public eye as a member of one of the world's most successful boy bands. The singer from Wolverhampton in central England was first unsuccessful in his audition on the hugely popular television talent show "The X Factor". But he hit gold on the program in 2010, aged just 16, joining Niall Horan, Harry Styles, Louis Tomlinson and Zayn Malik — and One Direction was born.

Over the next six years, the group enjoyed global fame and legions of screaming fans, selling more than 70 million copies of their five albums. They went on four world tours and won nearly 200 awards. Payne, described by former X Factor host Dermot O'Leary as "a joy... polite, grateful and... always humble", was said to be the "driving force" behind some of One Direction's most loved songs. He penned "Story of My Life", "Night Changes" and "Midnight Memories" among others, and once referred to himself as the "first verse man" — singing the coveted first verse of most of the songs on the band's first album "Up All Night". After Malik left One Direction in 2015, the band went on an "indefinite hi-



Britain singer Liam Payne performs on stage during a concert in front of the Hotel de Ville in Paris on September 15, 2017 to celebrate Paris' coronation as host of the 2024 Olympics Games. - AFP photos

atus" a year later, prompting Payne and the others to start solo careers.

Payne met with early success with his debut solo single "Strip That Down", released in 2017, reaching number three on the UK Singles Chart. Last year, he revealed he was working on a second solo album, having delayed a planned tour due to health problems, and released his last single "Teardrops" in March 2024.

### Charity

Payne, who fell from a third-floor ho-

tel balcony in the Argentinian capital on Wednesday, was in the city to watch his former bandmate Horan in concert. Police said they responded to a report of "an aggressive man who may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol". He leaves behind a son from a previous relationship with the Girls Aloud singer Cheryl.

News of Payne's death left fans distraught. "I feel like it's a part of adolescence lost," said one, Lena Duek, 21, outside the hotel. She described One Direction as the soundtrack of her teen-

age years and had been hoping for them to reunite. British anti-poverty charity Trussell praised Payne for his "compassion and kindness" for supporting their foodbanks. Chief executive Emma Revie said he funded more than 360,000 meals during the pandemic.

### Anxiety, frustrations

Payne's death came as he faced heavy criticism on social media following an interview in which his ex-partner Maya Henry accused him of being abusive. In the interview this week, Henry said Payne would tell her he was "going to die" as a manipulation tactic. The Daily Mail reported Henry obtained a "cease-and-desist" order against Payne.

In recent years, the singer opened up about his struggles with alcohol and dealing with fame at such a young age. "I've found in my life at the moment, because of the way things have happened, that everything's kind of fast-forwarded," he told Esquire Magazine in 2019. Speaking about anxiety and losing his sense of self, he added: "It's a bit like being stuck out in deep water and you're just going 'well, it would be really nice to get back now'."

However, after taking a break, Payne



British singer-songwriter Liam Payne poses in the winners' area during the 2017 MTV Europe Music Awards (EMA) at Wembley Arena in London on November 12, 2017.

said last year he was ready to return to music career in a video titled "I'm Back...". In it, he said he was sober and apologized for taking out "frustrations" with his career on "everybody else". "The rest of the boys really stuck by me when I needed them most, they kinda came to the rescue," he added. "I feel like I've got more of a grip on life now, and everything that was getting away from me." — AFP



The English-Irish pop band One Direction (Liam Payne left) attends the 2015 Billboard Music Awards, May 17, 2015, at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, Nevada.



Fans of British singer Liam Payne wait near the hotel where he died in Buenos Aires on October 16, 2024.

## Lifestyle



Egyptian geese are photographed on the banks of a pond in Ay-sur-Moselle, north eastern France, on September 12, 2024. — AFP photos

## Egyptian geese spread wings in France, threatening biodiversity

They came a long way from sub-Saharan Africa to eastern France — but now the Egyptian geese are quite at home there and are chasing out local ducks and swans, just one symptom of the world's biodiversity crisis. Recognizable by the brown eye markings that distinguish them from other geese, the birds are putting their fellow water birds to flight and tormenting holidaymakers with their droppings.

"It is a goose that defends its territory," said Pascal Koensgen, a deputy mayor in the town of Lauterbourg. "They have been here now for at least 15 years and they're not leaving. And now their numbers are getting bigger." In summer, the Egyptian geese waddle among the beach towels laid by sun-seekers on the banks of the lake, posing a health hazard as well as a threat to local species. "When 50 to 100 birds show up, they can foul a whole beach in 24 hours," Koensgen said.

"They are invasive. They take up the whole beach and leave their droppings



everywhere. It's a real nuisance for our bathers and campers," said Eric Beck, manager of a campsite next to a lake on the outskirts of Lauterbourg.

### 'Ornamental bird'

Between 1970 and 2000 France had fewer than 50 Egyptian geese across 16 departments, according to the France's state Biodiversity Office (OFB). But from 2005, their numbers surged. By January 2016 there were around 2,000 of them

across 83 departments. They are most concentrated in northeastern districts around the Rhine and Moselle rivers, close to the borders of Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany where the geese are also numerous. "It was originally an ornamental bird that people put on artificial lakes and little ponds to make them look pretty," said Jean-Francois Maillard, a specialist in invasive exotic species at the OFB.

Over time, specimens were sold as

pets, escaped from zoos or moved in from neighboring countries, multiplying and spreading. Their sale has been banned since 2017 when the European Union listed them as an invasive species of concern. It was "a bit late" for that, as "unfortunately, they were already well established on French territory," said Maillard. "They steal the nests of other species" such as swans, chasing them out, and behave aggressively towards ducks, threatening the "expulsion of native species", he said.

### Goose-hunting permit

Locals have tried putting up fences and nets and firing shots to ward them off, but the birds resist everything except an outright cull. "We have tried everything but nothing works—except for a rifle, of course," said Koensgen. Prefects in numerous departments have authorized the shooting of the Egyptian geese. This year and last in the Bas-Rhin, hunters killed 527 specimens, up from 189 in 2016-2017 and 78 in 2011-

2012, according to the department's Hunters' Federation. "This affords occasional periods of respite and sometimes allows other species to finish their reproduction cycle," said Nicolas Braconnier, the federation's deputy director. "But it is not going to solve the problem for good." United Nations experts last year listed 37,000 alien species — ones introduced into a territory by humans — worldwide, of which 3,500 they classed as invasive. "As soon as there is a first case of an unwanted species, you have to act very quickly to control it and avoid it spreading," said Maillard.

Concerning the Egyptian geese, "all it takes is an artificial lake where there is vegetation and a space that suits them, and the species settles in very quickly," warned hunting federation representative Braconnier. "They defend their offspring very well, so they lose very few of their young. If we want to preserve our local species, this is certainly going to be a real problem." — AFP

## 'Our time has come': The female Indian director hoping to make Oscars history

Despite Bollywood's popularity worldwide, the mammoth Hindi-language film industry has made barely a dent in the Academy Awards, with just 10 Indian Oscar wins since 1957. Kiran Rao is hoping to change that with "Lost Ladies" - India's official entry for best international film in 2025 - which she said comes at a "special moment" for South Asian cinema centring women's stories. Only three Indian entries in the category have been nominated and none has won.



Indian film producer, screenwriter, and director Kiran Rao poses for a portrait in central London. - AFP

The last entry to be nominated was the 2001 film "Lagaan". Rao was an assistant director in that epic, while the lead role was played by her ex-husband, Aamir Khan, who was a producer of "Lost Ladies". "We've seen a lot more participation from Asia at the Oscars," Rao told AFP in London, referring to triumphs for South Korea's "Parasite" and Malaysian actor Michelle Yeoh's Best Actress win for "Everything Everywhere All at Once". South Asian films, however, "haven't seen as much in terms of representation at the Oscars," said Rao. "There's a lot that we can offer the world in terms of our stories, in terms of our styles."

### 'Change mindsets'

"Lost Ladies" ("Laapataa Ladies" in Hindi) tells the story of two young women in rural India who get mistakenly swapped by their newly wed husbands while wearing similar face-covering veils. Forging intimate connections and navigating conservative norms with humor, both women and the families they accidentally join question their convictions on marriage and womanhood. The fresh take on the comedy-of-errors plot - a popular trope in Indian cinema - follows their journey "not just towards getting back home, but towards finding themselves and their purpose and their voice", explained Rao.

While trying to drum up attention for the film among Academy members, Rao also wanted to use "Lost Ladies" for social outreach in the Indian countryside. Since its release, she has been showing the film to "communities where women perhaps need new ideas and solutions and encouragement" and where "women would not perhaps otherwise be able to go to cinemas". "Storytelling, it can open that little window of perception, can change very old mindsets with sometimes just a small question or a small decision," said Rao.

Rao said the film aims to address patriarchal issues "in a way that's quite gentle and inclusive and doesn't necessarily pass judgement on women's decisions and the way they've chosen to live their lives - or have been forced to live their lives".

While focusing on the challenges and pockets of hope for women in small-town India, the story "touches upon issues that affect women everywhere", she said. "Issues of agency, identity... women's daily struggles and daily triumphs."

### Women directors

Some of these problems reflect in her life as well, said Rao. "Despite being halfway across the world, we still find women under-represented when it comes to most industries, especially when it comes to places where there's decision-making involved," she added. Women directors have been rebuffed in the Oscars until recently. The awards have faced strong criticism in the last decade for a lack of diversity.

Only three women have won the best director category, and less than two percent of all Oscar nominees have been women of color, according to research by the University of Southern California's Annenberg school for journalism. India's Oscar entries for the foreign film category over the last seven decades have included less than a dozen women directors.

"I think women's stories need to be seen more. Women directors need a lot more encouragement," said Rao. The selection of "Lost Ladies" comes as another Indian movie - Payal Kapadia's Malayalam-language "All We Imagine as Light", about two nurses who forge an intergenerational friendship while working in Mumbai - won the Grand Prix at the Cannes Film Festival. The UK entry for the Oscars foreign film category, "Santosh", is a Hindi drama by British-Indian director Sandhya Suri about a widow who takes on her late husband's role as a police constable in rural north India.

"It's great that in this Oscar race, Britain is represented by Sandhya Suri, again, a woman of South Asian origin. Payal Kapadia will be in the best film running after winning Cannes," said Rao. "It's a special moment for women from India. Finally, our time has come, and I hope it's the start of a wave of many more stories from India by women," she said. "We've been quiet for far too long." — AFP



Sulaimon Adio Oladele, popularly known as Atawewe, performs on the stage at the New Afrika Shrine during the Felabration week in the district of Ikeja in Lagos. — AFP photos

## Lagos festival dances to Nigerian icon Fela Kuti's beat

Hundreds jammed into an all-night concert hall in Nigeria's commercial hub Lagos for a festival celebrating the legacy of musical revolutionary Fela Kuti and his political activism. Kuti, who died aged 58 in 1997, is famous both for his pioneering role in the creation of Afrobeat - a then-novel genre marrying traditional African music with jazz, soul and funk - and for being a staunch thorn in the side of Nigeria's military authorities.

Beginning on Monday evening at the New Afrika Shrine, a rebuilt version of an original venue founded by Kuti and still run by his family, the annual week-long "Felabration" sees local artists take to the stage to pay tribute to the man nicknamed "The Black President" into the wee small hours. Located in Lagos's working-class Ikeja district, the New Afrika Shrine's walls are lined with giant portraits of Nigeria's best-known musical son, whose influence stretched far beyond his native country. Advertised as open to all 24/7, the Shrine welcomed a diverse audience on Monday, with young and old, aficionados and casual fans rubbing shoulders to the beat, all free of charge.

### 'Fela is the greatest'

"Fela is the greatest," proclaimed DJ Emmanuel Dre, 24, while 52-year-old journalist Jesukri Imoni hailed Kuti "the man who stood for Africans". Kuti left an undeniable musical imprint on several generations of musicians, with his sons Femi and Seun and grandson Made picking up the torch. But it is also Kuti's activism, which saw him jailed for almost two years in the 1980s, that many Nigerians believe makes him relevant today. "The music, the way he fought for human rights and a lot of things about Fela are just enticing and beautiful," audience member Bolarinwa Taiwo said.

"When you see how the government treats us in Nigeria... If you listen to Fela's music, he has said it all 20, 30 years ago, no, more than 40 years ago," said Ogunseye Oladokun, a 45-year-

old entrepreneur. Oladokun pointed to Nigeria's economic crisis - the worst in three decades in Africa's most populous country - with inflation at 32 percent in August and petrol prices soaring fivefold in a year and a half.

Since President Bola Ahmed Tinubu came to power in May 2023, Nigerians have seen their purchasing power collapse and poverty soar, triggering hardship protests against Tinubu's economic policies. So Kuti's defiance towards Nigeria's juntas in the 1970s and 1980s struck a chord with Dre, the artist said. Kuti was

vocal activism. "In terms of political stuff, our artists now, they don't care about it," said 24-year-old Ruth Adeleke, an entrepreneur who took part in the cost-of-living protests earlier this year.

"Fela was the only one that stood on his words then. I think we should do better now. Because now... in this generation, this Tinubu regime, everybody is complaining," said Adeleke. "Let our artists also come together, talk about it, give us music, the way Fela gave us the music," she added. But that passion was not shared by everyone in attendance on



Temitope Maberu-Fagunwa performs on the stage.

"more than music, man." "It's a movement... He really suffered for the youth. He went through a lot for us. That's why we're celebrating him today," Dre added.

### Politics and fashion

In recent years, other Nigerian artists have broken out and their worldwide fame has almost eclipsed Kuti's success. Singers such as Burna Boy, Davido and Wizkid are selling out stadiums across the world with their hits in a fresh genre - Afrobeats with an added "s". That style, less politicized and taking its cues from the glitz of much US hip hop, had many in the New Afrika Shrine pining for Kuti's



A man dances as he attends a concert at the New Afrika Shrine during the Felabration week.

Monday. At the stage's fringes, several influencers prowled in search of celebrities to photograph, with little apparent interest in the music or Kuti himself.

"I don't know much about him, honestly I don't think Gen Z care too much," admitted content creator "I am Energy Queen", who came to interview spectators on the festival's red carpet about their fashion sense. Osinachi Ogu, a 22-year-old student, said Kuti's style and the creativity around his performances were what she appreciated most. "His costumes are always different from every other person. So that's what I like about him," she said. — AFP

Lifestyle



A stray cat leaps in the historic district of Old San Juan fortress in Puerto Rico.



A cat sign is seen posted in the historic district of Old San Juan fortress in Puerto Rico.



A woman pets a stray cat in the historic district of Old San Juan fortress in Puerto Rico.

# Hissed off: San Juan cat removal plan prompts outcry, lawsuit



A stray cat wanders in the historic district of Old San Juan fortress in Puerto Rico.

**P**lans to remove stray cats from a historic site in Puerto Rico's capital San Juan have hit a snag, after animal rights groups cried foul. Years after the US National Park Service (NPS) announced it planned to remove the cats, a colony of about 150 continue to roam around the El Morro Castle, a military fort built in the 16th century, when the island was under Spanish colonial rule. With no signs of progress, the NPS in November 2023 gave the local group caring for the cats - Save a Gato (Save a Cat) - six months to find a new home for the animals.

If the association failed to meet the deadline, the park service — which views the cats as potential disease-vectors — warned it would hire a company to find another solution, even if that meant trapping and euthanizing the cats. The announcement outraged animal rights advocates, who said it was unnecessarily tough. "We are willing to enter into a plan that addresses their concerns, but maintains the lives and welfare of the animals," said Ana Maria Salicrup, a member of Save a Gato's board. Last March, an organiza-

tion based in the US state of Maryland, Alley Cat Allies, filed a suit against the NPS to try and block it from taking action.

The park service halted its plan, which was set to go into effect on October 1, until the court issues a ruling. "It's illegal, inhumane and makes no sense," Yonaton Aronoff, an attorney for Alley Cat Allies, said of the NPS plan to euthanize the cats. The cats have been roaming around San Juan's historic area since at least the mid-20th century. Since the controversy arose, many local merchants and tourists have voiced opposition to their removal.

"They don't bother me — on the contrary, they help my business," said Lucas Osorio, owner of a store in Old San Juan. "Besides, there are no rats here, no pests." Mark McCullough, an architect originally from Louisiana, said he would be saddened to see the cats removed, calling them an essential part of San Juan's identity. Attorney Aronoff called for local residents to voice their opposition. "We know that Puerto Ricans love cats and do not agree with the plan," he said. — AFP



A stray cat wanders near the El Morro wall in the historic district of Old San Juan fortress as a cruise ship sails through San Juan Bay, Puerto Rico.



Kittens for adoption inside the Save a Gato facility in the historic district of Old San Juan fortress in Puerto Rico.— AFP photos



A stray cat relaxes in the historic district of Old San Juan fortress in Puerto Rico.



A stray cat enters through a cat hole to the Save a Gato facility in the historic district of Old San Juan fortress in Puerto Rico.

## BTS member J-hope discharged from South Korean military

**K**-pop megastar J-hope from BTS ended eighteen months of South Korean military service Thursday, and hailed the "sacrifice" of soldiers working to keep the country safe, as fans wept for joy at his return to the industry. The seven members of the world's most popular boy band have been on a self-described "hiatus"

reporters and fans. "During the past one year and six months, I realized that many soldiers in the military are making great efforts and sacrifices to protect the country," he said, urging the public to support active duty military. "Thank you so much for waiting for me, and I deeply appreciate the strong support and love you have shown," he told

his military discharge flying overhead. Fans had been urged not to show up for safety reasons, but early Thursday there were around 50 admirers present — including international fans from China and Brazil — outside the base.

A group of Japanese fans rented a bus to get to the military unit, which is located about 100 kilometers (62 miles) from Seoul. Fernanda Polo, a Brazilian influencer who lives in Seoul, said she waited for J-hope since 5 am. "I was almost dying when I saw him," Polo told AFP, holding up her hand to show that she was still shaking with emotion.

Her friend Theana, a flight attendant, said she came to South Korea specifically to see J-hope, adding it was "very emotional" to be in the presence of her hero, even for just moments. Later Thursday outside his agency HYBE's headquarters, J-hope was met with hundreds of fans who had waited for hours to greet his vehicle. "Take Three of J-hope's life has begun," J-hope said on fan platform Weverse. "I'll focus on losing weight and working out, so that I can return to you with a beautiful appearance and show you a lot of amazing activities," he told his fans.

### Good for the industry

The latest BTS military discharge is likely to be good for the K-pop industry as a whole, analysts said. "J-Hope's comeback is certainly like a refresh-

ing downpour for HYBE during a long, dry spell," Yoo Sung-man, an analyst at Leading Investment and Securities, told AFP. BTS' agency HBYE is struggling with a legal battle with K-pop girl group NewJeans' superproducer Min Hee-jin, which has been causing a headache for investors, he added.

In addition, another BTS member, SUGA, was investigated over a drunk e-scooter incident in Seoul earlier this year, which led to HYBE's share price dropping to a record low. "Even putting aside the 'Suga' issue, the 'Min

Hee-jin and NewJeans' issue needs to be resolved first," said Yoo. "Unless all BTS members complete their military service and make a full-group comeback, J-Hope's solo return might not be enough to overshadow the conflict completely," he added. HYBE's share price closed up seven percent Thursday afternoon. The rest of the band will complete their service in June 2025. Jin announced Monday that he will release his first solo album in November. — AFP



BTS member J-hope salutes after being discharged from his mandatory military service outside a military base.



BTS member J-hope gestures to fans as he leaves after being discharged from his mandatory military service.

since 2022 due to their military service, which South Korea requires of all men under 30 due to tensions with the nuclear-armed North.

J-hope, the main dancer of the group, emerged from the gates of his army base in South Korea's central Wonju city, and hugged fellow band member Jin — who finished his service in June — before saluting waiting

fans, before getting into a vehicle.

Outside the base fans had hung up colorful banners to welcome the star back to civilian life saying: "The sun is finally shining upon ARMY" referring to the group's official fandom, and: "My bank account! It's ready to go straight to J-hope!" Fans had put a life-size cut out of J-hope dancing outside the base, with a giant balloon congratulating him on



BTS member J-hope (right) is greeted by fellow member Jin (left) after being discharged from his mandatory military service.

## Sports

# Mets top Dodgers to stay alive

## Yankees inch closer in MLB playoffs

**NEW YORK:** The New York Mets kept their magical season going, beating the Los Angeles Dodgers 12-6 on Friday to stay alive in their Major League Baseball playoff series. Pete Alonso hit a three-run home run in the first inning and the Mets piled up five runs in the third on the way to an 8-1 lead, then held on to cut the deficit to 3-2 in the best-of-seven National League Championship Series. The Dodgers, who were hoping to close out the series at the Mets' Citi Field, instead will host game six on Sunday, again with a chance to return to the World Series for the first time since they won it all in 2020. "We'll be ready," Alonso vowed. "We love opportunities."

Andy Pages homered twice for the Dodgers, including a three-run blast that cut New York's lead to 10-5 in the fifth inning. Mookie Betts's solo homer in the sixth pulled the Dodgers within four, but the Mets held on. Starling Marte belted three doubles, driving in three runs on four hits for New York. Francisco Lindor and Jesse Winker both plated runs with triples for the Mets, who had 14 hits with no strikeouts.

The winner of the series will take on either the New York Yankees or Cleveland Guardians in the World Series. The Yankees, with a three-run homer from Giancarlo Stanton and a tie-breaking pair of runs in the top of the ninth, beat the Guardians 8-6 to take a 3-1 stranglehold on the American League Championship Series. The Mets, with their backs against the wall, came out firing. They seized a 3-0 lead in the bottom of the first on Alonso's towering home run to center field that also scored Lindor and Brandon Nimmo.

The Dodgers pulled a run back with two out in the second when Enrique Hernandez raced home on a wild pitch from Mets hurler David Peterson to

Shohei Ohtani. But the Mets poured it on in the third when Marte made Dodgers starting pitcher Jack Flaherty pay for walking Alonso and Winker to open the frame, belting a double up the left field line that scored both. Flaherty retired two batters before the Mets put together three straight run-scoring hits to make it 8-1. Peterson surrendered a solo home run to Pages in the fourth as the Dodgers continued to press, but the Mets pushed their lead to 10-2 with a pair of runs in the bottom of the fourth and Los Angeles could never close the gap.

### Yankees on brink

In Cleveland, Stanton crushed his fourth home run of this post-season to power the Yankees, hammering a three-run blast off Guardians relief pitcher Cade Smith to put them up 6-2 in the sixth inning. Smith had walked Juan Soto to open the inning. Yankees slugger Aaron Judge cranked a single before a sacrifice bunt from Jazz Chisholm brought up Stanton, who launched a fastball 404 feet into the left field seats.

The Yankees, stunned by the Guardians' comeback from behind game three victory on Thursday, wasted no time, taking a 2-0 lead in the top of the first on Soto's two-run homer. Austin Wells also homered for the Yankees, but the Guardians scored three runs in the seventh inning to pull within 6-5. Cleveland tied it at 6-6 in the eighth when David Fry's soft infield hit was fielded clumsily by Yankees pitcher Mark Leiter, whose toss got past first baseman Anthony Rizzo to allow Fry to second as Bo Naylor - who opened the inning with a double - scored.

The Yankees, trying to return to the World Series for the first time since winning their record



**NEW YORK:** Francisco Lindor #12 of the New York Mets hits a RBI triple in the third inning against the Los Angeles Dodgers during Game Five of the National League Championship Series at Citi Field on October 18, 2024. — AFP

27th title in 2009, pushed across two runs in the top of the ninth against Cleveland's star closer Emmanuel Clase and held on for the win. They can finish off the series with a victory in game five on Saturday. "The

key is to go play one more game - go out there and try to win that game," Soto said. "Forget about the series, just try to go out there and win the game ... that's all we need to do." — AFP

## Martin extends lead with Australian MotoGP win

**PHILLIP ISLAND:** Spain's Jorge Martin extended his championship lead to 16 points over title rival Francesco Bagnaia on Saturday after leading from start to finish in a windswept Australian MotoGP sprint race. Italy's defending world champion Bagnaia could only come fourth, with Spaniard Marc Marquez second and another Italian, Enea Bastianini, completing the podium in third.

Fabio di Giannantonio was fifth and Franco Morbidelli sixth on a day marred by a huge crash between Aprilia rider Maverick Vinales and Marco Bezzecchi on his Ducati-VR46. Vinales appeared to get caught in Bezzecchi's slipstream late in the race, making contact that sent the riders and bikes barreling into the gravel. They both appeared to be OK, although battered and bruised. Several other riders hit the deck in the gusty conditions, with just 15 of the 22 starters finishing the 13-lap race.

"I saw it was increasing a lot, the gap, so I was trying to keep a really fast pace," said Martin, who started from pole on his Pramac for the third straight time in Australia and clocked his first win at Phillip Island. "When I saw I had a big gap already then I managed a bit to make it until the end. "It wasn't easy," he added. "The wind was a lot and it wasn't constant, it was like coming and going out. "So finally winning again, I am super happy and we have to be focused on tomorrow, it's going to be a really long race."

## Bella Nipotina wins world's richest turf race, The Everest

**SYDNEY:** Australian sprinter Bella Nipotina, ridden by Craig Williams, outgunned fast-finishing Giga Kick in Sydney on Saturday to become the first mare to win the world's richest turf race, The Everest. The Ciaran Maher-trained seven-year-old stormed through the field in the final 100 metres at a packed Royal Randwick to collect a whopping Aus\$7.0 million (\$4.7 million) for barely a one-minute dash. Giga Kick, the 2022 champion with Mark Zahra in the saddle, came second ahead of Growing Empire ridden by Kerrin McEvoy and also trained by Maher.

"It's very, very special, it's what all the hard work is for," said veteran jockey Williams, who rode Giga Kick to her 2022 triumph and steered Bella Nipotina to victory from barrier 12. "Again, I can't do it without the performance of Bella. "We were hoping for more rain but the track was to her liking and the plan was - Ciaran Maher said let's trust her. We might be wide, let's not be negative, let's be positive. Let's go. "I am lucky I know her," he said of the mare.

"Going to the gate today I said to Ciaran, she was moving well. And before I gave her a pat and a cuddle, she was ready to go." Raced over 1,200 meters



**SYDNEY:** Bella Nipotina (right), ridden by the jockey Craig Williams, wins the Everest 2024 race at the Royal Randwick race course in Sydney on October 19, 2024. — AFP



**PAJU:** Hannah Green of Australia tees off on the 6th hole during the third round of the 2024 BMW Ladies Championship at Seowon Valley Country Club in Paju on October 19, 2024. — AFP

## Green leads at LPGA in S Korea as Jeeno surges

**PAJU:** Major winner Hannah Green took a two-shot lead into the final day of the LPGA BMW Ladies Championship in South Korea on Saturday as Thailand's Athaya "Jeeno" Thitikul surged into contention. Australia's Green began the day with the sole lead but three bogeys on the front nine at the Seowon Valley Country Club clouded the picture at the top of the leaderboard.

Green, who won the Women's PGA Championship in 2019 and has two tournament wins so far this year, turned the tide with two birdies and an eagle on the back nine to move to 18-under par overall. "I felt like I didn't actually hit that many bad shots on the front nine, I just couldn't really get anything going," said Green, who was 2-under par for the day.

"I guess the momentum from shooting 16-under in two rounds kind of fell off, and I was getting angry at things that I probably shouldn't have," Green said a huge putt for eagle on the 15th green "really changed the momentum". "It definitely could have been worse, but I'm really proud that I was able to shoot under par," she said. South Korea's Yu Jin-sung was two shots further back on 16-under par after a 9-under round in which she birdied half of the holes she played. South Africa's Ashleigh Buhai was on 15-under, while American Ryann O'Toole and South Korea's Ryu Hae-ran were both one stroke further behind.

Former world number one Jeeno was on 13-under overall after a scintillating third-round score of 8-under par 64. "I think focusing is the most important key for me," said the 21-year-old, who had nine birdies and one bogey. "The past few days or past few weeks, it's been really good. And then if I can keep that in my mind, it should be good tomorrow." Olympic champion Lydia Ko finished six shots off the pace after a 1-under par round of 71. Defending champion Minjee Lee put an indifferent start to the tournament behind her to move to 10-under par overall after shooting a 66. The second round was completed on Saturday morning after heavy rain forced play to be suspended just after 1 pm on Friday. — AFP



**PHILLIP ISLAND:** Prima Pramac Racing's Spanish rider Jorge Martin powers through a corner during the sprint race of the MotoGP Australian Grand Prix on Phillip Island on October 19, 2024. — AFP

### Unstoppable Martin

Ducati star Bagnaia won the sprint and main event in Japan two weeks ago to close the championship gap with Martin to just 10 points. But Martin proved unstoppable on an overcast and cool Australian day. The win earned him 12 points to pile more pressure on Bagnaia ahead of the grand prix on Sunday, with just three race weekends left after Australia. Six-time world champion Marquez moved up to joint third in the standings, 84 points behind Martin, alongside Ducati's Bastianini. Martin had the perfect start, unlike Marquez who went wide on his Gresini at the first corner and slipped from second to eighth as Ba-

gnia moved up to fourth.

Marquez stormed back past Bagnaia and into contention but could not catch Martin, who streaked away to open a 2.6sec lead at the halfway mark and cross the line 1.520sec clear. "With the wind and everything I went wide (at turn one), but the pace was there," Marquez said. "Let's see if tomorrow I can avoid the mistake of that first corner. "But the feeling of the bike was good and the pace was very similar to Jorge, so let's see if tomorrow we can fight with him." It was the first sprint race at Phillip Island after last year's planned race was cancelled because of bad weather. — AFP

(3/4 mile or six furlongs), The Everest brought together 12 of the world's best sprinters under weight-for-age conditions. It was run this year for the first time as a Group 1, the official top-tier status that it had been previously denied since its inception.

### Beautiful

Storm Boy flew out of the blocks and led at the halfway stage before fading to eighth as Bella Nipotina and Giga Kick made their moves. The Chris Waller-trained pre-race favorite Joliestar came seventh. "She's a beautiful horse to train," Maher said, adding that he considered Bella Nipotina to be in career-best form. "She's been elite for the last five years and it's unbelievable to do it at this stage of her career. She has an uncanny knack of running well regardless of the gate, wide, inside, it doesn't matter."

The showcase event of the Sydney Spring Carnival, The Everest is the world's richest on turf and the second-richest thoroughbred race behind only the Saudi Cup, which is held on dirt. Its winnings dwarf those from the established Melbourne Cup, Kentucky Derby and Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe. Even last-placed I Wish I Win walked away with Aus\$700,000. Under an innovative concept, buyers purchase a Aus\$700,000 slot in the race, then do a deal with owners and jockeys to secure the top horses, splitting the prize-money, with the race capped at 12 horses. The idea was modeled on the Pegasus World Cup in the United States, run over 1,800m. — AFP

## NZ and SA face off in Women's T20 World Cup final

**DUBAI:** Whatever the result in Dubai on Sunday, there will be a new name on the trophy when New Zealand line up against South Africa in the final of the Women's T20 World Cup. Australia's dominance over the years, winning six of the eight previous tournaments has restricted the opportunities for anyone else. Only England, in the inaugural tournament in 2009, and West Indies in 2016 have seen them off.

It promises to be a fitting finale to a competition that has produced some excellent - and some middling - cricket after it was switched at short notice to the United Arab Emirates following political unrest in Bangladesh where it was due to take place. Apart from bringing new interest to the women's game, Sunday's final will also pit the two sides that have played the canniest and most courageous cricket over the competition. Unlike others they have also largely held their catches, although the White Ferns did make life more awkward for themselves in their semi-final win over the West Indies by dropping Deandra Dottin twice. Not many teams get away with that.

After making just 128-9, which even on a slow Sharjah pitch felt 10 to 15 runs short, the Kiwis defended that total superbly against a batting line-up which, as England found to their discomfort in their winner-takes-all group match, that takes no prisoners. Amelia Kerr, the leading wicket-taker for the tournament with 12, and Eden Carson bowled superbly, leading skipper Sophie Devine to look optimistically towards the final. "We are really excited about the final. We have nothing to lose and that is a great space to be," said Devine who was in the team that lost to Australia by three runs in the 2010 final, the latter of New Zealand's two previous finals. "We are going to win this thing now."

She is more than aware, however, of the dangers presented by a South African side which went close last year, losing to Australia by 19 runs in the final in Cape Town. "They are an incredible side," said Devine, picking out captain Laura Wolvaardt, the evergreen all-rounder Marizanne Kapp and number three batter Anneke Bosch whose stunning 74 not out led South Africa to their eight-wicket win over the Australians in Thursday's semi-final. "Laura leads them from the front," she said. — AFP

Sports

# 'Unbelievable' Raphinha leading Barca into tricky triple-header

## Catalan giants lean on the Brazil winger

**BARCELONA:** Raphinha has shone for Barcelona in their strong start to the season and the Catalan giants will need to lean on the Brazil winger even more ahead of a pivotal week. Hansi Flick's La Liga leaders host Sevilla on Sunday before a tantalizing Champions League clash with Bayern Munich on Wednesday and then a Clasico battle against Real Madrid the following Saturday. Madrid, meanwhile, visit Celta Vigo after giving their support to star forward Kylian Mbappe after Swedish media reported that he is being investigated for an alleged rape during a visit to Stockholm.

An internal club source, who spoke to AFP on condition of their identity not being revealed, described the accusations against the French player as "the biggest fake in the history of sport". Raphinha is Barcelona's only regular attacking star who has been able to stay fit, with question marks over the rest of the team's usual front line. Striker Robert Lewandowski sat out Poland's Nations League draw with Croatia on Tuesday with a knock, while Barcelona have diagnosed teenage winger Lamine Yamal with a minor hamstring strain. Ferran Torres is sidelined with a thigh injury for several weeks and playmaker Dani Olmo is recovering from a hamstring problem. By contrast Raphinha struck twice for Brazil in a 4-0 win over Peru which helped them gain back ground in South American World Cup 2026 qualifying.

The winger has six goals and six assists this season for Barcelona in 11 matches across all competi-

tions. "I am very happy for him, it's unbelievable what he's doing," said Flick after another stellar Raphinha display in Barcelona's last outing, a 3-0 win at Alaves. "His dynamic is really good and I think that he can still get even better." Raphinha's first two seasons at Barcelona after a 65 million euro (\$71 million) move from English side Leeds United in 2022 were inconsistent. The Brazilian showed flashes of brilliance but also frustrated fans and at times seemed lost under former coach Xavi Hernandez.

Finally under Flick he is delivering on his hefty price tag and his positive attitude and hard work has earned him the chance to captain both club and country on occasion. "The fact that I was chosen as captain at Barcelona also comes a little from my way of being," Raphinha told Globo during the international break. "(It comes from) always trying to get along with everyone, with the younger ones, with the older ones, trying to help those who arrive at the club, whether they are youngsters from the youth team or from other places, trying to help them adapt as quickly as possible."

Sevilla, 12th, started the season poorly but have three wins in their last five games, including against rivals Real Betis, and a draw at Athletic Bilbao. Former Barcelona attacker Gerard Fernandez is finding his feet with the visitors, while Chidera Ejuke and Dodi Lukebakio make Francisco Garcia Pimienta's side dangerous. The coach spent nearly three decades at the Catalan giants between his



Barcelona's Brazilian forward Raphinha

time as a player and a youth team coach. Garcia Pimienta's Sevilla pose a threat which Barcelona

cannot overlook despite the upcoming clashes with Bayern and Madrid. — AFP

## Maresca defies expectations with Chelsea revival

**LONDON:** Faced with feuding owners, a bloated squad and intense pressure to drag Chelsea out of their malaise, Enzo Maresca has defied expectations by restoring order at chaotic Stamford Bridge. Maresca's impressive start faces a stern test on Sunday when his fourth placed side visit Premier League leaders Liverpool. But few would have bet on Chelsea being involved in any top of the table clash this season when Maresca first arrived at the club's Cobham training ground in the summer.

While Liverpool's new boss Arne Slot has benefitted from the strong foundations put in place during the successful reign of his predecessor Jurgen Klopp, Maresca has had to work on shifting sands in west London. Fittingly for a stadium that borders the Brompton cemetery, Stamford Bridge has been a graveyard for managerial reputations in recent years. Chelsea co-owners Todd Boehly and Behdad Eghbali sacked Thomas Tuchel just 100 days into their reign, even though the German had won the Champions League under previous owner Roman Abramovich in 2021.

Tuchel's replacement Graham Potter arrived at Chelsea heralded as one of England's brightest young coaches, but he was ruthlessly axed after less than seven months in charge. The widely admired Mauricio Pochettino lasted just one season before departing in May, paving the way for Maresca to accept the daunting job of reviving Chelsea's fortunes in the close-season. Maresca was lured from Leicester after winning promotion

to the Premier League last term, but cynics suggested he would soon become the latest victim of Chelsea's blame game.

The 44-year-old Italian is in only his second season as a manager after serving as a member of Pep Guardiola's Manchester City coaching staff prior to taking charge at Leicester in 2023. A reported power struggle between Boehly and Eghbali adds another layer of difficulty for Maresca. After Boehly's brief stint as the club's sporting director during the first six months of the new regime, Eghbali has become the most hands-on figure within the ownership group. Their relationship is said to have deteriorated in recent months, with differing opinions over Pochettino's exit, the club's recruitment policy and the failure to make progress on the building of a new stadium.

Despite that difficult background, Maresca has quietly embarked on a culture change that could help him buck the trend and arrest Chelsea's decline. Chelsea haven't won the Premier League since 2017 and their domestic trophy drought has reached six years despite heavy spending on new signings. Boehly and Eghbali have splashed out well over £1 billion (\$1.3 billion) during their turbulent reign, using a haphazard recruitment policy that has been a key factor in Chelsea's travails. Yet Maresca's time with the intense and tactically astute Guardiola has informed his approach to management, giving him the blueprint to rebuild Chelsea.

Tasked with improving an underachieving squad that finished sixth last season and 12th in the 2022-23 campaign, Maresca has coaxed mature performances from a largely youthful team. Cole Palmer, Noni Madueke and Levi Colwill have flourished, while Nicolas Jackson and Enzo Fernandez are much improved on last year thanks to Maresca's deft man-management. "I'm very happy because



Chelsea's Italian head coach Enzo Maresca

what I expected in terms of players and level and style, I can see clearly that is there," he said. "We just started two, three months ago. But I'm very happy because the club is one of the best in the world. I'm very excited to play with them."

The Blues are unbeaten in their last seven games in all competitions, with four wins in seven league matches under Maresca. Chelsea's haul of 16 league goals this term is bettered only by champions Manchester City. Improving on Chelsea's dismal record of one win in their last 12 meetings with Liverpool in all competitions would be another significant feather in Maresca's cap. "Very good players, very good manager, very good club. We are excited to play this kind of game," Maresca said. — AFP

## Leeds down Sheffield Utd, move up to 2nd

**LONDON:** Leeds downed Sheffield United 2-0 on Friday to jump up to second in the English Championship on goal difference. Second half goals from defender Pascal Struijk and substitute Mateo Joseph produced a deserved win for Leeds at Elland Road. The result ended Sheffield United's unbeaten record this season and extended Leeds' unbeaten league run to five matches. Leeds moved up from fifth to second on 19 points with leaders Sunderland, in action at Hull on Sunday, and Sheffield United, who dropped from second to third.

Captain Struijk broke 69 minutes of deadlock when his fine left-footed finish off Joe Rothwell's bouncing corner flew past keeper Michael Cooper and into the top corner. That was the first goal the Blades had conceded since August 24. Leeds doubled up in the 90th minute when Joseph ran onto Joe Piroe's artful assist to beat his marker and slide the ball past Cooper. "It's massive. Tonight we always knew that was going to be a tough game," said Struijk.

The defender, who joined Leeds in 2018, added: "Six clean sheets in a row, you don't do that if you're not solid defensively so I'm glad we broke them down today. "It's way too early to look at the table. Hopefully we win as much as we can - the only way from here is up." Tributes were paid before kick-off to former Blades defender George Baldock, who died at his home in Greece last week aged 31. A minute's silence was spontaneously turned into a minute's applause by both home and away fans, while the players wore black armbands. — AFP

## Ligue 1 leaders Monaco held by Lille in stalemate

**PARIS:** French Ligue 1 leaders Monaco had a man sent off in a frustrating 0-0 draw with Lille on Friday. The result moved Monaco to 20 points, three ahead of champions Paris-Saint Germain who hostes Strasbourg on Saturday. Monaco had to play a man down for the last 30 minutes after Dutch international Jordan Teze was red-carded for an ugly challenge on Gabriel Gudmundsson.

Despite being outnumbered, Monaco continued to press for a winner with Maghnes Aklouché setting up Denis Zakaria but his injury-time strike was well-saved by Lille goalkeeper Lucas Chevalier. Monaco sorely missed American star Folarin Balogun who faces a long stretch on the sidelines with a shoulder injury. "We lost two points this evening, but I saw a very good performance from our team," said Monaco coach Adi Huetter. "We were the best side on the pitch and we deserved victory. We remain unde-

feated and it's a good point for us."

However, Friday was the first time this season that Monaco had failed to score. "Chevalier made a very good save and we must not forget that Monaco are still developing. We can't always win. Our team is young."

Huetter did admit there are concerns over striker Breel Embolo who has yet to find the net. "We have to work on that. There may be doubts but he was very good tonight. We have to give him confidence. We have to keep confidence in him," added the coach whose team are next in action on Tuesday at home to Red Star Belgrade in the Champions League.

Lille are now fourth in the table, six points behind the leaders. However, coach Bruno Genesio hit out at his team, claiming "nothing worked" and the players "did not do what was expected". "I pity the TV viewers," said Genesio. "We salvaged a point thanks to Lucas Chevalier. "This is not what I want to see from my team. I do not want to exaggerate, but I think that there are sometimes defeats which are more encouraging than this match." Lille next go to Spain on Wednesday to face Atletico Madrid in the Champions League. — AFP



MONACO: Lille's French midfielder #10 Remy Cabella (right) and Monaco's Senegalese midfielder #15 Lamine Camara (center) fight for the ball during the French L1 football match between Monaco (ASM) and Lille LOSC at the Louis-II Stadium in Monaco on October 18, 2024. — 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

#### Hospitals

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

### Change of Name

**I, Habibur Rehman** holder of Indian Passport No. Z6340353 having permanent address Rajasthan, India, 314025 residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: Habibur Rehman (given name) and Shaikh (surname)  
**(#6180 17/10/2024)**

## Man United ease pressure on Ten Hag; Spurs run riot

Tottenham get back on track, crush West Ham 4-1



MANCHESTER: Brentford's English-born Jamaican defender #05 Ethan Pinnoch (4th right) heads to score the opening goal during the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Brentford at Old Trafford in Manchester on October 19, 2024. — AFP

### Paul ends Wawrinka's run in Stockholm semis

STOCKHOLM: Tommy Paul ended Stan Wawrinka's run in the Stockholm ATP tournament with a 6-3, 6-2 win in the semi-finals on Saturday. Wawrinka, the 39-year-old three-time Grand Slam champion who has now slipped to 217th in the world, had beaten Andrey Rublev in the quarter-finals on Friday, his first win against a top-10 opponent for over a year. But he found the going tough against 27-year-old American Paul, the world number 13.

With Paul 4-2 ahead in the first set, Wawrinka had two chances to break but spurned



STOCKHOLM: USA's Tommy Paul of USA plays the ball to Switzerland's Stan Wawrinka during the semi final singles tennis match of the Nordic Open ATP in Stockholm, on October 19, 2024. — AFP

both. The American, who won the Stockholm title in 2021, roared through the second set to move into a final against either Bulgarian world number 10 Grigor Dimitrov or Dutchman Tallon Griekspoor, who face off in the other semi-final later Saturday.

#### Antwerp ATP

In another development, France's Hugo Gaston stunned ninth-ranked Alex de Minaur in three sets to record his first career top 10 win and make the semi-finals of the Antwerp ATP tournament on Friday. The 77th-ranked Gaston came through against the top seed 6-3, 3-6, 7-5 to register his second win over the Australian having also prevailed at the 2022 French Open. "It was really close. Alex is such a great player, playing unbelievable tennis this year and in the past few years," said Gaston.

Gaston will next face Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut who defeated third seed Felix Auger-Aliassime of Canada 3-6, 6-2, 7-6 (8/6). Second seed Stefanos Tsitsipas was also knocked out on Friday, losing to 33rd-ranked Jiri Lehecka of the Czech Republic, 6-4, 6-4. Appearing in his 14th tour-level quarter-final, 22-year-old Lehecka hit 19 winners, including eight aces and did not face a break point. The fifth seed will play either Marcos Giron of the United States or Sweden's Zizou Bergs for a place on the final. — AFP

LONDON: Manchester United eased the pressure on beleaguered boss Erik ten Hag as they fought back to beat Brentford 2-1, while Tottenham got back on track with a 4-1 rout of West Ham on Saturday. Ten Hag had defiantly slammed "fairy tales and lies" about his United future on Friday as the Dutchman insisted he was not in danger of the sack. But the 54-year-old is widely believed to be fighting to save his job after presiding over United's worst start to a top-flight season since 1989-90.

Ten Hag was surely teetering on the brink of being dismissed after Brentford pounced to take the lead in first-half stoppage time when Ethan Pinnoch met a corner with a powerful header. The goal sparked a furious reaction from Ten Hag, who was booked for protesting about Matthijs de Ligt's enforced absence to have treatment on a bloodied head wound.

But Alejandro Garnacho started United's revival in the 47th minute as the Argentinian met Marcus Rashford's angled pass with a superb volley into the top corner. And Rasmus Hojlund bagged the decisive second goal in the 62nd minute, taking Bruno Fernandes' clever flick and clipping a composed finish over Brentford goalkeeper Mark Flekken. United's first win in six games in all competitions was only their third victory in eight Premier League matches this term. They sit 10th in the table ahead of an

### Boniface lifts Leverkusen as Leipzig go top

LEVERKUSEN: Victor Boniface's 72nd-minute goal was the difference as Bayer Leverkusen beat Eintracht Frankfurt 2-1 at home, while RB Leipzig won 2-0 at Mainz to go top of the table. Omar Marmoush sent Frankfurt 1-0 up, before Robert Andrich equalized for the champions midway through the first half and Boniface completed the comeback in the second period. Leverkusen were given an early chance when Amine Adli was felled in the box, sending Boniface to the spot after a long VAR review. The Nigerian's shot, too soft and central, was gobbled up by Frankfurt goalie Kevin Trapp.

Just five minutes later, the referee was sent to the video screen again, this time finding a penalty for Frankfurt, with Andrich lightly touching Marmoush's foot. Marmoush showed Boniface how it is done, blasting a low shot left to give the visitors the lead on 16 minutes. The Egyptian now has an incredible nine goals and five assists in just seven league games this season.

Andrich made good on his error soon afterwards, combining expertly with Adli and Martin Terrier to flit through the penalty area for a superb one-touch goal in the 25th minute. Boniface would also redeem himself, giving Leverkusen the lead inside the final 20 minutes, heading in a deflected cross from substitute Florian Wirtz to put the hosts on course for victory. Days out from their home Champions League clash with Liverpool, Leipzig beat Mainz to go top of the table, at least until Bayern Munich's home match against Stuttgart later on Saturday.

At kick-off, the Mainz fans unveiled a series of banners critical of former coach Jurgen Klopp's decision to take over as football boss at Leipzig's

intriguing week, featuring a Europa League trip to Jose Mourinho's Fenerbahce and a visit to West Ham.

Tottenham scored three goals in eight second-half minutes against the Hammers to ease the pain of their recent collapse in a 3-2 loss at Brighton. Mohammed Kudus' opener for West Ham was cancelled out before the break by Dejan Kulusevski. Tottenham ran riot after the interval thanks to Yves Bissouma's strike, an own goal from West Ham goalkeeper Alphonse Areola and a fourth from Son Heung-min. It was a third win in four league games for Ange Postecoglou's men, heaping pressure on new West Ham coach Julen Lopetegui after his side's spluttering start to the season. "Second half was outstanding from the lads - good energy, good goals, good football," Postecoglou said.

#### Leicester's great escape

Brighton moved up to fifth place with a 1-0 victory at Newcastle on a day of mixed emotions for Danny Welbeck, who scored the 35th-minute winner but was later stretched off with a back injury that left him needing an oxygen mask. Leicester staged a stirring fightback to snatch a dramatic 3-2 victory at winless Southampton. Cameron Archer struck in the eighth minute before Joe Arbo's 28th-minute goal increased the lead for the

bottom-of-the-table hosts. But Leicester's Facundo Buonanotte bundled home in the 64th minute before Ryan Fraser was sent off for conceding a penalty with a foul on Jamie Vardy.

Vardy stroked in the 74th-minute leveler from the spot and Jordan Ayew drilled into the bottom corner in the eighth minute of stoppage-time. Fourth-placed Aston Villa extended their unbeaten run to nine matches in all competitions with a 3-1 win at Fulham. Raul Jimenez netted in the fifth minute, but Villa's Morgan Rogers equalized four minutes later. Andreas Pereira had a penalty saved by Villa keeper Emiliano Martinez before the interval. Ollie Watkins' 59th-minute header completed the comeback and Fulham's Joachim Andersen was sent off for a professional foul on the Villa striker five minutes later.

Issa Diop's 69th-minute own-goal sealed the win, although Villa had Jaden Philogene sent off for two yellow cards in three minutes. Everton clinched their first away win in 16 games in all competitions with a 2-0 victory against Ipswich. Iliman Ndiaye fired into the top corner in the 17th minute and Michael Keane doubled Everton's lead in the 40th minute to leave fourth-bottom Ipswich without a win in eight league games. On Sunday, Liverpool, currently in pole position, host sixth-placed Chelsea, while champions Manchester City travel to Wolves. — AFP



LEVERKUSEN: Bayer Leverkusen's Nigerian forward #22 Victor Boniface (center) scores during the German first division Bundesliga football match between Bayer Leverkusen and Eintracht Frankfurt in Leverkusen on October 19, 2024. — AFP

parent company Red Bull. The home fans asked "Are you crazy?" and accused Klopp, who coached Mainz to a debut promotion before joining Borussia Dortmund and later Liverpool, of "forgetting everything we gave you". Still unbeaten this season in Germany despite two Champions League losses, Leipzig hit the lead after 20 minutes thanks to an excellent solo effort from Xavi Simons. Leipzig captain Willi Orban tapped in a rebound from a Lois Openda cross to put his side 2-0 up.

Elsewhere, Freiburg continued their impressive start to the season with a 3-1 home win over

Augsburg to go into outright second. Freiburg were three goals up at half-time, with Vincenzo Grifo, Philipp Lienhart and Christian Guenter scoring, before Augsburg's Phillip Tietz pulled one back in the second period. Borussia Moenchengladbach striker Tim Kleindienst scored a double, days after making his Germany debut, in a 3-2 home win over former club Heidenheim. Hoffenheim won their first game since their season opener, with Andrej Kramaric, Marius Buelter and Haris Tabakovic scoring in a 3-1 win over lowly Bochum, who sit dead last with just one point from seven games. — AFP