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21,190 visa violators deported

Kuwait toughens anti-torture penalties • Court cuts jail term against ex-candidate

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The interior ministry said on Monday that detectives of the residency affairs department have arrested 21,190 illegal expats since the start of this year, and all of them have been deported. About 12,000 other expats have legalized their stay in the country after paying the required fines in accordance with legal procedures, the ministry said in a statement. The ministry said that this came as part of a campaign by authorities to crack down on expats living illegally in the country and employers who sell residency permits.

Slightly over 70,000 illegal expats have either legalized their stay in the country after paying fines or left the country without paying any fines during an amnesty offered by the interior ministry between March 17 and the end of June. The ministry has been launching campaigns against illegal expats and arrested hundreds of illegals following the amnesty period.

The ministry said detectives have uncovered dozens of cases of employers offering residency permits against money. The statement added 59 felonies were registered following search, investigation and inspection of fake companies, as well

as some 506 misdemeanor cases.

Meanwhile, Kuwait has strengthened its legal framework against torture with new amendments to the penal code, reflecting its commitment to international human rights agreements. Minister of Justice and Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr Mohammed Al-Wasmi announced the legislative changes under decree law no. 39 of 2024.

The amendment replaces article 53 of law no. 31 of 1970, which modifies certain provisions of the penal code no. 16 of 1960. The new law imposes stricter penalties for torture used to extract confessions.

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India to bolster law after airline hoax threats

NEW DELHI: India's aviation minister said Monday he wanted to tighten laws after more than 90 fake bomb threats against Indian airlines in the past week triggered travel chaos and terror. Ram Mohan Naidu said "safety and security" were the priority and that airport checks had been increased. Some threats led to planes being diverted to Canada and Germany, and fighter jets scrambled to escort aircraft in the skies above Britain and Singapore.

Civil aviation authorities have had to check every flight that has been threatened — many by messages posted on X. He also said there were discussions for "legislative action" to overhaul aviation and aircraft security laws, and make those who make such threats guilty of a serious, or "cognizable", crime with longer potential sentences. "We want to do it to be able to take strict action against them and to make it a cognizable offense," he said.

At least one person — a minor — has been arrested in India, but the threats have continued. "All others responsible for the disruptions will be identified and duly prosecuted," Naidu said after the arrest on Wednesday. There were no reports of any threats made on Monday. The minister refused to comment on whether the threats were coming from a single source, saying an investigation was still underway. "It is a very sensitive situation," he said.

All flights landed safely, but the spate of threats has resulted in planes being diverted to Canada and Germany, and fighter jets scrambled to escort aircraft in the skies above Britain and Singapore. New Delhi's civil aviation authorities have not said how many threats have been received in the past week, but the Times of India and broadcaster News18 reported more than 70 hoaxes targeting both domestic and international flights since Oct 13. At least 30 hoax threats were made on Saturday alone, and at least 20 more threats were made to different airlines on Sunday.

India's IndiGo airline confirmed threats were made against six of its flights on Sunday. Two were on domestic routes, and four were international — linking Indian cities to Saudi Arabia's Jeddah and Dammam, as well as two separate flights to Istanbul in Turkey. "The safety and security of our passengers and crew is our highest priority," IndiGo said in a statement. "We are working closely with the relevant authorities and taking all necessary precautions."

The global impact of delays and diversions has been heavy on airline schedules and costs. A report in The Indian Express said that an anonymous account on X, formerly Twitter, was suspended after posting bomb threats to at least 40 flights on Friday and Saturday. This included both Indian and international airlines, including from the United States and New Zealand. "There are bombs placed onboard... No one will make out alive. Hurry up and evacuate the plane," read the identical messages from the suspended account, the newspaper reported.

Among the recent flights impacted was an Air India plane heading from Mumbai to New York, with US security officials sweeping the aircraft after its safe landing on Saturday. Other flights that were impacted include an Air India plane from New Delhi to Chicago, which was forced to make an emergency landing in the far northern Canadian city of Iqaluit on Tuesday. Canada's air force had to fly the passengers onward. The same day, Singapore scrambled fighter jets to escort an Air India Express plane. On Thursday, British RAF fighter jets escorted an Air India Boeing 777-300 after a threat was made against the plane, which landed safely in London. — AFP

Zionists bomb finance group in Lebanon

BEIRUT: The Zionist entity conducted air strikes hitting a Lebanese association linked to Hezbollah, accusing it on Monday of financing the group's weapons, as it expanded the scope of its raids beyond military targets. In southern Lebanon, Zionist strikes hit Al-Qard Al-Hassan branches in the cities of Nabatiyeh and Tyre overnight, according to the official National News Agency.

On Monday, the Zionist military said it had conducted a series of strikes against "dozens of facilities and sites" used by Hezbollah in Beirut

and southern Lebanon, including on branches of the financial institution. The strikes mark an expansion of the Zionist entity's nearly month-long war with Hezbollah, as it seeks to degrade the group's ability to fund operations.

The Zionist entity accuses Al-Qard Al-Hassan of funding Hezbollah's activities, including the purchase of weapons and payments to fighters. Hezbollah built its loyal support base in Lebanon by providing protection, health, education and financial services in a state long wracked by sectarianism and corruption.

Al-Qard Al-Hassan is a Hezbollah-linked financial firm offering micro-credit in a country where the traditional banking system collapsed five years ago at the start of a crushing economic crisis.

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BEIRUT: A destroyed building is seen at the site of an overnight Zionist airstrike that targeted a branch of the Al-Qard Al-Hassan finance group in the capital's southern suburbs on Oct 21, 2024. — AFP

Erdogan rival Gulen dies in exile aged 83

ISTANBUL: Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen, who was accused by Turkey of organizing a failed 2016 coup, has died in exile in the United States aged 83, his movement said Monday. Gulen, who had lived in the United States since 1999, was once a close ally of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan before the two became bitter enemies. "The leader of this dark organization has died," Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said, vowing Turkey would continue to fight Gulen's "terrorist organization" and its "treasonous" followers.

The charismatic preacher, who



Fethullah Gulen

was stripped of his Turkish nationality in 2017, died in hospital on Sunday night, his nephew and a website close to him said. Gulen moved to Pennsylvania in 1999, ostensibly for health reasons, and from there ran his Hizmet movement, which once operated 4,000 schools in Turkey and 500 others around the world.

Initially close to Erdogan, the pair

fell out in 2013 and three years later the Turkish strongman accused him of masterminding the coup, dubbing Hizmet "the Fethullah Terror Organization" (FETO). Some 250 people died on July 15, 2016 when a rogue military faction tried to overthrow Turkey's government. Erdogan blamed Gulen supporters within the military.

Even beyond government circles, Gulen was widely disliked for his alleged role in the coup and the widespread influence once wielded by his movement behind the scenes. "We had wanted him to be held accountable in Turkey," said main opposition leader Ozgur Ozel, describing Hizmet as "a terrorist organization that infiltrated every corner of the state". "Only its founder has died.. we need to be on guard against this insidious organization."

Having helped Erdogan when he became prime minister in the early 2000s, Gulen's ties with him be-

came strained in 2010. Three years later, their relationship became pure enmity after a corruption scandal engulfed the Turkish premier's inner circle for which Erdogan blamed Gulen. After the 2016 coup, authorities prosecuted more than 700,000 people and jailed some 3,000 Gulen followers for life over their alleged involvement in the putsch.

Bayram Balci, a researcher at the Paris Institute of Political Studies (Sciences-Po) told AFP the preacher's death would have little impact in Turkey. "Since the break with Erdogan in 2010 and especially after the attempted coup in 2016, Gulen's image has been very bad. 'Few people held him in high esteem,' he told AFP, saying many harbored a deep distrust of Gulenists from the time when they worked closely with Erdogan "in support of his repression".

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Trump hands out fries at photo op at McDonald's

LANCASTER, Pennsylvania: Republican fast food enthusiast Donald Trump on Sunday donned a black-and-yellow apron over his white shirt and red tie to serve french fries at a McDonald's restaurant in Pennsylvania. The campaign stunt was intended as a job at opponent Kamala Harris, who says she worked at the fast-food franchise in her youth. Trump has repeatedly said, without offering evidence, that Harris never worked at a McDonald's while in college, an experience she has spoken about on the campaign.

On Sunday, an employee of the restaurant patiently showed the 78-year-old Republican how to scoop fries into cartons to be distributed at the drive-through window, as media gathered for the photo-op outside.

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FEASTERVILLE-TREVOSE, Pennsylvania: Former US President Donald Trump works behind the counter during a visit to a McDonald's restaurant on Oct 20, 2024. — AFP



Local

Zain Great Idea Bootcamp facilitated by local, regional and global experts

10 Kuwait-based tech startups to join ZGI Int'l Accelerator Program in Silicon Valley



Group picture of the judges' panel members.



Photo taken from the ZGI Super Saturday event.

KUWAIT: Zain announces 10 Kuwait-based tech startups selected by the judges panel to advance to the next phase of Zain Great Idea (ZGI) — the International Accelerator Program in Palo Alto, California, specifically in Silicon Valley, the global center of innovation, technology, and entrepreneurship. The following startups and founders have qualified: Lama Aloraiman and Ksenia Ozkrok from BLU DOT — the platform that transforms access to space, Dalal Thani from Akrem — the app that enables secure and easy tipping to service providers, Raghad AlZamel from MAWADA — the ultimate gifting platform, Hamad AlThunayan, Nasser AlQimlas, and Ryan Dougherty from DAWRATY — the quality education platform, and Abdulrahman AlHamdan from Nextbite — the platform that revolutionize the dining and hospitality experiences.

Also joining the program are Faisal Fawziqi, Fahad Alzuabi and Maxime Rousselet from USim — the seamless Internet roaming app, Eissa Alloughani from STAX — the app that offers one membership to access the best gyms in Kuwait, Abdullah Albusairi from EYON — the Arab live streaming platform, Abdullah Shaban from Mawqif — the ultimate parking app, and Talal Alzafiri from QSMAPS — the e-mapping and GIS solutions app.

The announcement came after the ZGI participants joined Super Saturday, where they utilized the expertise and skills they acquired in the first phase, the ZGI Bootcamp, to prepare the final business pitches of their startups and present them to the judges panel. The 10 finalists were then selected based on a set of criteria that took into account several key aspects of the business.

The judges panel featured executives, experts, and investors, including Volkan Sen, Digital Investment Director of Zain Ventures; Dakhil Al Dakhil, CEO of Rasameel Investment; Abdulaziz Al Marzouq, Assistant Manager for Business Development at Rasameel; Abdulaziz Al Dhubaib, CEO and Managing Partner at NIZEK; Seham Al Husaini, General Manager at Deliveroo; Omar Al Mandani, CTO of Dars Learning; Saud Ak Subaie, COO Al Sayer Facilities and founder of CUARDO; Sohail Ladha, CEO Asia Investments; and Saleh Al Tunaib, CEO and co-founder of Btr.tech.

The finalists will join the ZGI International Accelerator Program in Palo Alto, California, specifically in Silicon Valley, the global center of innovation, technology, and entrepreneurship. The program is offered in collaboration with Vibranium VC, a Silicon Valley-based venture capital firm specializing in startup investments. The program offers an invaluable opportunity for finalists to learn about business dynamics first-hand in the heart of Silicon Valley. Participants will attend workshops, connect with startup founders, visit major accelerators and tech companies, pitch their ideas to investment funds, build relationships, and gain a deep understanding of the global entrepreneurship ecosystem.

The program will include field visits and insightful talks in collaboration with major tech companies and prestigious universities and accelerators in Silicon Valley, including Amazon, Nvidia, Stanford University, Silicon Valley Bank (SVB), 500 Startups, and more. The first phase, the ZGI Bootcamp, recently concluded, with over 70 aspiring entrepreneurs joining to learn the most essential business and startup management skills through intensive workshops, training programs, and one-on-one mentoring sessions.

The bootcamp was facilitated by a group of local, regional, and international experts, like Prof Paris de l'Etraz from IE Business School, Prof Mike Grandinetti from Harvard, MIT, and Brown universities, Ramesh Chander from Google for Startups, and Gaelle Bou Abdo from IE Business School. In addition, the bootcamp featured Sahar Albaharna from IMPACTIQUE, Noorhan Al-Zan from Noor Coaching, Abdullah Saleem from Mushtari, Abdullah Al Mutawa from Cari, Abdulaziz Al Marzouq from Rasameel Investment and Yousef Alhusaini from Baime.

In the last week of the Bootcamp, ZGI participants worked on developing multiple aspects of their startups by joining extensive one-on-one sessions with experts and business owners from various industries, including Ahmad Marafi from COD-ED Academy, Najlaa Al Rumaib from Zain Group Branding and Advertising, Sulaiman Al Tunaib &



The ten startups joining the program.

Abdulrahman Al Sadoun from Waves, Naser Al Qatami from Jahez, Eid Al Mujaibel from Tenmeiya, Faisal Al Kuraibi from Enabill, and Rawan Alotair from Octopus AI.

MoH: Rapid spread of antibiotic resisting bacteria is 'alarming'

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi said that the rapid spread of antibiotic resistant bacteria is alarming. This came during Dr Al-Awadhi's opening speech in the Sixth Medical Lab Conference, under the title Advanced in Clinical Microbiology and Quality Assurance. He added that the Ministry took decisive steps by appointing a specialized liaison officer to work with the World Health Organization (WHO) since 2021, to collect germs data from the ministry's microbiology laboratories and submit it directly to WHO.

He stated that Kuwait adopted strict and innovative policies to regulate the use of antibiotics in all its health facilities, in line with the ambitious goals of the global action plan on antimicrobial resistance, and the "AWARE" program. He said that the Ministry adopted advanced approaches for classifying antibiotics, and proving its firm commitment to providing a



Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi



Dr Ibtisam Al-Jumaa



Dr Rama Al-Safi



health system capable of facing challenges. He pointed out that Kuwait proved its leading position, through its strategic partnership with WHO, by joining the WHO Global Antimicrobial Resistance and Use Surveillance System (GLASS).

Dr Al-Awadhi said that microbiology laboratories in health facilities play a leading role in diagnosing infectious diseases through advanced laboratory techniques, noting that their role

goes beyond diagnosis, as they work to monitor health care infections and identify their causes. On her part, Director of the Medical Laboratory Services Department at the Ministry of Health and Head of the Conference Dr Rama Al-Safi said that one of the most important goals the ministry seeks to achieve is train the medical staff and develop their professional skills to line with the rapid scientific development.

She said that the conference aims to raise the scientific and clinical level and exchange experiences between doctors, medical laboratories staff and health care providers in general. She pointed out that the medical laboratories affiliated with the ministry conduct more than 45 million laboratory tests annually through 29 laboratories in hospitals and specialized health centers and 98 laboratories in health care centers. — KUNA

MoH creates awareness on breast cancer

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Health has been paying much attention to treating breast cancer, which is a major challenge to the world, Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi said on Sunday. Delivering an inaugural speech during the cancer surgery conference, Al-Awadhi said the event sheds light on breast cancer, adding that one in eight women is diagnosed with this disease. The conference is featuring a number of experts from varied specialties to share expertise and knowledge to develop new strategies to combat this disease, he noted.

It is also an opportunity to boost cooperation between the public and private sectors. This requires raising societal awareness on the importance of early detection and periodical medical tests, he stressed. The minister voiced pride as Jaber Hospital was internationally accredited by Surgical Review Cooperation as an outstanding center in breast cancer surgery. The ministry launched the national program for early detection of breast cancer for women aged 40 and above in 2014, he noted, saying that above 40,000 women have been checked.

The ministry has been working on inaugurating a new cancer treatment center with a capacity of 618 beds, he said. Dr. Heba Ibrahim, senior specialist in plastic and reconstructive surgery and cancer surgeon, said care provided by the minister shows his keenness on enhancing healthcare levels, extolling the attendance of French Ambassador Olivier Govin. The conference includes workshops featuring a galaxy of experts and specialists in breast cancer treatment over three days, she noted. — KUNA

FM receives copy of Peru ambassador's credentials

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya received a copy of Peru's Ambassador to Kuwait Carlos Enrique Tomas Jimenez Gil-Fortoul at the Ministry on Monday. During the reception, the minister wished the new ambassador the best of luck and further development and prosperity for bilateral relations. — KUNA

Kuwait Medical Complex inaugurated in Pakistan

PAKISTAN: The Humanitarian Charity Society holds the opening ceremony of the Kuwait Medical Complex (KMC) on Sunday in Pakistan's northern Skardu city. KMC stands as a state-of-the-art 100-bed hospital located in Skardu city of the Gilgit Baltistan (GB) region aimed at restoring dignity and health to those in need. In his address at the ceremony, Chairman of the Board of Directors Abdul Ilah MR Marafie thanked the people of Kuwait and the government of Pakistan for their support in achieving a significant milestone with the inauguration of KMC.

He said that the foundation has had a profound connection with GB, inspiring them to contribute in education and health to combat poverty. The Chairman recalled the establishment of a hostel in Karachi, Pakistan, to improve access to quality intermediate education for students from GB. "In 2006, we opened our first hospital in Mehdiabad, focusing on women's health, which continues to serve the community today," he added.

The chairman mentioned that the first donor to the KMC was the late Kuwaiti Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ah-



mad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who helped us build the hospital. He thanked the people of Kuwait, the Kuwaiti donors, and the Marafie Foundation Pakistan, who helped in achieving the vision to build the KMC. He also thanked the Pakistani government for allocating 30,000 sq. meter of land for the construction of this much-needed hospital.

"I would like to emphasize that this project will endure as a legacy of the People of Kuwait and our family's commitment to service. We will continue to support the hospital with dedication, ensuring that it remains a beacon of hope and healing for one and all," the chairman concluded. The Governor of GB, Syed Mehdi Shah, in his speech on the occasion, thanked the people of Kuwait for serving humanity and assured them of his full support for the smooth functioning of the hospital to provide needy people with the best treatment.

He recalled the groundbreaking ceremony of the hospital in 2014 and appreciated the efforts by the foundation to complete the project despite challenges. He said that people of Pakistan will always remember the kindness and humanitarian aid by the people of Kuwait and the brotherly country. The people of GB will not forget the act of kindness and the gift from the people of Kuwait, as it is one of the largest hospitals in the area.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Kuwaiti donors, top medical practitioners, pol-



Photo shows the Kuwait Medical Complex in Pakistan. — KUNA

iticians, renowned religious scholars, and high ranking officials. A local resident and patient in the hospital, Dilshad Hussain, in a statement to KUNA, praised the hospital management for his free treatment and thanked the people of Kuwait for the medical facility. He prayed for the state of Kuwait to keep on developing and keep on helping people in need. The KMC is built to meet the region's growing healthcare demands, providing various services such as a modern operation theater, a fully equipped lab, diagnostic services, a pharmacy, and emergency care. — KUNA

Local

Opinions differ on 3rd fingerprint

Reforms aimed at addressing the issue of leaving workplace without permission

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: Kuwait recently approved a new system for employee attendance in the government sector, requiring biometric fingerprint scans three times during the workday. This initiative is part of Kuwait's broader reforms aimed at advancing the country and addressing the common issue of employees leaving their workplace without permission. This decision has been met with mixed reactions from Kuwaitis. Kuwait Times interviewed locals working in the public sector to look into their opinions on the new system.

Fatima Hussein, a Kuwaiti engineer working in the government sector, expressed her dissatisfaction with the introduction of the third fingerprint scan. She described it as a waste of time and effort. Fatima argued that those who leave during working hours will continue to do so between the first and

second scans or between the second and third.

"While the decision was meant to reflect progress and order, it actually indicates the opposite. It is very disappointing to see that as the world moves towards prioritizing performance over mere physical presence and counting work hours, Kuwait seems to be doing the exact opposite. Instead of focusing on productivity and efficiency, the emphasis has shifted to physical attendance and work hours, which are not accurate measures of a person's effectiveness or the nation's advancement. This consumes employees' time and energy rather than benefiting from it," she explained.

According to her, focusing on physical attendance and work hours is not an effective solution for reform; instead, employees should be entrusted with the responsibility to perform their work with high quality, meet deadlines, while having the freedom to manage their own time without stifling their



passion and energy.

On the other hand, Zahra'a Murtada, another Kuwaiti engineer working in the government sector, pointed out that this new decision has introduced

fairness into the workplace environment. Previously, some employees bore the brunt of work pressure while others left their offices without accountability, leading to a lack of seriousness during work hours. "It is not fair for those who are diligent in their work and care about earning their livelihood to bear the entire workload alone, especially since the work completed goes to the manager without any reward for those who accomplished it.

Equality in such circumstances is a form of injustice, as those who complete the work are not the same as those who just mark their attendance on the fingerprint scanner then leave the office." Zahra'a expressed that although the third fingerprint scan does not provide a perfect and definitive solution to this issue, it at least alleviates the problem to some extent, and having some degree of fairness is better than none. She praised the government's efforts in this regard.



PM receives invitation for UAE World Governments Summit

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Monday the UAE Ambassador Dr Matar Al-Neyadi who handed him an invitation to attend the World Governments Summit in Dubai February of 2025. The invitation was included with a hand written letter by Vice President of the UAE, Prime Minister, and Governor of Dubai Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum. Head of the Prime Minister Diwan Abdulaziz Al-Dhakeel attended the reception. — KUNA

Al-Safa Charity launches 'Warmth and Safety' project in Kyrgyzstan

KUWAIT: Al-Safa Charity Society on Monday launched its seasonal project, the "Warmth and Safety" campaign, which is one of the most prominent projects implemented by the society in the Kyrgyz Republic, coinciding with the onset of winter. Chairman of the Society's Board of Directors, Mohammad Al-Shaya, said in a press statement that the project is a type of social solidarity among Muslims. It targets thousands of families, widows, orphans, and the poor in the Kyrgyz Republic. Heating materials such as coal, winter clothing, and blankets will be distributed to them.

He explained that the society is keen to launch this project annually before the significant drop in temperatures that the Kyrgyz Republic witnesses every year. He added that temperatures in Kyrgyzstan will begin to drop sharply with the snowfall in a few weeks, amid the suffering of these widows, orphans, the poor, and the needy who are in dire need of a helping hand. Al-Shaya called on people



Winter clothes are distributed to the Kyrgyz people.

and business owners to stand by their brothers in Kyrgyzstan as they await their assistance to ease the harsh winter. He urged them to donate by calling the hotline designated for inquiries and donations (22233322) or through the association's website (alsafakw.com) or by visiting its headquarters. — KUNA



Chairman of the Board of Directors Mohammed Al-Shaya is greeted by a child. — KUNA photos

Asima gov underlines importance of ports in boosting the economy

KUWAIT: Asima governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah stressed on Monday the importance of the role of the General Authority for Ports in boosting the Kuwaiti economy, especially through the non-oil revenues. This came in a statement by Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali after an inspection tour he made to the General Authority for Ports and Shuwaikh Port, accompanied by the Director General of the Corporation Sheikh Khalid Salem Abdulaziz Al-Sabah, with the aim of reviewing the progress of work and the departments operating at the port.

Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali noted the role of the corporation in moving the economic wheel, as it is considered the safety valve and the backbone of the Kuwaiti economy, as most of Kuwait's imports pass through it. He praised the efforts to develop Shuwaikh Port and all Kuwaiti ports. He called on the employees to do more in order to achieve the required developmental role in accordance with the vision of New Kuwait 2035 and work to develop electronic services and all facilities to make a qualitative leap in the future.

For his part, Sheikh Khalid Al-Sabah said that the project to develop Shuwaikh Port is one of the most important projects included in the development plan. He added that the completion rate of the project reached 62 percent and is expected to be completed by the end of 2025, stressing that the project will benefit the economy greatly. He explained that berths (1 and 2) will be allocated for imports of the Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company, while the other berths will be allocated to receive and handle general cargo ships, in line with the state's interest in strengthening the food security system.

He pointed to the importance of the project currently being implemented in cooperation with the Korean company Hyundai in implementing the state's vision to diversify the economy and sources of income, enhance non-oil revenues, and transform the country into a financial and commercial center on a regional and international scale. — KUNA



Officials are pictured during the 16th ICAO Air Services Negotiation (ICAN2024) conference in Kuala Lumpur. — KUNA photos

DGCA keen on boosting global aviation ties

KUALA LUMPUR: Kuwait, represented by the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), is keen on bolstering efforts for more cooperation amongst global aviation authorities, said DGCA chief Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Al-Sabah on Monday. In a statement to KUNA on the sidelines of the DGCA participation in the 16th ICAO Air Services Negotiation (ICAN2024) conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Sheikh Humoud affirmed that Kuwait is among the 73 countries participating in this international event.

He added that the event scheduled between 21 and 25 October would be an opportunity for the DGCA to expand cooperation with aviation authorities from across the globe. He affirmed that the DGCA would seek all venues to sign agreements and MoUs so as to develop



Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Al-Sabah

air transportation of cargo and people from and to Kuwait International Airport. The Ministry of Transport of Malaysia is hosting this international conference, which would serve as a venue for regional and international aviation collaboration in addition to formulating policies connected with the industry. — KUNA

For his part, Dr Yasser Abdulrahim, a professor at the Faculty of Engineering and Petroleum at KU, said that cooperation between NASA and KU will allow students to exchange experiences in the field of space. KU's Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs, Research, and Graduate Studies, Dr Suzanne AlBustan, said that the College of Science students will be shown ways of benefiting from the cooperation in various other fields as well.

In turn, NASA's Deputy Associate Administrator Casey Swails praised the cooperation between KU and NASA during the visit and said that the meeting is expected to contribute to the potential of cooperation between the two. Kuwait Oil Company and Kuwait satellite (Sat-1) representative Hussain Al-Mousa stated that the satellite aims to take pictures and publish them through various communication sites. — KUNA

KU, NASA discuss enhancing Kuwait space field

KUWAIT: Kuwait University (KU) discussed with a US research delegation from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) ways of enhancing Kuwait's space field on Monday. In a statement, KU's Head of the Physics Department and project director of Kuwait's first satellite, Hala Al-Jassar, stated that the delegation came to support research, education and training between NASA and KU.

Kuwait eyes ambitious policies within national development drive

KUWAIT: Kuwait's development blueprint embraces 55 policies reflecting an ambitious development program that the Gulf country seeks to put in place by carrying out 35 development policies in the 2023-2024 plan, based on 130 supportive enterprises. The programs and projects mainly include the building of an international economic zone, while policies target independent and regulatory governance for running the zone, according to the annual plan follow-up report issued by the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (SCPD).

The privatization program, which is a core part of Kuwait Vision 2035, aimed at overhauling legislative and development frameworks to boost Kuwaiti citizens' ownership of would-be privatized businesses, showed the report. Relevant data indicated that this policy is directly linked to the North Shuaiba Power Station project, whose completion rate has now hit 51 percent. The plant privatization move was meant to turn state bodies from an operator and producer into an organizer and regulator, giving the private sector the opportunity to own or operate and manage productive utilities and units with a view to revamping their productive efficiency, thus serving the country's national economy.

Five policies of a dynamic private sector promotion program were accomplished by the end of the last quarter of the 2023-2024 annual plan, bearing on 17 development projects carried out by nine state agencies. Of this figure, a project is now in the delivery rate, seven in the implementation process and nine in the preparation phase, according to the report. Five policies have been put in place in this regard, chiefly related to the development of large-sized and highly efficient productive economies by means of developing economically prioritized sectors.

In this regard, the report particularly mentioned the mega Al-Zour refinery project of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), which is in the delivery phase with a completion rate of 99.9 percent. The health care program, which aims at offering better medical services and introducing modern treatment technology, covers 10 policies, it said, citing an already completed maternity hospital project, six projects in the implementation phase, and three in the preparation process.

The development plans also include a program purposed to create ecologically harmonious communities, covering five policies, four of which have been carried out as part of the 2023-2024 plan. Relevant projects mainly include boosting renewable energy production and overhauling the waste recycling system, with the completion rate of both projects having hit eight percent and 57 percent, respectively.

The development drive also includes another development program based on supporting community health and welfare, where the Ministry of Health has acquired eight projects that are mainly meant to improve public health for youth, combat drugs, raise the number of health cities, and promote individual health, with the completion rate having reached 85 percent. The General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (SCPD) is monitoring the national development plan, which is based on seven main pillars: sustainable diversified economy, effective civil service, sustainable living environment, developed infrastructure, high-quality healthcare, creative human capital, and global positioning.

Kuwait's 2035 vision aims at transforming Kuwait into a financial and trade hub regionally and internationally and becoming more attractive to investors, where the private sector leads the economy, creating competition, and promoting production efficiency. The government's development plan came at a time when the world was the scene of local, regional, and international developments, which necessitated the development of a clear, ambitious, and objective plan.

The objectives of this plan were to raise government performance and channel national resources towards achieving the desired goals. The system includes an integrated system of development documents, including the five-step process that has shaped the development paths of the state over the long term through mechanisms, means, and projects to ensure the achievement of development goals in both long and medium terms. — KUNA

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Maj Gen Khaled Saad



Military officials tour the exhibition on the sidelines of the festival. – KUNA photos

In my view

The act of giving

By Dr Khalid Ahmad Al-Saleh

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When you lose your older brother, you lose a strong bond. This is what I felt when I received the news of the death of my brother Mohammad. My consolation is that he dedicated his life to doing good. He made Bangladesh his abode as he got closer to his creator. He contributed along with other good men to provide water and dig hundreds of wells in Bangladesh. He supervised and contributed to building tens of mosques. He built a school from which many graduated. He was getting ready to inaugurate a hospital there. People should not be sad over his death, because you lived a good life before joining his creator.

For many years, he used to spend months among the poor of Bangladeshis, consoling them and providing them with their needs. He told me many stories of mercy that make one feel proud of him. I still remember the story of an old woman he told me about. One day, my brother's car developed a fault near a village. Some residents took him to the shed, where he met a very old woman who could barely see or hear. Her clothes were worn out, and people do help the poor woman to feed her. She lost her family and remained alone. Abu Ahmad (Mohammad) assisted the old woman and gave her comfort for the rest of her life. The car incident turned out to be a blessing for him and the old lady.

Many people were blessed by him. The Muslim brothers loved my brother and stood by him until he joined his creator. Many families miss him a lot. He assisted many schoolboys and girls by paying their fees and providing them with clothes and food. He gave them hope and provided them with housing. This was his life on earth, but it is the hereafter that gives us hope and courage. Yes, it is the hereafter where the harvest of life on earth is, and his place will remain empty but will be filled with the spirit of giving and love. Thousands are praying for this Arab man who went out of his way, in the spirit of brotherhood, to assist the poor. May Allah bestow His mercy on Abu Ahmad and accept him in His heavenly abode.

Arab solidarity constitutes historical epic in Oct War

Victory restored pride to the Arab nation

KUWAIT: Participation in the 1973's October War has shown real Arab solidarity that made the victory an immortal historic epic, said a Kuwaiti official on Sunday. Delivering a speech during an Egyptian Embassy's festival on the 51st anniversary of the victory of the October War, Maj Gen Khaled Saad, Commander of the Air Defense Force and representative of Chief of General Staff of Kuwait's Armed Forces Lt-Gen Bander Al-Muzain said October carries the memory of the most important victories in modern history.

The victory restored pride to the Arab nation and Egyptians through recapturing Egypt's Sinai, he said, recalling Kuwait's supportive position toward Egypt. Kuwaiti soldiers participated bravely, along with Egyptians, in that war while Egypt's air forces were destroying the 'Bar-Lev' Line, he stated.

Meanwhile, military attaché at the Egyptian Embassy to Kuwait, Colonel Moustafa Al-Dallal, said in a similar speech that this anniversary is the best evidence of strong Arab solidarity, stressing that Ku-



wait has been backing Arab solidarity. Kuwait backed Egypt financially and dispatched its soldiers to the fighting front, he noted, pointing also to media and diplomatic support of Kuwait. The festival witnessed

the honoring of relatives of the Kuwaiti martyrs who lost their lives in the war launched by Egypt and Syria against Zionists in 1973. In addition, Arab countries supported Egypt in that war. — KUNA



Egypt, UAE continue to airdrop humanitarian aid on Northern Gaza. – KUNA photos



OIC condemns horrific Zionist massacre

JEDDAH: The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) strongly condemned the horrific massacre committed by the Zionist occupation in Gaza Strip's Beit Lahia, which resulted in the murder of more than seventy Palestinians and the injury of dozens. In a statement, the OIC considered this an extension of thousands of massacres, crimes of genocide and ethnic cleansing

that Palestinians have been subjected to in brazen violation of all international agreements, such as the UN's resolutions and relevant orders of the International Court of Justice.

The OIC stressed that the continuation and escalation of war crimes, destruction, starvation, and prevention of delivery of humanitarian aid is shameful towards all of humanity, they are calling on the international community to hold the occupation accountable for all its crimes and to end the impunity. They reaffirmed their call on the UN Security Council to assume its responsibilities and enforce an immediate ceasefire, provide international protection for the Palestinian people and ensure the urgent delivery of humanitarian aid to all parts of the Gaza Strip.

Meanwhile, Egypt and the UAE have dropped by air tons of humanitarian assistance on northern Gaza. Egyptian Armed Forces Spokesperson Colonel Gharib AbdellHafez said. Some Egyptian and Emirati military planes loaded with dozens of tons of humanitarian aid and relief stuff took off from Egypt's territories to drop them on northern Gaza, he added in a statement. The move comes within the framework of Egypt's effective role, in collaboration with the UAE, in mitigating living conditions facing the Palestinian people due to military operations in the Strip, he noted. Northern Gaza has been facing violent attacks and genocide campaigns launched by the occupation forces, in addition to blockade and starvation, against Palestinians at streets and squares. —KUNA



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KPI seeks a better, sustainable future

MUSCAT: Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI) CEO Shafi Al-Ajmi underlined Sunday the company's commitment to a better more sustainable future through pioneering energy transformation. Al-Ajmi made these remarks at the fifth Duqm forum, which was launched in the Omani capital of Muscat on Sunday and organized by the chamber of industry and commerce. The program was attended by a number of field experts.

The Kuwaiti official spoke at a discussion panel on the strategies of investment in blue economy and the company's endeavors, its strategic goals and the challenges. KPI's activities center in Eu-

rope - with more than 4,700 retail fuel stations. It is responsible for supplying global air navigation with fuel in more than 70 international airports. On the challenges of energy transformation, Al-Ajmi spoke of KPI responsibility to keep pace with the changing tiding saying that the company is investing in multi-power stations and services. He also affirmed intent on decreasing carbon emissions, using renewably sourced electricity and promoting use of sustainable airplane fuel.

On forum sidelines, Al-Ajmi stated to KUNA that KPI is following Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's strategies in relation to refining and promoting petroleum products outside of Kuwait. He also touched on the significance of Duqm refinery project, and its positive impacts on both nations. Al-Ajmi thanked event organizers for this valuable opportunity to discuss the future of energy and keeping pace with accelerating changes towards broadened horizons and sustainable energy. — KUNA



Discussion panel at the fifth Duqm forum. – KUNA photos



India, China reach pact to resolve border conflict

Harris, Trump in dead heat across swing states: Poll

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GAZA: A man sits next to the shrouded bodies of people killed during Zionist bombardment outside Al-Ahli Arab hospital, also known as the Baptist hospital on October 21, 2024. — AFP

Zionist forces besiege hospitals in north Gaza

Zionist entity destroying the Palestinian population in north Gaza 'through death and displacement': UN

CAIRO: Zionist forces besieged hospitals and shelters for displaced people in northern Gaza on Monday as they stepped up their operations in the strip, residents and medics said. Troops rounded up men and ordered women to leave the Jabalia historic refugee camp, they said. A Zionist airstrike on a house in Jabalia killed five people and wounded several others, they added.

The UN Palestinian refugee agency UNRWA said Zionist authorities were preventing humanitarian missions from reaching areas in the north of the Palestinian enclave with critical supplies, including medicine and food. "People attempting to flee are getting killed, their bodies left on the street," UNRWA head Philippe Lazzarini said on X.

Medics at the Indonesian Hospital told Reuters that Zionist troops stormed a school and detained the men before setting it ablaze. The fire reached hospital generators and caused a power outage, they added. Health officials said they had refused orders by the Zionist army, which started a new incursion into the territory's north over two weeks ago, to evacuate the three hospitals in the area or leave the patients unattended.

Troops remained outside the hospital but did not enter, they said. Medics at a second hospital, Kamal

Adwan, reported heavy Zionist fire near the hospital at night. "The army is burning the schools next to the hospital, and no one can enter or leave the hospital," said one nurse at the Indonesian Hospital, who asked not to be named. Palestinian health officials said at least 18 people had been killed in Jabalia and eight elsewhere in Gaza in Zionist strikes.

The Zionist entity has intensified its campaigns both in Gaza and Lebanon after the killing of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar last week had raised hopes of an opening for ceasefire talks to end more than a year of conflict. "We are facing death by bombs, by thirst and hunger," said Raed, a resident of Jabalia camp. "Jabalia is being wiped out and there is no witness to the crime, the world is blinding its eyes." The Zionist entity claims that its attacks are aimed at "terrorists and terrorist infrastructure."

Forced to live in toilets

Hadeel Obeid, a supervisor nurse at the Indonesian hospital, said they were running out of medical supplies, including sterile gauze and medications. The water supply has been cut off and there was no food for the fourth consecutive day, she told Reuters. The United Nations said it had been unable to reach the three hospitals in northern Gaza. The UN Human

Rights Office accused Zionist forces of unlawful interference with humanitarian assistance and issuing orders that were causing forced displacement. It said their conduct "may be causing the destruction of the Palestinian population in Gaza's northernmost governorate through death and displacement". UNRWA'S Lazzarini said injured people were lying without care in hospitals that had been hit. "UNRWA remaining shelters are so overcrowded, some displaced people are now forced to live in the toilets," he said.

Residents and medics said Zionist forces had tightened their siege on Jabalia by positioning tanks in nearby Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahiya towns and ordering residents to leave. Zionist officials said evacuation orders were aimed at separating Hamas fighters from civilians and denied there was any systematic plan to clear out civilians. It said forces operating in northern Gaza killed scores of Hamas gunmen and dismantled infrastructure.

Hamas accused the Zionist entity of carrying out acts of "genocide and ethnic cleansing" to force people to leave northern Gaza. The Hamas armed wing said fighters attacked forces there with anti-tank rockets and mortar fire, and detonated bombs against troops inside tanks and stationed in houses. — Reuters

WHO to evacuate 1,000 Gazan women, children for urgent care

COPENHAGEN: Up to 1,000 women and children needing medical care will shortly be evacuated from Gaza to Europe, the head of the World Health Organization's Europe branch said in comments published on Monday. The Zionist entity, which is besieging the Palestinian territory, "is committed to 1,000 more medical evacuations within the next months to the European Union," Hans Kluge said in an interview with AFP. He said the evacuations would be facilitated by the WHO — the United Nations' health agency — and the European countries involved.

On Thursday, UN investigators said the Zionist entity was deliberately targeting health facilities in Gaza, and killing and torturing medical personnel there, accusing the country of "crimes against humanity". Rik Peepkorn, WHO representative in the occupied Palestinian territories, said in May that around 10,000 people needed evacuating from Gaza for urgent medical care. The WHO Europe has already facilitated 600 medical evacuations from Gaza to seven European countries since the latest war began there in October 2023. "This would never have happened if we did not keep the dialogue (open)," Kluge said. "The most important medicine is peace," he said, noting that healthcare workers had to be allowed to do their jobs in conflict zones.

'Outrage every time'

Around 2,000 attacks have been registered on health centers in Ukraine since Russia's invasion in February 2022, according to the WHO. "There may be a kind of acceptance almost but this should cause outrage every single time," he said. "We will always continue to condemn this in the strongest possible terms." Kluge expressed concern ahead of Ukraine's third winter of war. "Eighty percent of the civilian energy grid is damaged or destroyed. We saw it in the hospitals, surgeons operating with a lamp on their heads," he said. "It will be a very, very tough" winter. Despite strains on Europe's healthcare systems, he said the 53 countries that make up the WHO European region — which includes central Asian countries — were able to come together to prepare for future pandemics. "In Europe, we did our homework," he said.

"What we need is a pandemic treaty globally, because even if we do our share, we're never going to stop bugs entering our continent." A European strategy for pandemics is due to be presented on October 31. At the same time, the WHO is urging its members to "manage and prepare for the next crisis, while ensuring continuation of essential basic health services" in order to avoid another "rupture" like that which occurred during the COVID pandemic. Ensuring the security of national health care systems is crucial and should be a priority, he said. — AFP



CANBERRA: Australian Senator Lidia Thorpe disrupts proceedings as King Charles III and Queen Camilla attend a Parliamentary reception at Parliament House in Canberra on October 21, 2024. — AFP photos



King Charles III reacts as he is introduced to an alpaca named Hephner.

Indigenous Australian senator accuses King Charles of genocide

CANBERRA: King Charles was accused of "genocide" by an Indigenous senator at Australia's Parliament House on Monday, moments after he delivered a speech in which he paid his "respects to the traditional owners of the lands". Charles, on his 16th official visit to Australia and his first major foreign trip since being diagnosed with cancer, had finished speaking when independent senator and Indigenous activist Lidia Thorpe shouted that she did not accept Charles' sovereignty over Australia.

"You are not our King. You are not our sovereign. You committed genocide against our people," she said. "Give us our land back. Give us what you stole from us — our bones, our skulls, our babies, our people. You

destroyed our land. Give us a treaty. We want treaty."

Thorpe, who has disrupted previous events protesting over the colonization of Australia, was stopped from approaching the king, who spoke quietly to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on the podium but was otherwise unfazed. Thorpe was then escorted out of the chamber. Thorpe has said the incarceration and violence caused by colonization can only end with a national treaty between the government and Indigenous people to address First Nations' issues. Throughout her career, Thorpe has also been vocal in support of Palestine and the fight of all indigenous people against colonization.

An alpaca in a suit

The protest was an outlier among a stream of tributes to Charles and Queen Camilla from dignitaries and well-wishers in the crowds, with Albanese speaking about the respect Australians had for their monarch and praising Charles for his long advocacy on climate change. His speech made only a passing

reference to the republican cause, which Albanese and much of his center-left Labor party support. "The Australia you first knew has grown and evolved in so many ways," he said. "Yet through these decades of change, our bonds of respect and affection have matured — and endured." Albanese shelved plans for a referendum on turning Australia into a republic after a government-backed referendum to create an Indigenous advisory body was defeated earlier this year.

The visit to parliament followed a trip to the Australian War Memorial in Canberra where the royal couple met more than a thousand well-wishers including Hephner, a nine-year old alpaca in a suit with a crown perched atop his fluffy white head. Hephner, named after Playboy founder Hugh Hefner, waited for hours alongside owner Robert Fletcher and long lines of others outside the memorial for the chance to greet the royal couple on their one-day tour of the capital. "He has many outfits and this is one we've saved specifically for today," said Fletcher. "One king meets another king." — Agencies

International

Harris, Trump in dead heat across swing states: Poll

Washington Post/Schar School survey shows 2 candidates neck and neck in the 7 battleground states

Political violence roils US ahead of contentious election

WASHINGTON: In York, Pennsylvania, a man accosted a group of people rallying for Vice President Kamala Harris' White House campaign, punching a 74-year-old man in the head and calling another man a "n — supporter" as he fled. In northern Michigan, an assailant enraged by his hatred of Donald Trump used an all-terrain vehicle to run over and injure an 81-year-old man who was putting up a yard sign for the former president's reelection bid.

The recent attacks were among at least 300 cases of political violence identified by Reuters since Trump's supporters stormed the US Capitol on January 6, 2021, including at least 51 incidents this year. With just two weeks to go before the November 5 presidential election, the cases are part of the biggest and most sustained increase in US political violence since the 1970s.

Some of the violence has been reported widely, most notably two assassination attempts on Trump, a Republican. Other high-profile incidents include three shootings in recent weeks at a Democratic campaign office for Harris in Arizona. But Reuters documented scores of other cases on contentious political issues — from election disputes to the Zionist-Palestinian war. Incidents ranged from small fights over political signs to more violent brawls and property destruction at rallies. Most of this year's violence wasn't fatal with the exception of two deaths: a spectator killed during July's attempt on Trump's life and the shooter.

The pace of cases has remained remarkably consistent since beginning to rise in 2016, around the time of Trump's first presidential run. In 2021, which included the tumult that followed Trump's efforts to overturn the 2020 election, there were 93 cases of political violence, followed by 79 in 2022, and 76 in 2023.

Political extremism experts warn that the charged atmosphere around the 2024 presidential election has created a highly volatile situation. Trump in particular often uses incendiary rhetoric, threatening to put his political enemies on trial and to deploy the military against the "radical left", calling them "the enemy within." Americans are starting to see violence as "part of the way politics happens," said Nealin Parker, who heads Common Ground USA, a nonprofit that studies ways to bridge America's political and cultural divides. In the current climate of mistrust, she added, "incidents of violence can metastasize into something bigger."

Robert Pape, a University of Chicago professor who studies political violence, expressed concern over the prospect of post-election violence in battleground states, where the margin of victory could be a few thousand votes. He likened it to "a wildfire season" with lots of "dry combustible material" and the "potential for lightning strikes." — Reuters

Zionists bomb finance group...

Continued from Page 1

It is sanctioned by the United States, which accuses Hezbollah of using it as a cover to mask the group's financial activities and gain access to the international financial system.

On Sunday, 11 strikes hit Beirut's southern suburbs, NNA reported, many of them targeting Al-Qard Al-Hassan. At the site of a flattened building housing a branch of Al-Qard Al-Hassan in south Beirut, AFP photographers saw a pile of concrete and mangled metal. Just a month ago, south Beirut's bustling streets were packed with traffic, families strolling about and youths in cafes. Now silence dominates the abandoned Hezbollah bastion.

Other strikes hit Al-Qard Al-Hassan branches in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa Valley and in the country's south. The NNA also reported a strike near Beirut's airport, the main entry point of humanitarian assistance to the country and a major evacuation hub for those fleeing the conflict. According to the Zionist military, dozens of projectiles were launched across the border Monday morning.

The Zionist entity shifted its focus to Lebanon late last month, while it fought a devastating war in Gaza. The Zionist entity launched a massive air campaign

Trump hands out fries at photo op...

Continued from Page 1

Thousands of people lined the street opposite the restaurant to watch. Famously a germophobe, Trump marveled at the serving tool used to distribute the fried potatoes without picking them up: "It's clean, it's really nice, you never touch 'em."

"I'll never forget this experience," he said, as he finished up the campaign stop meant to appeal to working-class voters. "It requires expertise. I'm go-

WASHINGTON: Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump remain in a tight contest across seven battleground states with just over two weeks until the November 5 US presidential election, a Washington Post/Schar School opinion poll showed on Monday. Democratic former prosecutor Harris led among likely voters in Georgia 51 percent to 47 percent, while Republican Trump was slightly ahead in Arizona with 49 percent to 46 percent. Both findings fell within the plus or minus 4.5 percentage points margin of error in the poll, which surveyed 5,016 registered voters from September 30 to October 15.

Harris, who became the party's candidate after President Joe Biden stepped aside in July, also had an edge in Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin — three states where she will campaign later on Monday with Republican former US Representative Liz Cheney. Trump led in North Carolina and was tied with Harris in Nevada 48 percent to 48 percent, according to the poll. The former president will hold a rally in North Carolina later on Monday after surveying recent damage from Hurricane Helene.

Harris celebrates birthday, takes jab at Trump in Georgia

LANCASTER: Kamala Harris turned 60 on Sunday in the final stretch of a knife-edge US election, making campaign stops at black churches in Georgia as her 78-year-old opponent Donald Trump served fries at a Pennsylvania McDonald's in a bid to earn working-class credibility. Throughout the day Harris lambasted Trump's increasingly disparaging, dark language on the trail, saying in an interview on MSNBC that Americans "deserve so much better." "Donald Trump should never again stand behind the seal of the president of the United States. He has not earned the right," Harris said.

Recently Trump has likened undocumented migrants to animals, threatened revenge against his perceived enemies, praised autocrats like Vladimir Putin of Russia and described America as a ruined nation only he can fix. And over the weekend he used an expletive to describe Harris. Speaking at a Baptist megachurch near Atlanta, the Democrat urged a black congregation to embrace compassionate values while others "spread hate, sow fear and cause chaos." She also appeared alongside Stevie Wonder, who sang Harris his rendition of "Happy Birthday" while urging voters to "think about more than yourself when you vote." Georgia is among the key states expected to decide the November 5 election.

McDonald's center stage

With just over two weeks before Election Day, the Democratic vice president and the Republican billionaire are in a fierce, split-screen race. On Sunday Trump was all smiles as he scooped fries at a McDonald's franchise outside of Philadelphia, donning a black-and-yellow apron over his white shirt and red tie. The campaign stop was intended as a jab at Harris, who has talked about working at the fast-food chain in her youth.

Trump has repeatedly said, without offering evidence, that Harris never worked at a McDonald's. A friend of Harris' told The New York Times she recalled her having worked there. "I don't mind this job," said Trump during his brief stint as a server, at one point asking if customers ever ask for more salt. "I love salt!"

that has primarily focused on Hezbollah strongholds across Lebanon, and sent ground troops across the border on Oct 30. It has vowed to keep fighting in Lebanon until Zionists displaced by the cross-border fire can return to their homes.

The conflict has put the United Nations peacekeeping force, UNIFIL, on the frontline, with the Blue Helmets accusing the Zionist entity of attacking their members multiple times in recent weeks. UNIFIL said the Zionist army had on Sunday "deliberately" damaged one of its positions, the latest in a series of incidents reported by the force that have sparked international condemnation.

Zionist Foreign Minister Israel Katz has said the Zionist entity has "no intention" of harming the peacekeepers. US special envoy Amos Hochstein was in Lebanon on Monday to meet Lebanon's prime minister, who is pushing for a ceasefire, and Hezbollah-allied parliament speaker Nabih Berri, who is tasked with negotiating on behalf of the militants.

In northern Gaza, the civil defense agency on Sunday said a Zionist air strike on a residential area killed 87 Palestinians Saturday in Beit Lahia. The Zionist entity, vowing to stop Hamas fighters from regrouping in the north of the Palestinian territory, launched a major air and ground assault on Oct 6 this year. Tens of thousands of people are estimated to have fled the assault, and according to the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, around 400,000 people were trapped in northern Gaza last week. — AFP

ing through the french fry stuff. I don't mind this job," he continued, at one point asking if customers ever ask for more salt. "I love salt!" he exclaimed, also throwing some over his shoulder onto the floor, explaining that he is "superstitious".

Told by reporters that Sunday was also his opponent Harris' 60th birthday, Trump wished her a "happy birthday". "I think I'll get her some flowers," he quipped. "Maybe I'll get her some fries." Harris spokesman Ian Sams told Reuters that the stunt was a sign of the real estate mogul's desperation. "All he knows how to do is lie," he said. "He can't understand what it's like to have a summer job because he was handed millions on a silver platter, only to blow it." — Agencies

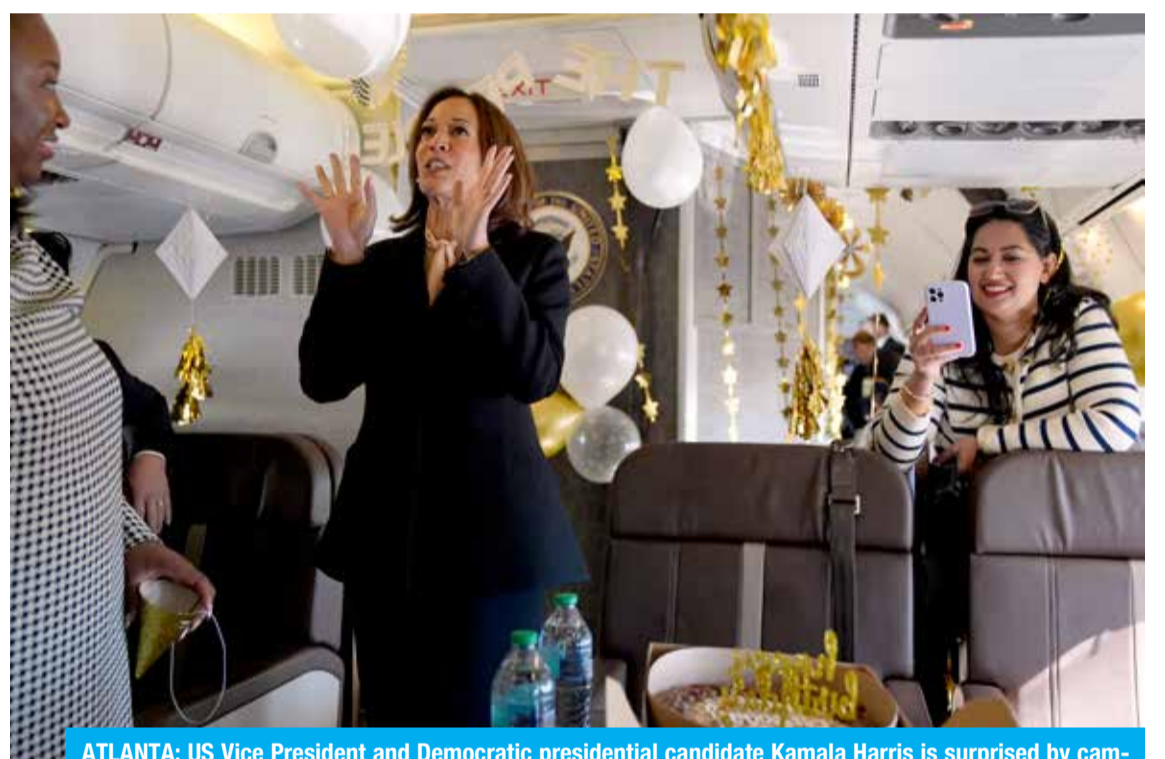


Kamala Harris and Donald Trump are seen in this combination photo. — AFP

Trump, 78, is making his third consecutive White House bid after losing to Biden in 2020. He continues to falsely blame widespread voter fraud and faces federal and state criminal charges over efforts to overturn the election results, among other charges.

Trump has denied any wrongdoing. Harris, 60, is a former San Francisco prosecutor, state attorney general and US senator seeking to rebuild the party's diverse coalition of young voters, women and people of color as well as pick up some Republicans disillusioned with Trump.

Monday's findings from the Post and George Mason University's Schar School of Policy and Government echoed other recent polls that found a neck and neck race in the seven battleground states ahead of Election Day on November 5, even as Harris holds an edge nationwide, according to some surveys. Overall, 49 percent of likely voters said they support Harris and 48 percent backed Trump, the Post poll showed. Among registered voters, Reuters/Ipsos polling last week found Harris holding a steady, marginal 45 percent to 42 percent lead over Trump. However, state-by-state results of the Electoral College will determine the winner of November's contest. The seven battleground states are likely to be decisive, with surveys of their likely voters offering an indication of the race so far. — Reuters



ATLANTA: US Vice President and Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris is surprised by campaign staff with birthday decorations before departing Atlanta on October 20, 2024. — AFP

he exclaimed, also throwing some over his shoulder onto the floor, explaining that he is "superstitious." Told by reporters that Sunday was also Harris' birthday, Trump wished her well. "I think I'll get her some flowers," he quipped. "Maybe I'll get her some fries."

Test of endurance

Both candidates are spending their final campaign days in pivotal states, as are their surrogates. Tesla and SpaceX boss Elon Musk has been stumping for Trump, while Harris taps pop star power, with singers Lizzo and Usher making Saturday appearances for her. Shawn Fain — head of the United Auto Workers, one of the most influential unions in the country — appeared in Pennsylvania on behalf of Harris, telling rural voters in the large battleground state that "Trump is bought and paid for by Musk" and that the Republicans can't simply buy support from work-

ing-class voters. "The billionaires have the money. They can throw all the money they want in the election, but working-class people have the votes, and votes are the great equalizer in this fight," Fain said.

In the lead-up to her birthday, Harris increasingly raised questions about Trump's fitness to be president. "He's ducking debates and canceling interviews because of exhaustion," Harris told an Atlanta rally Saturday, mocking his rambling, off-script speeches.

The former president has surprised attendees at his rallies with sometimes bizarre references, including a ribald reference to the anatomy of a famous golfer. Trump on Sunday insisted his age wasn't slowing him down, telling a Pennsylvania town hall that "we've had some of the greatest leaders in world history that are in their 80s." His age and spontaneous remarks have not appeared to be a deal-breaker for voters, as polls show a close battle ahead. — AFP

Erdogan rival Gulen dies in...

Continued from Page 1

In Germany, home to Europe's largest Turkish diaspora of three million people, a Hizmet spokesman said Gulen's death would not affect its work with up to 100,000 members and its management of some 250 associations. Although Gulen had wanted to be buried in the western Turkish city of Izmir, there was no chance Ankara would let his body be repatriated, meaning he would likely be interred in Pennsylvania, he said.

Turkey still regularly rounds up Gulen followers and demands their extradition from countries where Hizmet is active. Despite Gulen's death, Turkey would continue to "fight against this organization, which poses a national security problem", Justice Minister Yilmaz Tunc wrote on X.

But Balci said Hizmet "no longer represents any threat" as it was "no longer the big movement it once was" with its network of schools now reduced to just a handful operating mainly in Germany, the United States, Nigeria and South Africa. "The community is no longer as strong: It concentrates mainly on helping the victims of the (Erdogan regime's) repression," he said. "It's over and they know it."

21,190 visa violators...

Continued from Page 1

In addition to a prison sentence of up to five years, the financial penalty has been raised significantly — from a previous maximum of KD 500 to a range between KD 1,000 and KD 5,000.

A key addition in the legislation holds officials accountable if they approve, witness or remain silent about acts of torture, provided they had the authority to intervene. Furthermore, the penalty will be increased if the act is committed based on any form of discrimination, irrespective of its nature or cause.

The ministry of justice collaborated closely with the ministry of foreign affairs to draft the amendments, re-

Known to his supporters as Hodjaefendi, or respected teacher, Gulen was born in a village in the eastern Turkish province of Erzurum in 1941. The son of an imam, he studied the Holy Quran from infancy. In 1959, Gulen was appointed as a mosque imam in the northwestern city of Edirne and came to prominence as a preacher in the 1960s in the western province of Izmir, where he set up student dormitories and would go to tea houses to preach.

These student houses marked the start of an informal network which would spread in coming decades through education, business, media and state institutions. His influence also spread beyond Turkey's borders to the Turkic republics of Central Asia, the Balkans, Africa and the West through a network of schools. Fidan said he hoped Gulen's death would lift a "spell" over Turkish youth who had taken a path of "betrayal" against their country under the pretense of religious values. "This is not a good road," he added.

Ankara long sought to have him extradited from the United States. Speaking in his gated compound in Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains, Gulen said in a 2017 Reuters interview he had no plans to flee the United States to avoid extradition. Even then, he appeared frail, keeping his longtime doctor close at hand. — Agencies

flecting Kuwait's dedication to aligning national legislation with the UN Convention against Torture and other human rights agreements. "This legislative effort promotes human rights, basic freedoms and human dignity in line with Kuwait's constitution," Wasmi emphasized.

Separately, the court of appeals on Monday reduced a four-year jail term against former National Assembly elections candidate Musaed Al-Qraifa to two years and then suspended its implementation for three years against pledging good conduct. Qraifa was arrested late April and sent to court on charges of undermining the authority of HHH the Amir and abusing the interior minister during an election campaign ahead of the April 4 general polls.

He was sentenced by the criminal court to four years in jail. The appeals court on Sept 30 decided to free him on bail and set Oct 21 as the date to issue its verdict. Now, the case goes to the cassation court, the country's top court whose rulings are final.

International

India, China reach pact to resolve border conflict

Deal would help defuse 4-year stand off which strained ties, business interactions

NEW DELHI: India and China have reached a deal on patrolling their disputed frontier to end a four-year military stand-off, the Indian foreign minister said on Monday, paving the way for improved political and business ties between the Asian giants. The news came on the eve of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Russia for an October 22-24 summit of the BRICS regional grouping, during which he could hold talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Indian officials said. Relations between the world's two most populous nations — both nuclear powers — have been strained since clashes between their troops on the largely undemarcated frontier in the western Himalayas left 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers dead in 2020.

The two sides had since stopped patrolling several points along the border in the Ladakh region to avoid new confrontations, while moving tens of thousands of new troops and military equipment closer to the freezing highlands. "We reached an agreement on patrolling, and with that we have gone back to where the situation was in 2020 and we can say ... the disengagement process with China has been completed," Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said at a NDTV media conclave.

The "understanding was reached only today," he said, adding: "We always said that if you disturb the peace and tranquility how can the rest of the relationship go forward?" To avoid clashes, the two militaries will patrol contested points along the border according to an agreed schedule, a senior Indian military officer aware of the details told Reuters. Both sides will monitor the area in Ladakh

to ensure that there are no violations, the officer added. Authorities in Beijing offered no immediate response to India's remarks.

Regular review, monitoring

Officials in New Delhi said the pact clears the path for a likely bilateral meeting between Modi and Xi on the sidelines of the BRICS summit, which will be their first since 2020. The senior military officer said that both sides would pull back their troops a little from current positions to avoid face-offs, but would be allowed to patrol these areas according to a schedule that is being worked out. Monthly review meetings and regular monitoring of the contested areas by both sides would ensure there are no violations, he added. Deependra Singh Hooda, a retired senior Indian army officer who was a commander for a part of the China frontier, said that while the two sides would need fresh confidence-building measures, "at least the impasse has been broken".

Slow progress during talks over the last four years to end the stand-off damaged business ties between the two large economies, with New Delhi tightening scrutiny of investment by Chinese firms and halting major projects. India's tougher vetting of all Chinese investment after the clashes effectively turned away billions of dollars from the likes of carmakers BYD and Great Wall Motor, and added more red tape in Indian firms' interactions with Chinese stakeholders.

However, Indian imports from China have surged 56 percent since the 2020 border clash, nearly doubling New Delhi's trade deficit with Beijing to \$85 billion. China remains India's biggest source of

at a time of economic uncertainty and increasing tension with neighbors China, Russia and North Korea.

'Tough' election

A Kyodo News survey on Saturday and Sunday put the current approval rating for Ishiba's cabinet at 41.4 percent, down from 42 percent a week earlier. The disapproval rating was 40.4 percent in the most recent survey of some 1,260 voters, Kyodo said Sunday. Disapproval in the October 12-13 poll was 36.7 percent. "This election will be really tough and difficult for us," Ishiba told voters in a campaign speech last week.

A separate weekend survey by the liberal-leaning Asahi Shimbun newspaper found public support for Ishiba's cabinet at 33 percent, below 39 percent who disapproved. Those results are worse than Kishida faced in 2021 ahead of his first general election as premier: 42 percent approval against 31 percent disapproval, the Asahi said. The daily said its polls indicated that the LDP and its junior coalition partner Komeito ran the risk of losing a majority in the upcoming vote. Jiji Press said its polls and reporting showed the coalition was likely to retain its majority, although the LDP may not pass the threshold on its own — a possibility reflected in several previous polls by other outlets.

The LDP has ruled Japan for almost all of the post-war era, and holds a majority in the 465-seat lower house. Its long-time coalition partner is Komeito, a party backed by a large Buddhist lay group that has often lent crucial cam-



LADAKH: Indian army soldiers walk along a road near Zojila mountain pass that connects Srinagar to the union territory of Ladakh, bordering China on February 28, 2021. — AFP

goods and was its largest supplier of industrial products last year. Asked about the impact of Monday's pact on trade with and investment from China,

Jaishankar said: "It has just happened. There will be meetings to see what the next steps will be. I wouldn't go so fast." — Reuters

Japan PM facing lukewarm approval ahead of election

TOKYO: Japan's general election on Sunday will be a test for new prime minister Shigeru Ishiba, who is seeking to solidify his position atop a scandal-plagued party. His gamble to call a snap election after winning a close-fought contest last month to lead the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) could backfire in a fluid election, however, as opinion polls show the party could cede seats to the opposition. Ishiba inherited a fractured party struggling to shake off a scandal over undocumented funds after predecessor Fumio Kishida cleared out tainted ministers, disbanded influential factions and stepped down himself, in a bid to regain public trust. But Ishiba still appears to be fighting an uphill battle. While some polls project the LDP and its coalition partner Komeito will maintain their majority, a weekend poll by the Asahi newspaper showed they may struggle, with the LDP potentially losing 50 of the 247 seats it now has. If Ishiba misses his own target of retaining a majority for the ruling coalition, questions are likely to be asked about his capability as premier

South Korea summons Russian envoy to protest North's troop dispatch

SEOUL: South Korea's foreign ministry summoned the Russian ambassador in Seoul on Monday to protest over what it has called the sending of North Korean troops to Russia for deployment in Ukraine. The Kremlin declined to directly answer a query on whether North Korean troops were going to fight in Ukraine but spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Moscow's cooperation with Pyongyang was not directed against third countries. South Korea's first vice foreign minister Kim Hong-kyun called in Russian ambassador Georgy Zinoviev and urged the immediate withdrawal of North Korean soldiers from Russia, the ministry said in a statement.

The Kremlin has previously dismissed South Korean assertions that North Korea may have sent some military personnel to help Russia against Ukraine. Kim said the participation of North Korean troops in the war in Ukraine violated UN resolutions and the UN charter and posed serious threats to the security of South Korea and beyond. "We condemn North Korea's illegal military cooperation, including its dispatch of troops to Russia, in the strongest terms," the ministry quoted Kim as saying. "We will respond jointly with the international community by mobilizing all available means against acts that threaten our core security interests."

Zinoviev told Kim that cooperation between Moscow and Pyongyang was in line with international law and was not directed against the security interests of South Korea, the Russian embassy said in a Facebook post.

South Korea's spy agency said last week that North Korea had shipped 1,500 special forces troops to Russia's Far East for training and acclimatizing at local military bases and that they were likely to be deployed for combat in the war in Ukraine. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has accused Pyongyang of preparing to send 10,000 soldiers to Russia, and on Sunday called for strong reaction from countries.

'Dangerous development'

The United States said on Friday it could not confirm reports that North Korean troops were fighting but said that if true, it would be a "dangerous development" in Russia's war against Ukraine. South Korea's defense ministry said on Monday that Seoul had consulted Washington ahead of the spy agency's announcement, and condemned what it called the North's illegal involvement in Ukraine and urged an immediate halt.

NATO chief Mark Rutte, after a phone call on Monday with South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, said on social media platform X that if North Korea were to send troops to Ukraine to fight on Russia's behalf it would significantly escalate the conflict. Yoon's office said he agreed with Rutte's suggestion for Seoul to send a government delegation to NATO to share more information about North Korea's moves. Lin Jian, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson, said Beijing hoped that all parties would work to de-escalate the situation. Both Russia and North Korea have denied arms transfers but have pledged to boost military ties, signing a mutual defense treaty at a summit in June. — Reuters



JAMMU: Family members of a victim, who was killed in an attack on a construction site, mourn his death at their residence in Jammu on October 21, 2024. — AFP photos



SRINAGAR: Relatives and mourners carry the body of a doctor, a day after he was killed in the attack, during his funeral procession at Budgam district in Srinagar on October 21, 2024.

Gunmen kill doctor, migrant workers, in India's Kashmir

SRINAGAR: At least six migrant workers and a doctor were shot dead in India's Kashmir region on Sunday night when militants opened fire near a tunnel construction site, officials said, days after a new government was formed in the territory. An opposition alliance took power in the region this month after winning the first polls in a decade, and the first since its special status was revoked and it was split into two federally administered

territories — Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

The victims of Sunday's attack were involved in the construction of tunnels meant to provide all-weather connectivity to the militarily strategic Ladakh region, which shares a border with China and Pakistan. "At least two armed militants barged into the mess of the private construction company and fired at workers who were dining," said a senior police officer who did not want to be named. Six workers and a doctor working for the company were killed and five other people were injured in the attack, he said.

The Resistance Front (TRF), which Indian authorities believe is an offshoot of Pakistani Islamist militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba, claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement circulating on social media. Reuters was not able to independently verify the

"The people of Moldova have spoken: our EU future will now be anchored in the constitution. We fought fairly in an unfair fight — and we won," the 52-year-old leader wrote on X. At a presidential election held alongside the referendum, Sandu won 42 percent, short of the 50 percent needed to win outright and paving the way for a tightly-fought November 3 runoff against former prosecutor-general Alexandr Stoianoglo, who won 26 percent.

Earlier, Sandu had told Moldovans there was "clear evidence" that criminal groups working with "foreign forces hostile to our national interests" had aimed to buy off 300,000 votes. "Criminal groups ... have attacked our country with tens of millions of euros, lies and propaganda, using the most disgraceful means to keep our citizens and our nation trapped in uncertainty and instability," she said. In the runup to the vote, authorities said there had been Moscow-backed meddling attempts spearheaded by fugitive tycoon Ilan Shor, including an effort to buy up

authenticity of the statement. India's Interior Minister Amit Shah, in a post on X, said those behind the attack "will not be spared and will face the harshest response from our security forces".

Kashmir is claimed in full but ruled in part by both India and Pakistan, and militants in the portion under India's control have for decades fought security forces, resulting in the deaths of thousands of people. At least nine soldiers were killed in two separate militant attacks in July, barely a month after Prime Minister Narendra Modi took charge for a third term. Non-Kashmiri workers employed in orchards, paddy fields and construction sites in Kashmir have previously been targeted by militant groups aiming to drive them away. A bullet-riddled body of a laborer from the eastern state of Bihar had been recovered from Kashmir's Shopian region last week. — Reuters

130,000 people to vote "no" and support a specific candidate at the election. Shor denies wrongdoing.

The Kremlin, which denies interfering, denounced the votes in Moldova as "unfree", casting doubt on what it said was a "hard-to-explain" increase in votes in favor of Sandu and the EU, and challenging her to "present evidence" of meddling. The EU defended Sandu, saying Moldova had faced "really unprecedented intimidation and foreign interference by Russia and its proxies ahead of this vote".

Shor, the 37-year old accused of vote meddling, was born in Tel Aviv, in the Zionist entity on March 6, 1987, but his family returned to Moldova in the 1990s. His father, Miron Shor, was a businessman with interests in duty-free and travel retail, among others. When his father died in 2005, then 18-year-old Shor took over the family business 'ShorHolding' and expanded its reach, buying TV stations, an insurance company, and the Moldovan soccer team, FC Milsami Orhei. — Reuters

Tycoon with Zionist roots allegedly interferes in Moldova's EU referendum

CHISINAU: President Maia Sandu said on Monday Moldovans had won a "first battle in a difficult fight" for their future, a day after a slim majority of 50.4 percent backed EU accession at a referendum that has been roiled by allegations of Russia-backed meddling. The knife-edge finish was a shock for supporters of Sandu who hoped the vote would deliver a firm message of intent to bring the poor ex-Soviet agricultural economy into the European Union by 2030 and leave Moscow's orbit for good. But the result means a clause will be added to the constitution defining EU accession as a goal. Moldova began the long process of formal accession talks in June.



SEOUL: A man reads a newspaper displayed on a street for the public in Seoul on October 21, 2024, showing a photo (left) of Kim Jong Un and Vladimir Putin toasting at a banquet in Pyongyang. — AFP

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2024

KFH reports net profit of KD 482.9 million up to end of Q3 2024, an increase of 4.6%

Earnings per share reached 29.62 fils, a growth of 4.8%



Hamad Al-Marzouq

- Record profits are the highest in the Kuwaiti banking sector
- KFH's support for development plans stems from its leading national role and prestigious economic position
- MSCI Index "A" Rating for Exceptional ESG Performance
- KFH Group demonstrates potential to enhance the future of Islamic finance in the world



Abdulwahab Al-Rushood

- Profits confirm stability and robust solvency
- KFH reaps the fruits of its successful strategic plan
- We continue our efforts in sustainability and promoting financial inclusion and green finance products
- Global reach with 640 branches in 12 different countries

KUWAIT: Chairman of Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Hamad Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq announced that KFH has, by the grace of Allah, achieved a net profit for its shareholders of KD 482.9 million (\$1.58 billion) up to the end of the third quarter of 2024, an increase of 4.6 percent compared to the same period last year. The profits up to the end of the third quarter of 2024 are the highest in the Kuwaiti banking sector. Earnings per share up to the end of Q3 2024 reached 29.62 fils; an increase of 4.8 percent compared to the same period last year.

Net financing income up to the end of Q3 2024 reached KD 835.1 million; an increase of 17.0 percent compared to the same period last year. Total operating income up to the end of Q3 2024 increased, supported by an increase in all core activities to reach nearly KD 1.2 billion; an increase of 6.9 percent compared to the same period last year. Net operating income up to the end of Q3 2024 increased to reach KD 754.0 million; an increase of 1.9 percent compared to the same period last year.

Financing receivables as of the end of Q3 2024 reached KD 19.1 billion, affected by the sale of Kuwait Finance House - Bahrain, as well as the impact of foreign currency fluctuations during the current period. Total assets as of the end of Q3 2024 amounted to KD 36.3 billion. Shareholders' equity amounted to about KD 5.4 billion as of the end of Q3 2024. Depositors' accounts as of the end of Q3 2024 amounted to KD 19.9 billion.

In addition, the capital adequacy ratio reached 17.68 percent which is above the limit required by regulators. This ratio confirms the solid capital base of KFH.

Exceptional financial results

Al-Marzouq highlighted that KFH has achieved record financial results by the end of the third quarter of 2024, with growth in the main indicators. This success is attributed to the strong performance and disciplined implementation of KFH's strategy, along with a cautious approach to risk management. The bank has also focused on diversifying the financing portfolio, boosting the capital base, and improving the quality of assets to ensure KFH's ongoing financial strength and solid creditworthiness.

Al-Marzouq added that the record financial results were achieved in conjunction with the completion of the

merger between KFH and (formerly) AUBK, the largest in Kuwaiti banking history. This marks the beginning of a new successful phase for KFH. The merger has become a successful model in the region, creating a major financial entity in the Islamic finance industry locally, regionally, and globally. It solidified KFH's position as a benchmark in the industry and set the stage for its goal to be listed among the top 100 banks in the world.

Successful conversion

Al-Marzouq explained that KFH Group has demonstrated its capability in advancing the future of Islamic finance worldwide. He highlighted the rapid and successful conversion of the operations of AUB-Bahrain, AUB -UK, and AUB-Egypt to sharia-compliant banking services. This supports KFH Group's strategy to contribute to expanding the Islamic finance sector on a local, regional, and global scale.

Supporting Kuwaiti businesses

Al-Marzouq emphasized that KFH's support for Kuwaiti businesses and development plans stems from its significant national role and its distinguished economic position as Kuwait's largest bank by market capitalization, the world's second-largest Islamic bank, and a highly competent, financially stable, and experienced institution. He noted that KFH's financing activities have diversified across various sectors, including oil, petrochemicals, energy projects, infrastructure, startups, environmentally friendly ventures, and real estate development. KFH has been a strategic partner in funding all major development projects.

Al-Marzouq stressed KFH's commitment to a transparent framework aimed at creating a more sustainable banking model that incorporates environmental, social, and governance (ESG) aspects. He highlighted the ongoing progress of sustainability initiatives at KFH, with a focus on achieving new milestones and further integrating sustainable practices into the bank's operations to support its growth. Al-Marzouq also underscored the bank's commitment to enhancing financial inclusion and promoting green financing products as part of its sustainability efforts.

KFH's addition to the FTSE4Good Index Series for emerging markets highlights the increasing focus of KFH on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) stan-

dards. The bank also achieved an "A" rating on the MSCI ESG Index due to its strong commitment to ESG practices. Additionally, KFH was recognized for having the top ESG risk assessment on the Sustainalytics Index, receiving a score of 24.7, the highest among Kuwaiti banks.

Societal leadership

Al-Marzouq confirmed KFH's commitment to upholding its role as a leading example of social responsibility and maintaining its status as a respected national financial institution that fulfills a societal purpose and actively participates in executing numerous strategic community projects.

KFH's Acting Group Chief Executive Officer, Abdulwahab Iesa Al-Rushood stated that the bank's financial results up to the third quarter of 2024 demonstrate the stability and robust solvency of KFH. He added that the bank's successful strategic plan and high-quality assets have enabled it to maintain profitability and strengthen its financial position. This success validates KFH's vision and business plan, which focus on sustainable profits, promoting financial position, improving cost-to-income ratios, managing bad debts, increasing operating income, and bolstering liquidity and capital adequacy ratios.

A giant banking group

Al-Rushood commended KFH for its distinguished status as a giant banking entity that attains sustainable profits, competitive performance, and international presence across approximately 640 branches in 12 countries, notably including Kuwait, Bahrain, Turkey, Egypt, Britain, and Germany. He noted that KFH surpasses all other Kuwaiti banks and companies listed on Boursa Kuwait in terms of market capitalization, which exceeds KD 12 billion.

Digital transformation journey

Al-Rushood shed light on KFH's achievements in digital transformation and improving customer experience to meet their evolving needs. This was achieved by continuing collaboration with fintech companies, developing technological infrastructure, integrating artificial intelligence into global operations, and ensuring that all services and products offered to customers meet high standards of speed, quality, and security. Al-Rushood highlighted Tam Bank, introduced by KFH as Kuwait's

first sharia-compliant digital bank, along with the digital payment platform Zaheb for merchants, as examples of KFH's dedication to offering top digital financial solutions to customers of various segments.

Best institution in manpower nationalization

Al-Rushood emphasized the high quality of KFH and its commitment to implementing replacement, nationalization, and training programs within the private sector in Kuwait. This recognition of KFH as the top institution for manpower nationalization in Kuwait underscores their ongoing efforts to support and enhance the skills of young graduates and experienced professionals. KFH has a comprehensive strategy in place to attract, develop, and nurture Kuwaiti talent, ensuring that individuals have the necessary skills and experience to excel in leadership roles and contribute effectively to KFH's success. He mentioned that KFH won 13 distinguished global awards in the field of Human Resources for 2024 from the renowned Brandon Hall Group.

Rankings & awards

Al-Rushood highlighted the fact that KFH continues to receive esteemed international ratings and awards, solidifying its position as a top financial institution in the region. He specifically commended KFH Group for their recent achievements, such as being awarded Kuwait's Best Bank, Kuwait's Best Digital Bank - tam digital bank, Kuwait's Best Bank for ESG by Euromoney. Additionally, KFH was recognized as the top listed company in Kuwait and ranked tenth in the Middle East by Forbes Middle East in their 2024 ranking of the top 100 listed companies. KFH has ranked first in the Kuwaiti banking sector in terms of growth and return on risk for this year's Top 100 Arab Banks Rankings from The Banker. These accomplishments, along with numerous other international awards, further establish KFH's significant role in the Islamic finance industry.

Al-Rushood expressed gratitude to shareholders and customers for their trust and to the Board for their unwavering support. He also thanked the Central Bank of Kuwait and regulatory authorities for their support to the banking system. He also expressed appreciation for the executive management and all employees for their dedication and hard work.

The highest in the Kuwaiti banking sector

Praise be to Allah

482.9 KD Million

بيت التمويل الكويتي
Kuwait Finance House



Net Profit for Shareholders until the end of Q3 - 2024

	30/09/2024	30/09/2023	%
Net Profit for Shareholders * ^{"KD Million"}	482.9	461.5	4.6
Earnings per Share * ^{"Fils"}	29.62	28.26	4.8
Net Financing Income * ^{"KD Million"}	835.1	713.9	17.0
Net Operating Income * ^{"KD Million"}	754.0	739.8	1.9
	30/09/2024	31/12/2023	%
Total Assets * ^{"KD Million"}	36,259	38,010	(4.6)
Financing Receivables * ^{"KD Million"}	19,136	19,425	(1.5)
Depositors' Accounts * ^{"KD Million"}	19,865	21,813	(8.9)
Shareholders' equity * ^{"KD Million"}	5,371	5,316	1.0

* Financing receivable and depositors' accounts decreased due to the effect of Sale "Kuwait Finance House - Bahrain", as well as the impact of foreign currency fluctuations during the current period.

Business

NBK ECONOMIC REPORT

Kuwait's economy poised to return to expansion in 2025

Oil, geopolitics and reform agenda the main outlook risks

KUWAIT: The Kuwait economy will return to expansion in 2025 led by the unwinding of earlier cuts in oil production. Non-oil GDP could grow slightly faster than in 2024 at 2.6 percent, amid interest rate cuts and signs that consumer spending growth and other metrics are edging higher. Structural reform prospects have improved, but strong delivery is needed for growth to sustainably match that in some other parts of the GCC. Fiscal deficits will continue through 2025, making another tight spending round likely next year although capex could still rise from recent very low levels. Key upside risks to the outlook include higher oil prices and clear signs of momentum on structural reforms.

Non-oil economy

Non-oil economy is expected to emerge from two years of negative growth this year, expanding by 2.3 percent and then 2.6 percent in 2025. Having decelerated previously, consumer spending growth (+5.4 percent y/y in Q2) appears to have stabilized while other key indicators such as bank credit (+2.2 percent ytd in August), real estate sales (+24 percent y/y in Q3) and project awards have moved up, suggesting that a growth improvement could be around the corner.

Official data (subject to revision) shows non-oil GDP growth averaging 3.5 percent in H1 2024, with manufacturing (mostly refining) the standout performer following the production ramp-up at the huge 615 kb/d Al-Zour refinery in 2023. Despite the prospect of a cyclical upturn, our forecasts for non-oil growth are below the 2011-2019 historical average (+3.3 percent), with key structural challenges laying ahead. These include tackling low investment rates, the need for fiscal consolidation (see below) and Kuwait's low rankings in competitiveness measures versus GCC peers. We do expect greater progress on these issues going forward than in previous years,

Table 1: Key economic indicators

	2021	2022	2023	2024f	2025f	
Nominal GDP	\$ bn	145	182	184	157	154
Real GDP	% y/y	2.3	5.9	-3.6	-2.4	3.0
- Oil sector	% y/y	-0.9	12.1	-4.3	-6.8	3.4
- Non-oil sector	% y/y	5.4	-0.1	-2.9	2.3	2.6
- Non-oil ex refining	% y/y	5.2	-1.3	-5.6	2.0	2.5
Budget balance (FY)	% of GDP	-9.0	11.6	-3.1	-4.5	-5.6
Current act. balance	% of GDP	26.4	34.5	31.4	22.8	17.0
Inflation (avg.)	% y/y	3.4	4.0	3.6	3.0	2.5

Source: Official sources, NBK forecasts

reflecting more streamlined decision-making in the new political climate.

The government is yet to release its work agenda for the years ahead and a step-change in the pace of reform delivery is needed if Kuwait is to sustainably match the 4 percent+ non-oil growth rates now being recorded in Saudi Arabia and the UAE. We see strong expansion potential in sectors such as utilities, housing, transport, and tourism & entertainment over coming years.

The oil sector is expected to record its first output gains in two years in 2025, with OPEC+ scheduled to unwind members' voluntary cuts from end-2024. Kuwait should see 135 kb/d of crude return and production average 2.5 mb/d in 2025. This should boost oil GDP by 3.4 percent from -6.8 percent in 2024 and total GDP growth to 3.0 percent in 2025 from -2.4 percent in 2024. State oil firm KPC is undergoing a restructuring aimed at delivering efficiency gains and faster decision-making but plans to spend some \$410bn to achieve its 4 mb/d 2035 oil production target and 2050 net zero goal.

Monetary policy easing cycle begins

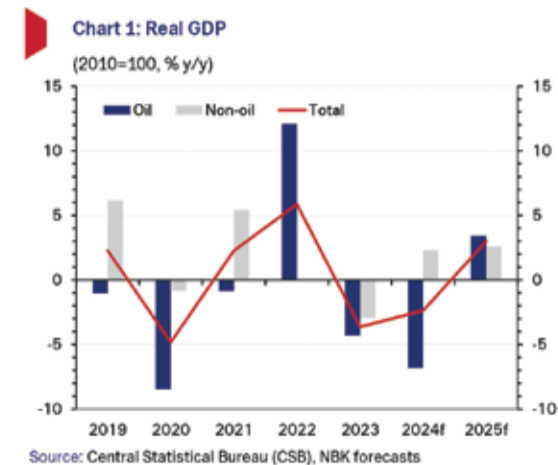
Inflation has proven slightly sticky amid price rises in the food and clothing categories especially, but still eased to 2.9 percent y/y by August from 3.3 percent at the start of 2024. We see the trajectory as broadly downwards given moderate economic growth, still elevated interest rates and soft price trends elsewhere in the GCC region: we see it slowing from 3.0 percent this year to 2.5 percent in 2025.

Meanwhile, the Central Bank of Kuwait cut its discount rate in September by 25 bps to 4.0 percent, after the US Fed cut interest rates by 50 bps. This comes after the Central Bank of Kuwait had raised interest rates less than the US Fed during the recent tightening cycle.

Deficits expected

Addressing the weak fiscal position is a key government objective, with deficits recorded in 8 of the past 9 years and forecast to average 5 percent of GDP in FY24/25-FY25/26. Issues include the rigid structure of public spending, especially the rising share of salaries and subsidies, and heavy reliance on oil revenues, which are forecast to decline in FY25/26 on lower average oil prices. We expect another tight spending round in FY25/26, following a projected 5 percent spending cut this year (from FY23/24's high base, inflated by one-off items), although potentially allowing for a pick-up in capex from recent very low levels as the authorities move on delayed infrastructure projects (eg housing, water, power).

To boost fiscal sustainability, the IMF in its October Article IV statement recommended the government adopt a medium-term fiscal framework based on annual consolidation of 1-2 percent of GDP (up to KD 950 million). Steps would include caps in public sector hiring and wage control, energy subsidy cuts and the introduction of VAT, but higher investment.



Still, ample fiscal and external buffers (estimated KIA assets of \$980 billion) including ultra-low debt levels (2.8 percent of GDP) put Kuwait in the enviable position of being able to balance reform of public finances with support for economic growth—so long as near-term liquidity pressures are avoided. Fitch recently reaffirmed Kuwait's high investment grade AA- credit rating.

Oil and geopolitics

The main risks to the outlook center on the path of oil prices, reflecting the health of the global and Chinese economy in particular, regional geopolitical and security issues and progress on the government's domestic reform agenda. While oil prices could fall further than forecast and a widening regional conflagration cannot be discounted (which could lead to a spike in oil prices), we see the launch and implementation of a reform-centered economic plan as critical for driving a more positive growth narrative for Kuwait from 2025 onwards.

China central bank cuts two key rates to boost economy

BEIJING: China's central bank on Monday said it had cut two key interest rates to historic lows, in the latest move by Beijing to boost sluggish spending and kickstart the world's second-largest economy. The cuts come just days after the country posted its slowest quarterly growth in a year and a half, underlining the deep economic woes the country faces. Leaders are targeting annual growth of five percent this year, but that goal is being challenged by weak consumption and a prolonged and debilitating debt crisis in the colossal property sector.

The one-year Loan Prime Rate (LPR), which constitutes the benchmark for the most advantageous rates lenders can offer to businesses and households, was cut from 3.35 percent to 3.1.

The five-year LPR, the benchmark for mortgage loans, was cut from 3.85 to 3.6. Both rates were last reduced in July and are sitting at all-time lows. Data showed Friday the economy grew 4.6 percent in the third quarter, its slowest rate in a year and a half. Authorities acknowledged a "complicated and severe external environment... as well as new problems of domestic economic development". Beijing has said it has "full confidence" in achieving its annual growth goal, but economists say more direct fiscal stimulus is needed to revive activity and restore business confidence.

The disappointing data came after weeks of announcements and news conferences about an eagerly awaited stimulus plan, though investors say they are still waiting to see more details. The country's top banks on Friday cut interest rates on yuan deposits for the second time this year in another potential boost to spending.

Central bank chief Pan Gongsheng also on Friday said that authorities were considering a further cut to the amount commercial lenders must hold in reserve before the end of the year. Months of sluggish spending has raised fears that China will dip back into deflation after it ended a months-long stretch of falling prices early this year. Zhang Zhiwei, President and Chief Economist of Pinpoint Asset Management, said Monday's rate cut was "an encouraging sign". "The monetary policy has clearly shifted to a more supportive stance since the press conference on September 24. The real interest rate in China is too high," he said. — AFP



This picture shows a general view of cars parked at Yantai port, in eastern China's Shandong province on October 21, 2024. — AFP



NBK Tower

NBK to join Annual Meetings of IMF, World Bank Group

KUWAIT: In a reflection to its unwavering commitment to advancing international collaboration and knowledge exchange in finance and economics, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) is participating in the Annual Meetings held by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Board of Governors of the World Bank (WBG). These high-level discussions in Washington, DC, commenced on Sunday will continue until October 26.



NBK's delegation is headed by Isam Al-Sager, Vice Chairman and Group CEO, along with Omar Bouhadiba, CEO of International Banking Group, and Nassif Chehab, Head of Financial Institutions Division, as well as Rani Selwanes, General Manager of NBK - New York.

The delegation will take part in the Annual Meetings, focusing on discussions regarding significant economic and financial challenges. Key topics on the agenda include exploring how do governance reforms promote economic growth and social inclusion. On the sidelines of the meetings, NBK delegation will attend the Group of Thirty's seminar, an exclusive annual gathering of central bank governors, senior official and executives of the financial sector, as well as academics. The seminar provides a platform to address the most pressing financial and systemic challenges facing the global central banking community. Additionally, the delegation will participate in the

Institute of International Finance (IIF) Annual Membership Meeting.

The delegation will also take part in a joint reception ceremony hosted by Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) for senior international banking leaders on the sidelines of the meetings. This event will be attended by Kuwaiti banking leaders, heads of international banks, as well as officials from European and Arab central banks, along with a large number of international public figures and decision makers. Additionally, the delegation will attend a reception hosted by the Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the United States of America.

This year's annual meetings will discuss several important topics, including public debt, fiscal sustainability, and economic growth, by assessing financial risks and analyzing growth indicators in member countries and ways to promote sustainable development. Furthermore, the meetings tackled international trade issues with the continued disruption of shipping traffic in the Red Sea and the impact of geopolitical tensions on the global economic landscape.

Discussions will also address the issue of climate change, how climate change affects the economy and fiscal policies, and means of cooperation between countries to face this existential challenge. Key topics on the agenda also include digitization and innovation, as well as the impact of modern technologies and artificial intelligence on financial markets and the global economy. NBK's delegation will hold bilateral meetings with senior international officials on the sidelines of the Annual Meetings of the IMF and the World Bank. Those discussions will focus on some of the key and pressing issues and current challenges that the banking and financial industry has been facing around the world.

The IMF and the World Bank Group Annual Meetings bring together central bankers, ministers of finance and development, parliamentarians, private sector executives, civil society, and academics to discuss issues of global concern.

The Annual Meetings feature several significant committees, with the most notable ones being the Development Committee, the International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC), the Group of Ten, the Group of Twenty-Four, etc. The IMFC meeting, in particular, is slated to tackle a range of critical issues including the current state and potential future trends in the global economy's performance, as well as examining developments in international financial markets, and other pressing issues.

Sisi: 'Pressure' on Egyptians could call for IMF deal review

CAIRO: Egypt's President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi warned on Sunday that regional challenges could lead to "unbearable" economic pressure on the population and a review of internationally-demanded economic reforms. "If these challenges will make us put unbearable pressure on public opinion, then the situation must be reviewed with the IMF," Sisi said at the Global Congress on Population, Health and Human Development in Cairo, as Egyptians brace for a new wave of inflation following fuel price hikes. Egypt has been embroiled in economic crisis since 2022. Dominated by military-linked enterprises and for years focused on expensive infrastructure mega-projects, the economy is almost entirely reliant on imports.

Foreign debt has ballooned, the currency has undergone several devaluations, with a resultant rise in inflation. The International Monetary Fund this year approved a \$5 billion top-up to an agreed \$3 billion loan for the Arab world's most populous nation.

In turn, the Washington-based lender demanded wide-ranging reforms including shifting to a more flexible exchange rate, plans to boost the role of the private sector in the economy, as well as tackling high inflation and government debt, the IMF said. In what he said was a "message to us and to the relevant international institutions, the IMF and the World Bank", Sisi warned of persistent "challenges". His comments came two days after authorities announced new fuel hikes by up to 17 percent—the third increase this year as the government moves to lift fuel subsidies by the end of 2025.

The increases on Friday included hikes to the price of diesel and mazut, used in mass transport and industry. Public transport fares in the capital Cairo quickly went up in response. Inflation peaked at nearly 40 percent last year, with the most recent figures in September at 26 percent.

Cairo has received three tranches of its IMF package. The IMF said earlier this month its next review mission, initially set for September, "is planned to take place in the coming months". Sisi said Egypt is "undertaking this (reform) program in very difficult regional and global circumstances" which "must be taken into account". Alongside the economic crisis, Egypt has also been caught up in regional tensions, with wars raging in neighboring Gaza and Sudan.

"We have lost \$6-7 billion only in the past seven or eight or 10 months," Sisi said Sunday, referring to Suez Canal revenues impacted by the attacks by Houthi. — AFP



CAIRO: People shop at a vegetable and fruits market in Cairo in this file photo.

Business

Gulf Bank collaborates with ktech to empower youth, enhance job skills

KUWAIT: In its ongoing efforts to empower youth, Gulf Bank has signed a partnership agreement with Kuwait Technical College (ktech) to train and prepare college students for the job market. This initiative demonstrates the bank's dedication to fostering the growth of young national talent and enhancing their skills. Salma Al-Hajjaj, General Manager of Human Resources at Gulf Bank, expressed her excitement, stating, "We are delighted to embark on this partnership with ktech to promote cooperation among community institutions, supporting youth development and equipping them with outstanding skills for the job market."

She highlighted Gulf Bank's commitment to nurturing young talent across various fields, both within the bank and in the broader community. "Our youth embody the generation capable of meeting current demands and keeping up with the rapid technological advancements in the banking sector, both locally and globally. We actively participate in job fairs orga-

Salma Al-Hajjaj: We are committed to supporting Kuwait's vision of empowering youth and increasing employment in the private sector

nized by different universities and collaborate with civil society organizations dedicated to youth training and development," Al-Hajjaj stated.

Al-Hajjaj reaffirmed the bank's dedication to supporting Kuwait's Vision 2035, which focuses on enhancing employment in the private sector and developing young Kuwaitis. "Our commitment is evident in the rising growth rates of national employment at Gulf Bank in recent years."

She continued, "We take pride in being one of the leading banks that generously invest in human capital to enhance our employees' competencies, as they are the central pillar in achieving our strategic objectives. We provide them with the latest experiences and skills necessary to keep up with the significant developments in the banking industry."

Al-Hajjaj concluded by emphasizing that recruitment, training and development are essential pillars of Gulf Bank's ongoing efforts to promote economic sustainability. "By hiring and nurturing Kuwaiti talent, we empower them to thrive and grow, preparing them to become the future leaders in the private sector." Gulf Bank aims to be Kuwait's leading bank, fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace to deliver exceptional customer service while contributing sustainably to the community. Through its extensive branch network and innovative digital services, the bank empowers customers to conduct banking transactions conveniently and efficiently, ensuring a seamless experience.

In alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035, "New Kuwait," and its commitment to fostering collaborative partnerships, Gulf Bank is dedicated to driving



Salma Al-Hajjaj (left) and Mishari Boodai sign the partnership agreement.

robust sustainability initiatives across environmental, social, and governance (ESG) dimensions. The bank is committed to implementing strategically selected and diverse sustainability programs both internally and externally.

UK fines VW over mistreatment of customers

LONDON: A UK regulator on Monday said it had fined a division of German car giant Volkswagen £5.4 million (\$7 million) over its treatment of customers in financial difficulty. Volkswagen Financial Services (UK) has also agreed to pay more than £21.5 million, shared among around 110,000 customers, after the Financial Conduct Authority showed it had been "failing to treat its customers in financial difficulty fairly".

The FCA said that between 2017 and middle of 2023 that Volkswagen Finance had failed to take into account the individual circumstances of customers or to provide support tailored to their needs.

"This meant that, in some cases, Volkswagen Finance took cars away from vulnerable customers without considering other options. This risked people being put in a worse position, particularly if they relied on their car to travel to work," the FCA said in a statement. Volkswagen Financial Services on Monday acknowledged failings had been made and apologized to those affected. "We recognize our shortcomings in these past cases and have made significant adjustments over recent years to ensure that we are always delivering the right level of service," it said in a separate statement.

"We are in the process of concluding our remediation efforts as we continue to provide goodwill payments to affected customers and apologize for any detriment caused," it added. — AFP

LatAm braces for US election impact on trade, tariffs

WASHINGTON: Latin America is anxiously counting the days to Nov 5, when US voters will choose between relative continuity under Vice President Kamala Harris or a return to policies that triggered volatility in the region's largest markets and economies under former president Donald Trump.

Trade and tariffs, as well as monetary policy's effect on global interest rates, are likely the largest avenues for the election to jolt the US's neighboring region. Washington's economic war with China could particularly rock Mexico and boost Brazil, especially in a tit-for-tat scenario. On a broader level, a Trump victory would likely send shockwaves through the region, potentially putting the squeeze on some currencies and central banks even as countries that are more tied to commodities or trade with China could emerge largely unscathed.

While the Biden administration did not roll back tariffs imposed by Trump on China, Harris' plan to keep them roughly as they are makes her a dove toward the world's No 2 economy. Under Trump, tariffs on Chinese products would jump to around 60 percent. China will also hover over talks to revise the US, Mexico and Canada trade deal (USMCA), scheduled for 2026, as some goods including from Chinese companies' transplant factories could stop being treated as Mexican. Automotive sector content requirements, known as "rules of origin," are likely to loom large in those talks. Trump said weeks ago that he would slap a tariff as high as 200 percent on vehicles imported from Mexico.

"A trade war (with China) would likely intensify in the case of a Trump presidency, and I think that the most affected country in Latin America could be Mexico," said Carlos de Sousa, emerging markets strategist and fixed income portfolio manager at Vontobel. "If Trump wins, he would probably try to leverage that (USMCA) sunset clause as some stronger negotiating position, potentially to change the rules of origin."

He added that the increased scrutiny on the trade rules regarding Mexico could mean "We'll go back, in terms of Mexican asset prices, to a higher volatility level than what we have seen in the last five or six years." Lazard said in a recent client note that a universal 10 percent tariff like the one proposed by Trump could be used as leverage to prevent countries from skirting tariffs by setting up shop in US trading partners. Other instances of its use as leverage could include policy around migration, as remittances make a big contribution to several regional economies, especially in Central America. — Reuters

Cuban leader warns against unrest over nationwide blackout

HAVANA: Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel warned Sunday that his government would not tolerate public disturbances during the nationwide power outage which the authorities are struggling to resolve. The island's 10 million people were spending their third night in the dark after the collapse on Friday of Cuba's largest power plant crippled the whole national grid.

The government said power is expected to be restored to most of the country by Monday evening. But the president issued a warning there would be no room for unrest in a country already battling sky-high inflation and shortages of food, medicine, fuel and water.

Dressed in a military uniform, Diaz-Canel said during a news conference that some Cubans had taken to the streets on Saturday evening in an attempt to "disturb public order." Perpetrators will be prosecuted "with the severity that revolutionary laws provide," he said, adding that the protesters were acting "under the direction of the foreign operators of the Cuban counter-revolution."

Witnesses had reported that residents in several neighborhoods of Havana had taken to the streets on Sunday night to express their discontent. There are people "making noise with pots and pans, shouting 'Let us have the power back on,'" a resident of the Santo Suarez neighborhood told AFP.

In July 2021, blackouts sparked an unprecedented outpouring of public anger. Thousands of Cubans took to the streets shouting, "We are hungry" and "Freedom!" in a rare challenge to the government. One person was killed and dozens were injured in the protests. According to the Mexico-based human rights organization Justicia 11J, 600 people detained during the unrest remain in prison.

Cuba was still plunged in darkness on Sunday when Hurricane Oscar made landfall in its eastern part at 5:50 pm local time (2150 GMT) as a Category 1 storm. It weakened into a tropical storm as it moved inland, the US National Hurricane Center said, whipping up waves up to 13 feet (four me-

What to look for at BoJ's October policy meeting

TOKYO: The Bank of Japan holds a two-day policy meeting concluding on Oct 31, days after a general election where new Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba faces a key test on his agenda to prop up wages and revitalize the country's weak regional economies. Here is a guide on what to expect and why the BOJ's rate review matters:

Will BoJ raise rates?

The BOJ ended negative interest rates in March and raised its short-term policy target to 0.25 percent in July. It has signaled readiness to hike again, once the board has enough confidence that Japan will durably hit its 2 percent inflation target.

With inflation stable around 2 percent and showing few signs of spiking, however, the BOJ is in no rush to pull the trigger. The central bank is widely expected to keep rates steady at the October meeting, as Governor Kazuo Ueda has stressed the need to spend time scrutinizing risks such as uncertainty over the US economy and the fallout from volatile markets.

Central banks typically avoid changing policy around big political events. The BOJ has plenty of reason to stand pat with a domestic election scheduled on Oct 27 and the US presidential election looming early next month.

The BoJ has said it will hike rates again if the economy and prices move in line with its forecast. That means its quarterly report, which will include the board's fresh growth and price forecasts, may offer clues on the next rate hike timing. Sources have told Reuters the BoJ is unlikely to make major changes to its forecast for inflation to hover around its 2 percent target through March 2027.

While such projections would meet the prerequisite for more rate hikes, the BOJ may signal its readiness to go slow by highlighting risks such as slow global growth and the damage volatile markets could inflict on household and corporate mood. If the BoJ escalates warning over such risks or refers to them in the report's portion on policy guidance, that could further diminish the chance of a year-end rate hike. Increased optimism over sustained wage hikes, by contrast, could be a sign the next rate hike is nearing.

Governor Ueda's post-meeting briefing, to be held at 3:30 pm Tokyo time (0630GMT) on Oct 31, may offer clues on the pace and timing of further rate hikes. In a briefing in September, Ueda dropped signs of a pause by saying the BOJ can "afford" to spend time scrutinizing risks. His comments on the yen are also key as the currency's sharp decline, which pushes up inflation via import costs, was among factors that led to the BOJ's rate hike in July.

While still off a three-decade trough near 162 hit in early July, the yen fell to a two-and-a-half-month low below 150 to the dollar on Thursday. Further yen falls could put re-



HAVANA: People line up outside a store for food during the third day of a massive power outage in Havana on October 20, 2024. — AFP

ters) high along the eastern coast.

Roofs and the walls of houses were damaged, and electricity poles and trees felled, state television reported. President Diaz-Canel acknowledged in his address that the situation of the grid remained "complex," characterized by a high level of "instability." Energy and Mining Minister Vicente de la O Levy told reporters Sunday that electricity would be restored for most Cubans by Monday night, adding that "the last customer may receive service by Tuesday."

The power grid failed in a chain reaction Friday due to the unexpected shutdown of the biggest of the island's eight decrepit coal-fired power plants, according to the head of electricity supply at the energy ministry, Lazaro Guerra.

Power was briefly restored Sunday to a few hundred thousand inhabitants before the grid failed again, according to the national electric utility UNE. Authorities have suspended classes and business activities until Wednesday, with only hospitals and essential services remaining operational.

Cuba is in the throes of its worst economic crisis since the collapse of key ally the Soviet Union in the early 1990s — marked by soaring inflation and shortages of basic goods.

"Cubans are tired of so much... There's no life here, (people) can't take it anymore," lamented Serguei Castillo, a 68-year-old bricklayer. "My fridge hasn't worked for three days now, and I'm afraid everything will be spoiled." 56-year-old worker Adismary Cuza.

President Diaz-Canel blamed the situation on Cuba's difficulties in acquiring fuel for its power plants, which he attributed to the tightening, during Donald Trump's presidency, of a six-decade-long US trade embargo. The island is also feeling the aftershocks of the Covid-19 pandemic battering its critical tourism sector, and of economic mismanagement.

To bolster its grid, Cuba has leased seven floating power plants from Turkish companies and also added many small diesel-powered generators. — AFP



TOKYO: Bank of Japan governor Kazuo Ueda (right) speaks at the House of Representatives Finance and Financial Services Committee, as Japan's Finance Minister Shunichi Suzuki (left) looks on Aug 23, 2024. — AFP

newed pressure on Ueda to drop hawkish signals on the rate outlook.

After the October meeting, the BOJ next meets for a policy meeting on Dec. 18-19 followed by a meeting on Jan 23-24. A slim majority of economist polled by Reuters saw the BoJ forgoing a hike this year, with most expecting the central bank to raise rates again by March next year.

What could hamper further rate hikes?

The BOJ has signaled readiness to raise rates to levels deemed neutral to the economy — seen by analysts

as somewhere around 1 percent — by around late next year or early 2026. But the road could be bumpy. The BOJ hopes bumper wage hikes offered by firms this year will underpin consumption, and allow retailers to keep hiking prices. But slowing global demand may discourage manufacturers from offering big pay hikes next year. Political clouds also hang over the BOJ's rate-hike path. While Ishiba has said he will not interfere in monetary policy, the premier may push back against further rate hikes if his ruling party fares poorly in the Oct 27 election. — Reuters

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2024



This photograph shows displayed flowers and a framed picture of late British singer Liam Payne as fans gather to pay tribute to the former member of the British pop band One Direction, at Jardin des Tuileries in Paris.



Fans gather at a makeshift memorial to pay tribute to late British singer and former member of pop music boy-band One Direction, Liam Payne, in Madrid.



Fans gather at a makeshift memorial to pay tribute to late British singer and former member of pop music boy-band One Direction, Liam Payne, in Madrid. —AFP photos



A makeshift memorial pays tribute to late British singer and former member of pop music boy-band One Direction, Liam Payne, in Madrid on October 20, 2024.

Fans gather to mourn Liam Payne's death at UK and other vigils

Fans mourning Liam Payne's death turned out across Britain and beyond at organized vigils Sunday, with at least 1,000 gathering in central London to pay tribute to the former One Direction star. It came four days after Payne died aged 31 following a fall from the balcony of his Buenos Aires hotel room, prompting an outpouring of grief and condolences from family, former bandmates, fans and others.

Investigators have said he appeared to have been "going through an episode of substance abuse". Those at the London memorial at the Peter Pan statue in Hyde Park were encouraged in social media posts to bring "flowers, letters, balloons, pictures" and did not disappoint.

Gathering in the rain under umbrellas bearing those things and more, the crowd of mainly young people sang One Direction songs after also standing in silence for periods. "He was such a big part of our childhood -- we just came to pay our respect," student Katie Etchells, 20, wearing a One Direction t-shirt, told AFP.

She was one of many who said that they at first thought word of his death was "fake news", calling the realization it was true "very upsetting". "I think he'll be happy to know that so many people does love him," a tearful Luna Franco,



Fans of late British singer Liam Payne gather to pay respects on the esplanade of the Monterrey macroplaza.

20, from Italy, told AFP.

'Unify'

Musician Shukhrat Turdikhodjaev, 21, said he had gone from "disbelief at first" to shock on hearing Payne had died. He added the turnout showed that the singer "was able to connect and unify so many different people". Elsewhere, news reports and social

media posts showed hundreds also gathered in the Scottish cities Edinburgh and Glasgow, as well as Paris, New York, Stockholm and many other places. Fans were also set to gather later Sunday in Birmingham in central England -- near Wolverhampton where Payne was born and raised.

He would shoot to fame around the world as a teenager in the hugely

successful pop group One Direction, which formed in 2010 after its members appeared on "The X Factor". Sunday's meet-ups mirror gatherings seen across Latin American in recent days.

In Buenos Aires, tearful fans have continued to mass in front of the Casa Sur Hotel, where Payne plunged to his death and an altar dedicated to him has been created full of flowers and messages.

On Friday, his father Geoff Payne visited the scene, thanking fans gathered there in a shared moment of grief. Meanwhile Mexico City, the Ecuadorian capital Quito and various towns and cities in Colombia are among the other places to have seen impromptu ceremonies for Payne.

'Just really sad'

Anguished reactions have continued to stream in, including from Girls Aloud star Cheryl Tweedy, Payne's former partner and the mother of their seven-year-old boy, who called his death an "earth shattering event". Payne's One Direction bandmate Zayn Malik said Saturday on X that he was postponing the current US leg of his tour until January, citing "the heartbreaking loss experienced this week."

Payne died from "multiple traumas" and "internal and external haemorrhag-



British singer and songwriter Liam Payne poses on the red carpet prior to the 2020 Laureus World Sports Awards ceremony in Berlin on February 17, 2020.

ing" after the fall from the hotel, an autopsy found. It suggested he had not tried to stop his fall and was in a state of "semi or total unconsciousness" before his death.

The singer, who had spoken publicly about struggles with alcohol and coping with fame from an early age, was alone at the time and appeared to be "going through an episode of substance abuse," prosecutors have said. Back in London, fan Chelsea Willy, 20, summed up the feelings of those mourning the loss.

"It is just really sad," the actress said. "I've been a fan of him since I was very little," she added, noting she cried on learning the news. —AFP



Fans gather to pay tribute to late British singer Liam Payne, former member of the British pop band One Direction, at Jardin des Tuileries.



A note displayed as fans gather to pay tribute to late British singer Liam Payne, former member of the British pop band One Direction, at Jardin des Tuileries in Paris.



A makeshift memorial pays tribute to late British singer and former member of pop music boy-band One Direction, Liam Payne, in Madrid on October 20, 2024.



Fans gather to pay tribute to late British singer Liam Payne, former member of the British pop band One Direction, at Jardin des Tuileries in Paris.



Tools used at the workshop of Kilberry Bagpipes in Edinburgh.



Bagpipe pieces displayed at the workshop of Kilberry Bagpipes.



A photograph shows the working area at the atelier of Kilberry Bagpipes.

'ONE OF THE LAST': HANDMADE BAGPIPES A DYING ART IN SCOTLAND



A photograph shows storage draws at the workshop of Kilberry Bagpipes in Edinburgh.



Artisan bagpipe maker Ruari Black makes a bagpipe chanter in the workshop of Kilberry Bagpipes in Edinburgh.

The Highland bagpipe is an integral part of Scottish culture and history, famous for its distinctive, powerful sound that even accompanied troops as they landed in northern France on D-Day. But the wind instrument is slowly growing silent as demand dwindles and machine-made bagpipes replace traditionally crafted ones, consigning their use to largely ceremonial occasions.

Just off Edinburgh's historic Royal Mile, which sweeps down from the city's imposing castle to the Palace of Holyroodhouse, is a faded storefront sign for artisan bagpipe maker Kilberry Bagpipes. Inside, Ruari Black is one of only a few remaining craftsmen in Edinburgh who knows how to make the instrument by hand.

"At Kilberry, we're one of the last artisan bagpipe makers -- certainly in Edinburgh, the capital of Scotland -- but probably all around the world," Black told AFP as he shaped a pipe with a lathe. "It's got a big sound, it'll fill a room," said Black, describing the nine stages it takes to make the intricate instrument.

After boring and shaping the pipes, they are fitted with mounts and ferrules before adding the finishing touches and setting up the components. The whole process takes around a week, with the craftsmen working on multiple bagpipes at the same time.

The finished product has "our distinct sound", according to Black. "Every set, we're striving to have that consistency across, to make sure they're sounding the same." Each handmade set also has "its own character, in terms



Artisan bagpipe maker Ruari Black makes a bagpipe chanter in the workshop of Kilberry Bagpipes in Edinburgh.

of looks, in terms of feel", making it attractive to customers from around the world, he added. The current wait time for an artisan Highland bagpipe is two years on Kilberry's website.

Best-known form

"Customers are coming to us for a set of handmade pipes, they're generally coming for the handmade aspect," Black explained. "They're wanting the sound we strive to produce -- the thing we want to be known for." Clients include experienced pipers as well as newcomers looking to buy their "first practice chanter" -- the part of the bag-

pipe with finger holes, where the melody is played.

While bagpipes have been recorded in Scottish history for some 600 years, the origins remain unclear. Different variations found around the world include the Irish bagpipe, the Northumbrian smallpipes and the Turkish tulum. In Brittany, northwest France, a band called a bagad is composed of Breton bagpipes, or binioù, and drums.

However, the Highland bagpipe remains the best-known form, and has had significant influence in the military music of Britain and Commonwealth countries. Every year, the

Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo -- a series of military musical performances with massed pipe bands -- takes place at the top of the Royal Mile. The last song played at Queen Elizabeth II's funeral in 2022 was a rendition of the lament "Sleep, Dearie, Sleep", played by her personal piper.

'Means a lot'

Despite its enduring cultural significance, the traditionally handmade Highland bagpipe is vanishing. Unlike Kilberry, most other producers now use machinery. However, Black said it is easy to differentiate the instruments, with machine-made ones missing the "hand-turned" shapes and decorative designs that his bagpipes have.

Despite having fewer workers and taking longer to make each bagpipe, they "try and keep the cost down for customers to still have a handmade instrument", said Black. "So it's kind of up to the customer to choose us over mass-produced."

Some mass-manufactured bagpipes can also be told apart by their use of imitation ivory for the mounts, according to Black. The artisans are trying to be more sustainable without compromising on quality. For Black, there is no alternative to making bagpipes by hand.

"Keeping it handmade means a lot to me -- it's the way it's always been done. It just feels right," he added. "For something that's completely dying out, it's not nice to be one of the last... but it's nice to be carrying that on." --AFP



Artisan bagpipe maker Ruari Black, the last traditional bagpipe-makers who make everything by hand from start to finish, tests a bagpipe chanter in the workshop of Kilberry Bagpipes in Edinburgh. —AFP photos



Artisan bagpipe maker Ruari Black works on a bagpipe chanter in the workshop of Kilberry Bagpipes in Edinburgh.



Artisan bagpipe maker Ruari Black makes a bagpipe chanter.

'Smile 2' scares up the biggest audiences in North American theaters

Paramount's new horror film "Smile 2" has surpassed its successful predecessor, taking in an estimated \$23 million in North American theaters this weekend, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations reported Sunday. "This is an excellent opening for the second episode in a horror series," said analyst David A. Gross, who noted that horror sequels tend to earn a fourth less than the originals.

The first "Smile," also directed by horror-master Parker Finn, made \$22.6 million when it opened in 2022 and ultimately grossed \$217 million worldwide.

"Smile 2" again tells the story of a grim curse, passed from one victim to the next, that afflicts a troubled pop star (Naomi Scott). Universal and DreamWorks Animation's "The Wild Robot," about a dispassionate mechanical being, stranded on an island, having to cope with (and care for) fuzzy woodland creatures, placed second again with \$10.1 million, part of what Gross said has become a welcome industry trend.

"With 'Inside Out 2' breaking records



Parker Finn speaks during the Global Premiere of "Smile 2" at Paramount Pictures Studios on October 14, 2024, in Los Angeles, California. —AFP photos

and 'Despicable Me 4' finishing sensationally well, 2024 has gone from a good year for family films to an outstanding year," Gross said. "Family moviegoing

has come all the way back after the pandemic and is in very good health now."

Horror film "Terrifier 3," from indie studio Cineverse and Icon Events, earned

\$9.3 million for the Friday-through-Sunday period. David Howard Thornton again plays the psychopathic Art the Clown. In fourth place again, and enjoying a nice run in its seventh weekend out, was Warner Bros.' "Beetlejuice Beetlejuice," at \$5 million. Michael Keaton again plays the creepily hilarious title character.

Fifth place went to "We Live in Time," a weepy romantic drama from StudioCanal, at \$4.2 million. Andrew Garfield and Florence Pugh star in what Comscore analyst Paul Dergarabedian called a "breakout indie hit" with "a hugely appealing cast (and) a funny, moving and romantic plot."

Rounding out the top 10 were:
"Joker: Folie a Deux" (\$2.2 million)
"Piece by Piece" (\$2.1 million)
"Transformers One" (\$2 million)
"Saturday Night" (\$1.8 million)
"Nightmare Before Christmas (reissue)" (\$1.1 million)—AFP



Naomi Scott and Parker Finn attend the Global Premiere of "Smile 2" at Paramount Pictures Studios.



James Charles attends the Global Premiere of "Smile 2" at Paramount Pictures Studios.



After collecting mushrooms for a biodiversity survey, participants photograph and record details about the morphology and growing environment of each mushroom before sending the samples for DNA sequencing to aid in identifying the fungi.



A selection of mushroom found during a fungi biodiversity survey near Port Angeles, Washington.—AFP photos



A mushroom of the genus *Gymnopilus* found during a mushroom biodiversity survey.

Fungi finding: Mushroom hunters seek new species and recognition



A Sulfur Tuft mushroom (*Hypoholoma fasciculare*) found during a mushroom biodiversity survey, in the Olympic National Forest near Port Angeles.

You can't walk very far through a forest in this part of the United States without stumbling upon a mushroom, an eruption from a vast fungal kingdom that all life depends on, but about which we know very little.

Some are tall and thin with a helmet top, others are great flourishes of brain-like folds; some seem like they should be sheltering fairies in a storybook.

Many look like they could be delicious in the hands of a skilled chef; others... decidedly not. But the dozens of species that enthusiasts and experts collected on a recent morning represent just a tiny fraction of life that is neither flora nor fauna. "Mushrooms are not plants," said Amy Honan, who teaches mycology and fungal ecology at Oregon University. "Fungi are more closely related to animals than they are to plants."

Plants make their own food through photosynthesis, but mushrooms have to eat something else. "They spit out different enzymes, so they break down their food outside of their body, and they slurp it up like a smoothie," Honan said.

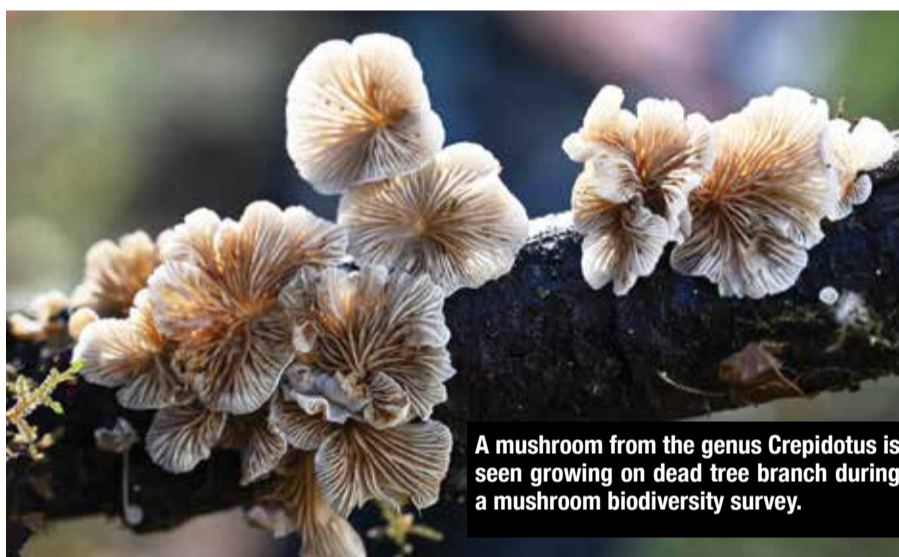
'Essential'

Of the at least 2.5 million species of fungus thought to exist on Earth, scientists have described around 150,000 -- six percent -- Honan told AFP during a field trip near Port Angeles in Washington state. Compared with what we know about plants and animals, that's practically nothing. "We know about 98 percent of the vertebrates that are on the planet," she said. "We know about 85 percent of plants that exist on the planet. We know about 20 percent of invertebrates."

This paucity of fungal knowledge is troubling because of the vital -- and largely unseen -- role that they play. Fungi evolved before plants and created the conditions to allow vegetation to move from the sea to the land.

"Fungi are essential for all terrestrial ecosystems. They confer all kinds of benefits to plants, from salt tolerance, heavy metal tolerance, disease resistance," Honan said. "Basically, without fungi... plants would not exist. We need plants for oxygen, so the world would not exist in its current state."

It would also be chock-full of dead things. "Fungi break down all dead organic material, so they recycle all that carbon and other nutrients," facilitating



A mushroom from the genus *Crepidotus* is seen growing on dead tree branch during a mushroom biodiversity survey.

the life cycle of plants and animals.

COP16 focus

There is a burgeoning awareness of the importance of fungi, whose role is set to come up for discussion at the UN Convention on Biological Diversity COP16 meeting in Colombia, which kicks off on Monday. The Guardian newspaper reported last week that a joint proposal by Chile and the United Kingdom could see fungi recognized as "an independent kingdom of life in legislation, policies and agreements, in order to advance their conservation and to adopt concrete measures that allow for maintaining their benefits to ecosystems and people."

Greater protections would be good



Graham Steinruck, certified wild mushroom identification expert and the founder of the "Biodiversity Collective," smells a *Pleurotus* mushroom found during a mushroom biodiversity survey.

news, said mycologist Graham Steinruck, who, along with Honan, is leading a study into fungal biodiversity at a site that was underwater until the removal of a dam a few years ago.

As part of the Olympic Peninsula Fungi Festival, he and Honan have taken participants out into the field to show them how to find species of mushroom, and how to record what they are seeing.

"I think the more fungi that we go out and discover and document not only tells us about our biodiversity, but also can tell us about ways we can steward the land better," Steinruck said.

Knowing more about these mysterious organisms could also bring benefits to lots of areas of human life. Mushrooms can help us "heal ourselves, and maybe even potentially (help) other things like industries," he said.

For participants on the mushroom hunt, the opportunity to find new fungal life was eye-opening. Naomi Ruelle had traveled from New York with her mushroom-enthusiast partner, and was taking part in her first organized hunt.

"I've learned so much," she beamed, showing off a collection that included a huge, fleshy shelf-like specimen, yellow parasol-style mushrooms and spindly stalked fungi that had found root in a dead pine cone. "It was so interesting to see the different species. They're obviously going to take them to the lab and I'm kind of curious to understand a bit more about them." —AFP



Liv Filialuna holds up an edible cauliflower mushroom (*Sparassis* sp.) found during a mushroom biodiversity survey.



A Fir Cone Mushroom (*Strobilurus trullisatus*) found during a mushroom biodiversity survey.



After collecting mushrooms for a biodiversity survey, participants photograph and record details about the morphology and growing environment of each mushroom before sending the samples for DNA sequencing to aid in identifying the fungi.



Mushroom enthusiast Won Choi holds up an Artist's Conk mushroom (*Gandorpha* spp.) with the words "Mush Love!" scratch into its underside during a mushroom biodiversity survey.



A mushroom from the genus *Pholiota* grows in moss on a dead tree spotted during a biodiversity survey.



A translucent Cat's Tongue mushroom (*Pseudohydnum gelatinosum*) is found during a mushroom biodiversity survey.



A selection of mushroom found during a fungi biodiversity survey.

Sports

Rabada fastest to 300th Test wicket, as Bangladesh all out for 106

Visitors take the lead, reaching 140-6 in 41 overs

MIRPUR: South Africa posted 140-6 on Monday in an action-packed first day of the opening Test, after Bangladesh collapsed to 106 all out with Kagiso Rabada celebrating being the fastest to take 300 Test wickets.

The visitors took the lead, reaching 140-6 in 41 overs in reply at stumps at Mirpur, with Wiaan Mulder and Kyle Verreynne not out for 17 and 18 respectively.

Bangladesh won the toss and opted to bat but four of their top six batsmen failed to reach double figures, with opener Mahmudul Hasan Joy top-scoring with 30 on a lively pitch. Seamers Rabada, Mulder and left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj took three wickets apiece for South Africa.

Bangladesh were teetering at 40-4 when Rabada bowled Mushfiqur Rahim on 11, as the South African celebrated reaching the 300-wicket landmark. He managed the feat in 11,817 balls, the fastest of all time, beating Pakistan's Waqar Younis (12,602 balls).

Rabada soon made it 301 Test wickets, removing Litton Das for one, with Bangladesh crumbling, all out for 106 in 40.1 overs. Rabada said he was "really surprised at how the wicket played out". "Test cricket should offer a fair contest between bat and ball, where bowlers get something if they bowl well, and batters can score if they apply themselves," he said. "With 16 wickets on day one, I'd say it's leaning towards the bowlers," he added.

'Still in our hands'

Right-arm seamer Hasan Mahmud brought Bangladesh the first success in the first over after the innings change, removing South African captain Aiden Markram for six off seven deliveries. Left-arm spinner Taijul Islam — Bangladesh's main seamer in the absence of Shakib Al Hasan — then boosted his team after he bagged a five-for, to become only the second Bangladeshi to take 200 wickets in Tests after Shakib.

"Many bowlers have 200, or 300-400 wickets," Taijul said. "But we don't play many Test matches — still, I'm one of the Bangladeshi bowlers who have 200 wickets, and I'm happy for this." He kept the team's spirits up, saying it was possible the match was "still in our hands" to win.

The Test is the first international cricket fixture in Bangladesh since a student-led revolution toppled autocratic premier Sheikh Hasina in August. Bangladesh are missing all-rounder Shakib after security fears forced him to cancel plans to return home.

Shakib announced his retirement from international cricket last month but said that he wanted to play one last red-ball series at home. The 37-year-old was also a former lawmaker in the government ousted by the revolution, making him a target of public anger. Bangladesh have never beaten South Africa in a Test. The second Test begins in Chattogram on October 29. — AFP



DHAKA: South Africa's Kagiso Rabada (C) celebrates with a teammate after taking the wicket of Bangladesh's Mushfiqur Rahim (R) during the first day of the first Test cricket match between Bangladesh and South Africa at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Dhaka. — AFP

New Zealand basks in 'golden 48 hours' after sporting success

WELLINGTON: New Zealand hailed one of the country's finest weekends in its sporting history Monday after the triple success of winning the Women's T20 World Cup, a rare Test triumph in India and America's Cup sailing glory.

"This was a weekend that will go down in New Zealand's sporting annals," sports minister Chris Bishop said in a statement. First, the crew of Emirates Team New Zealand completed a commanding 7-2 victory over Ineos Britannia on Saturday to retain the America's Cup.

The dominant Kiwis lifted the world's oldest international sporting trophy for the third consecutive time after beating their British opponents by 37 seconds in the ninth race off Barcelona to end the best-of-13 series.

On Sunday, New Zealand crushed the mighty India by eight wickets in Bengaluru to record their first Test cricket win on Indian soil for 36 years. Later the same day an outstanding all-round performance by Amelia Kerr led the country to their historic first Women's T20 World Cup crown as they beat South Africa by 32 runs in Dubai.

Throw in a ruthless 64-50 victory over world champions Australia in Wellington in netball, and it had many in New Zealand debating whether the country had ever known a weekend like it. "The best weekend for NZ sport ever?" asked Radio New Zealand.



DUBAI: New Zealand's Amelia Kerr plays a shot during the ICC Women's T20 World Cup cricket final match between South Africa and New Zealand at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai. — AFP

Jesse Mulligan, a presenter on RNZ, said: "It's been a golden 48 hours for New Zealand sport." The New Zealand Herald ran a poll on its website asking readers which was their highlight, also throwing in Auckland FC's win on their debut in the A-League and Liam Lawson's ninth-placed finish in the Formula One in Austin, Texas.

The T20 World Cup win came out top with 33

percent of the vote, followed by the America's Cup and then the Test victory in India. "Kiwi sports fans can be forgiven if they're caught yawning at work today, after so much sporting excitement packed into one weekend," added Bishop. The news website Stuff called it "a weekend that kept giving, one that will go down as one of the greats." And the All Blacks weren't even in action. — AFP

Sri Lanka triumph in rain-affected first ODI against Windies

PALLEKELE: Sri Lanka cruised to a comprehensive five-wicket win in the rain-shortened first one-day international against the West Indies in Pallekele on Sunday, with half-centuries from captain Charith Asalanka and debutant Nishan Madushka.

Chasing a revised target of 232 in 37 overs, the hosts raced to victory with 5.3 overs to spare. After a shaky start that saw Sri Lanka slump to 45 for three in the seventh over, Asalanka's arrival at the crease turned the tide. His partnership with Madushka, worth 137 runs for the fourth wicket, came in rapid time. Both Asalanka and Madushka reached their half-centuries in just 44 balls. Madushka, who has played 10 Test matches, was brought in to replace injured opener Pathum Nissanka, the leading run scorer in ODIs in 2024.

"I am glad that he has grabbed the opportunity with both hands," Asalanka said. "It is good to have healthy competition in the side." The West Indies had posted 183 for four in 38.3 overs before rain in-

tervened. Their spinners then found it hard to grip the wet ball.

"We were really tested by the conditions", West Indies skipper Shai Hope said. "Particularly for the spinners, the wet ball was quite challenging." Gudakesh Motie eventually broke the Asalanka-Madushka stand, when Brandon King took a sharp catch at slip. But by then, the damage had been done.

Sri Lanka needed just 50 runs off 74 balls when Madushka fell for 69 off 54 balls, which included seven fours and a six. Motie also trapped Asalanka lbw after a brilliant 77 off 71 balls, studded with eight fours and three sixes. Motie finished with three wickets, although he could have had a greater impact if not for the challenging conditions, with the ball having to be changed twice. Kamindu Mendis and Janith Liyanage saw Sri Lanka home comfortably.

Earlier, the West Indies had struggled against Sri Lanka's spinners, but Sherfane Rutherford's career-best 74 not out, combined with support from Roston Chase, helped the visitors recover with an unbroken 85-run partnership for the fifth wicket. However, it was not enough to stop Sri Lanka from taking the lead in the series 1-0.

Sri Lanka came from behind to win the T20 series 2-1 last week, their first series win over the West Indies in the shortest format. The remaining two ODIs will be held on Wednesday and Saturday. — AFP



KANDY: Sri Lanka's Janith Liyanage (L) plays a shot during the first one-day international (ODI) cricket match between Sri Lanka and West Indies at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium in Kandy. — AFP

Celtics seek repeat, LeBron and son unite as NBA season opens

WASHINGTON: Defending champion Boston launches a quest for back-to-back titles, LeBron James teams with his 20-year-old son and familiar faces debut in new places when the NBA's 79th season begins on Tuesday.

The Celtics will raise a record 18th championship banner when the New York Knicks visit Boston while James and the Los Angeles Lakers entertain Minnesota in opening-night contests. Boston fans have not celebrated back-to-back NBA crowns since 1968 and 1969 — the end of the Bill Russell dynasty era — but after ending a 16-year title drought star Jayson Tatum yearns for such glory.

"It was never just about just trying to win one," Tatum said. "Now you get to be at least in the same room with the other Celtics, great teams, the other great players. Now it's just a conversation of how great are you trying to be, what tier you're trying to be mentioned in when it's all said and done?"

Tatum, who helped the US team win Paris Olympic gold, says the Celtics feel different as champions. "It does feel different being up here as a champion and knowing what it takes, and wanting to be on the top of the mountain as many times as you can," Tatum said.

Tatum and Jaylen Brown lead a veteran Celtics lineup with star guard Jrue Holiday and injured center Kristaps Porzingis. "We want to win a championship every single year — that's the goal, that's the standard, that's the expectation," Celtics coach Joe Mazzulla said. "Just because something worked before doesn't mean it's going to work again. That's the challenge."

NBA all-time scoring leader James, who turns 40 in December, joined his eldest son Bronny in the Lakers lineup during a pre-season loss to Phoenix, the NBA's first father-son combination. "It was cool for both of us," LeBron James said. "Definitely a moment I'll never forget. It was like being in 'The Matrix' or something. It just didn't feel real."

Star big man Anthony Davis and four-time NBA Most Valuable Player James sparked the Lakers to the 2023 Western Conference finals but they crashed out in round one last season. A huge off-season deal sent center Karl-Anthony Towns to the Knicks with forward Julius Randle and guard Donte DiVincenzo going to Minnesota.

New York also added Mikal Bridges and with All-Star guard Jalen Brunson among veterans returning, the Knicks could challenge for their first NBA crown since 1973. "We can't just be worried about one team. We've got to be worried about the whole Eastern Conference," Towns said.

"To accomplish what we want to do, and what the city is yearning for us to do, we need to be a team not just that beats Boston, but finds a way to beat every team in the East." Klay Thompson was traded from Golden State to Dallas, where the four-time NBA champion will partner with Luka Doncic and Kyrie Irving to give last season's NBA runner-up Mavericks a triple-threat attack.

Swingman Paul George had starred for the Los Angeles Clippers last season but wasn't re-signed so the 14-year veteran signed a free agent deal to join star center Joel Embiid and guard Tyrese Maxey at Philadelphia. Embiid will see limited action on back-to-back nights to keep him healthy into the playoffs. "We're very focused on April, May, June," 76ers president of basketball operations Daryl Morey said. "That doesn't mean that the time right now isn't very important as well, but we're going to be very smart about how we manage him through the season."

Giannis Antetokounmpo and Damian Lillard lead Milwaukee while Indiana and Cleveland should contend again for top spots. The Atlanta Hawks added top NBA Draft pick Zacharie Risacher, the second Frenchman in a row taken first overall after NBA Rookie of the Year Victor Wembanyama went to San Antonio last season.

"Wemby" had 21.4 points, 10.6 rebounds, 3.9 assists and a league-high 3.6 blocks a game for the Spurs in his debut campaign. Shai Gilgeous-Alexander led a young Oklahoma City lineup to the top seed in the Western Conference last season and the Thunder will be formidable again along with Denver, powered by three-time NBA MVP Nikola Jokic, and Phoenix, featuring Kevin Durant, Devin Booker and Bradley Beal. — AFP

Malinin captures 3rd straight Skate America crown

ALLEN: World champion Ilia Malinin won his third straight Skate America title Sunday, adjusting on the fly after a mid-routine mistake to hold off France's Kevin Aymoz at the first Grand Prix event of the season. Self-styled "Quad God" Malinin doubled one of the four planned quadruple jumps in his free skate — then calmly added an extra quadruple Salchow-triple Axel late in his routine to score 190.43 points for a winning total of 290.12.

"I'm completely shocked," Malinin told broadcaster NBC. "I don't know what just happened. I just went full auto-pilot through there."

The 19-year-old electrified the crowd with a backflip in his closing choreography sequence, the new move now allowed since the International Skating Union ended its longtime ban on "somersault style" elements prior to the season.

Malinin became the first three-time Skate America champion since Nathan Chen won four titles in a row from 2017 through 2020.

He needed to pull out all the stops after French veteran Aymoz delivered a powerful free skate to rocket from fourth to the top of the standings.

The 27-year-old, who ended his disappointing 2023-24 campaign early to focus on his mental health, was overcome with emotion after a stunning free skate that included a pair of quadruple jumps along with a spectacular triple-Axel, double-Axel combination. Aymoz was in tears again as his career best free skate score of 190.84, for a total of 282.88, was revealed.

"I think it was a pretty challenging moment for me," Malinin said. "Stepping on the ice I felt more nervous than usual. That might have played a part in the whole programme." Japan's Kao Miura, who trailed Malinin by just 15-hundredths of a point after the short programme, finished third with a total of 278.67 points.

Britain's Lilah Fear and Lewis Gibson pulled off an upset in ice dance, edging two-time reigning world champions Madison Chock and Evan Bates for gold by a fraction of a point. Fear and Gibson were surprise leaders after rhythm dance after an uncharacteristic fall left Chock and Bates trying to fight back. The Americans were the epitome of cool in a new free dance to jazz standard "Take Five". — AFP

Sports

McLaren blast 'inappropriate' penalty as Lando Norris' F1 title hopes hit

Norris was adjudged to have gained an advantage by running off the track

AUSTIN: McLaren team chief Andrea Stella blasted as "inappropriate" a controversial penalty handed to Lando Norris at the United States Grand Prix which could shatter his world title dream.

Race stewards penalized Norris and relegated him to fourth behind three-time world champion Max Verstappen of Red Bull after the pair clashed and ran off-track in the closing laps. A five-second penalty given to Norris, who finished third on track at the flag, pushed him back to fourth behind the series leader and dealt a blow in his bid to catch and pass the Dutch driver in this year's title race.

Norris was adjudged to have gained an advantage by running off the track when he swept outside Verstappen on lap 53 or the 56-lap race. The incident cost Norris valuable points and helped lift Verstappen to a 57-point lead in the title race with 354 to Norris's 297 with five races left.

"My view is that the way the stewards interfered with a beautiful piece of motorsport was inappropriate because both cars went off track so both cars gained an advantage," said McLaren team chief Andrea Stella. "It's a shame because it cost us a podium, it cost us a race where we stayed patient after we were pushed off in the first lap, at the first corner. We accepted it. "Having said very clearly our position, this kind of position by the stewards, this kind of decision cannot be appealed. For us the chapter is now closed and we move on to the next race. "But both cars went off track so for us there was no doubt that the manoeuvre was correct."

Norris was philosophical about his plight after a feisty drive, having recovered from a poor first lap when he wasted his fourth pole in five races

and fell to fourth. "Not my best race," he said. "With the loss in turn one and just the racing at the end, it clearly wasn't enough—so that's life. I didn't do a good enough job, but I gave it a good shot so I'm doing my best."

"My best isn't good enough sometimes. It just wasn't our day today." He added that he was considering talking to the stewards about their decision, but felt "there's plenty of scenarios where people wouldn't get a penalty in cases like what happened."

He said it was difficult to know if he should have given his place back immediately during the race. "It's tough to know, but maybe that was my one opportunity that I had. Max was defending well and it wasn't easy to overtake." Verstappen said he had endured a difficult race without the pace in his car to attack. "It was tough, a tough battle and I tried everything to keep him behind me. But it was fun, too," he said.

'Worked like crazy'

"A podium is a good result. I have my own opinion on the move, but I don't need to say anything. I'll let the stewards do their thing." The race was won by Charles Leclerc who led home Carlos Sainz in a Ferrari one-two. Leclerc's win lifted him to 275 points in third place in the championship.

"We did a great job and the pace of the car was really good and that's thanks to the engineers and the team," said Leclerc. "They've worked like crazy for the upgrades and it is paying off now. We could not have dreamed for anything better."

"It all worked and we are very happy. Now we are targeting the constructors title." It was Leclerc's first



AUSTIN: Second place, Ferrari's Spanish driver Carlos Sainz Jr. (2nd L); winner, Ferrari's Monegasque driver Charles Leclerc (C) and third place, Red Bull Racing's Dutch driver Max Verstappen stand on the podium after the United States Formula One Grand Prix at the Circuit of the Americas in Austin, Texas. — AFP

win in America, his third this year and the eighth of his career as Ferrari revealed in their first US Grand Prix one-two since 2006.

Ferrari's success at the Circuit of the Americas

lifted them to 496 points in the teams' title race behind McLaren on 544 and Red Bull on 504 with the Mexican and Brazilian Grands Prix to come on the next two successive weekends. — AFP

Dodgers beat Mets to set World Series showdown with Yankees

LOS ANGELES: The Los Angeles Dodgers advanced to the World Series for the fourth time in eight years by beating the New York Mets 10-5 on Sunday with Tommy Edman driving in four runs to power the triumph.

Edman blasted a two-run double in the first inning and he and Will Smith added two-run home runs in the third as the Dodgers reached Major League Baseball's championship spectacle for the first time since taking the crown in 2020. "This group of guys, I love these guys," said Dodgers outfielder Mookie Betts. "It's fun coming to work every day. It's fun battling." Edman, who was hurt until the middle of August, was named the Most Valuable Player of the series.

"The way the season started, to end up in this situation is crazy," said Edman. "Amazing team. They welcomed me with open arms. Can't wait to keep things going." The Dodgers took the best-of-seven National League Championship Series 4-2 over the Mets and will open the World Series at home on Friday against the New York Yankees, who own a record 27 titles. "I can't wait," Edman said. "This is what we've always dreamed about."

It will mark the record 12th time the Dodgers and Yankees have met in the World Series, the first time since the Dodgers won in 1981. The Yankees are 8-3 against the Dodgers in their World Series meetings.

"I don't know what it means yet," Betts said. "I've just got to get in and see. It's what the people wanted. It's what we all wanted." The Dodgers reached the World Series for the 22nd time while the Yankees, who have not played in a World Series since winning the 2009 crown, are in for the 41st time.

"You guys want a parade in Los Angeles—four more wins," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts told a sellout crowd at Dodger Stadium. It will be the first World Series for Japanese star Shohei Ohtani, who never made the playoffs in his first six MLB campaigns with the Los Angeles Angels before joining the Dodgers this season.

"It's a place that I've dreamed of playing all my



LOS ANGELES: Chris Taylor #3 of the Los Angeles Dodgers singles up the middle past Kodai Senga #34 of the New York Mets during the 8th inning of Game Six of the National League Championship Series at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles. — AFP

life. And to be able to finally come to the stage and be able to play and hopefully win it is my next goal," Ohtani said. "There are no easy games (in the) post-season. We really played well as a team. I'm glad that we were able to pull through."

Dodgers grab early lead

The Mets seized the lead in the first inning as Francisco Lindor walked, took second base on Dodgers' starter Michael Kopech's wild pitch and reached third on Brandon Nimmo's ground out before scoring on a Pete Alonso single. Los Angeles answered in the first when Ohtani singled and took third on Teoscar Hernandez's single and both scored on Edman's double to left field for a 2-1 Dodgers lead.

The Mets loaded the bases in the third inning but Dodgers relief pitcher Anthony Banda struck out Jeff McNeil to end the threat. After Hernandez singled to open the third for the Dodgers, Edman followed with

League and finished the weekend four points behind leaders Liverpool.

But Arteta, speaking at his pre-match press conference on Monday, said there was no need to panic after a first defeat since April. "You have a defeat, that's part of the game, it happens in very specific conditions as well," he said.

"Let's move on, take that pain we still have in the tummy and use it for tomorrow night." The Spaniard added: "It puts a bit of perspective into the situation. Obviously we want to win in any context. The reality is that we have made that context very difficult for ourselves."

"It was very difficult already with the amount of players that we had out and the schedule and the games that we had to play but that's the reality. "For

a two-run homer into the left-field stands.

Max Muncy walked and Smith blasted a two-out homer to boost the Dodgers' advantage to 6-1.

The Mets, however, responded with a two-run homer by Mark Vientos in the fourth. New York loaded the bases again in the sixth only for Jesse Winker to fly out and end the threat.

In the Dodgers' sixth, Smith walked, took second on Chris Taylor's bunt single and scored on a single by Ohtani for a 7-3 Los Angeles lead.

New York's Tyrone Taylor and McNeil hit back-to-back singles in the seventh and Francisco Alvarez drove in Taylor with a sacrifice fly to pull the Mets back within 7-4.

The Dodgers padded their lead to 10-4 in the eighth as Chris Taylor singled, Ohtani walked, Betts doubled in Taylor, Hernandez scored Ohtani on a sacrifice fly and later Enrique Hernandez singled in Edman. — AFP

that game we didn't get away with it. We could have done and it could have been a very different narrative but the reality is we didn't. Another context is that we have lost one game in six months. Now we have to win again."

Arteta also addressed the issue of red cards, after Saliba became the third Gunners' player to be sent off in eight Premier League games this season, following dismissals for Declan Rice and Leandro Trossard.

"Playing with 10 men, obviously that is an issue," he said. "The truth is when you analyse the three very different actions and the outcome of them, the reasons are very different. "Regardless of that, we cannot continue to play with 10 men, especially at this level." — AFP

Dortmund identity crisis ahead of rematch with Real

BERLIN: Borussia Dortmund travel to Real Madrid Tuesday in a rematch of last season's Champions League final amid worrying form and criticism of coach Nuri Sahin. Tipped to be eliminated at the group stage last year, Dortmund arrived for the showpiece finale at Wembley in June, riding a wave of momentum.

Dortmund dominated the first half and well into the second, but were felled by a trademark Real Madrid counterpunch, conceding twice in the final 20 minutes to lose 2-0. Since then, coach Edin Terzic was shown the door, falling victim to a poor domestic season with a fifth-placed finish, bringing his assistant Sahin into the hot seat.

Sahin, a Dortmund junior who had stints at Real Madrid and Liverpool as a player, has overseen 10 games in all competitions. Now he faces the biggest test of his mettle to date with his Dortmund team having looked inconsistent and still appearing to lack a clear tactical identity.

Home and away

Dortmund started the season with a solid 2-0 win over Eintracht Frankfurt, but were later thrashed 5-1 by Stuttgart. Sahin's side are seventh in the Bundesliga, but are top of the 36-team Champions League group after wins at Club Brugge and against Celtic at home.

The only discernible trend so far for Dortmund has been their strength at home and their woes on the road. In front of their 82,000-strong Westfalenstadion home crowd, Dortmund have won five from five, scoring 19 goals and conceding six.

On the road however, their two wins in five matches have come against fourth division Phoenix Luebeck, and Brugge, who sit fourth in the Belgian league. Real, by contrast, have won seven from seven at home in all competitions, scoring 19 and conceding just four. Up front, the German side look set to arrive in Madrid lacking firepower with Karim Adeyemi, Julien Duranville, Giovanni Reyna and attack-minded defender Yan Couto on the injury list.

Aside from the ever-reliable Gregor Kobel in goal, Dortmund's only trump card is the form of striker Serhou Guirassy. The Guinean, who joined from Stuttgart in the summer, has 12 goals in his past eight games for club and country, only failing to score once.

Sahin endured an unhappy spell at Real who signed him after he won the 2011 Bundesliga title in a Jurgen Klopp-powered Dortmund side. However, the Turkey international played just 10 games in all competitions. — AFP

Arteta urges Arsenal to use Bournemouth pain against Shakhtar

LONDON: Mikel Arteta has urged Arsenal to use the "pain" of their first defeat in six months as motivation in Tuesday's Champions League clash against Shakhtar Donetsk.

The Gunners suffered a shock 2-0 loss at the hands of Bournemouth on Saturday after defender William Saliba was sent off in the first half. It meant they lost ground at the top of the Premier

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
Qadsia	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, **ZAHERUDDIN** SHAIK, holder of Indian Passport No. U0461168 having permanent address 4 73 B Usmannagar, Rajampet, Ysr District, Pin: 516115, Andhra Pradesh, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as under: **ZAHEERUDDIN** (given name) and **SHAIK** (surname).
(#6181 22/10/2024)

Lethal Lewandowski helps Barca rout Sevilla, Atletico triumph

Lewandowski reached 12 goals in 10 La Liga matches



MADRID: Atletico Madrid's Norwegian forward #09 Alexander Sorloth shoots despite being tackled by Leganes' Peruvian midfielder #05 Renato Tapia (2L) during the Spanish league football match between Club Atletico de Madrid and Club Deportivo Leganes SAD at the Metropolitano stadium in Madrid. — AFP

BARCELONA: Red-hot Robert Lewandowski and Pablo Torre struck twice each as Barcelona hammered Sevilla 5-1 on Sunday to stay three points clear of Real Madrid at the top of La Liga ahead of next weekend's Clasico.

Earlier, Alexander Sorloth's double helped Atletico Madrid, third, come from behind to beat neighbors Leganes 3-1. Madrid beat Celta Vigo on Saturday to pull level with Hansi Flick's side but Barca swiftly restored their advantage with a stylish and dominant display of attacking football.

Veteran striker Lewandowski reached 12 goals in 10 La Liga matches, his strikes sandwiching Pedri Gonzalez's effort from the edge of the box, before substitute Torre added the fourth. Stanis Idumbo grabbed a consolation for Sevilla in the final stages but Francisco Garcia Pimental's side were roundly beaten on his return to the club he spent nearly three decades with in various roles.

Torre finished the rout with a crossed free-kick which flew beyond Nyland and in at the far post and Barcelona were also able to celebrate Gavi's return from a long injury lay-off. The midfielder

came on in the final stages for his first minutes in a Barcelona shirt since suffering a severe knee injury in November 2023.

"It's too difficult, it's not easy (to pick a highlight)," said Flick. "Three points and five goals... but we are all happy that Gavi's back." Despite upcoming clashes against Bayern Munich in the Champions League and Saturday's visit to the Santiago Bernabeu, Flick started arguably his strongest fit and available side.

As well as Gavi, the coach was able to name Dani Olmo and Fermin Lopez on the bench after injury, while Ansu Fati started for the first time this season. The Catalans took the lead when Raphinha went down in the box under light contact from Peque, a former Barca youth player, and the referee pointed to the spot.

Lewandowski, stuttering in his run-up, sent Sevilla goalkeeper Orjan Nyland the wrong way to fire Barca ahead in the 24th minute. The 36-year-old striker is enjoying a second wind under Flick and leads Spain's scoring charts with 12 strikes in 10 matches, twice as many as any other player. Pedri soon doubled Barcelona's lead from the edge of the box after

the hyperactive Lamine Yamal set him up and created another fine chance for Lewandowski.

Gavi 'deserves this'

The Polish striker netted his second before the break by guiding home Raphinha's drive from distance with a flick of his boot. Suffering Sevilla were dealt more bad news before the break when explosive winger Chidera Ejuke limped off injured.

Raphinha fired home early in the second half but was offside, as Barcelona strolled, carving open the Andalusians at their leisure. Yamal produced an outrageous shot from distance with the outside of his boot which Nyland clawed to safety.

Dodi Lukebakio struck at the other end on a rare Sevilla foray forward but had strayed offside. Barca midfielder Pablo Torre rattled home the fourth with the aid of a deflection before Gavi appeared as a substitute with a few minutes remaining to a rapturous reception.

"I am very happy to come back after so long out injured, I have been dreaming about this for many months and I am grateful to my teammates who made

the process easier for me," Gavi told LaLiga TV. "The hardest thing is not playing, watching from the outside. It's frustrating, it's tough... I feel fortunate to be back." Idumbo pulled one back for Sevilla, 13th, but Torre wrapped up Barcelona's night with a stroke of fortune when his free-kick crept in at the far post.

Sorloth double

Diego Simeone's Atletico struggled against the minnows from the south of Madrid but after Yvan Neyou blasted the visitors ahead Sorloth levelled with a fine finish and Antoine Griezmann slid home the second. Norwegian target man Sorloth wrapped up the victory late in stoppage time with a poacher's finish. "In the second half we improved a bit, above all in speeding up the game," Simeone told Movistar. Atletico came into the game with just one victory in their last five matches across all competitions.

No supporters filled the lower part of the Metropolitano stadium's south stand, closed by the Spanish football federation after some Atletico fans threw objects at Real Madrid players during the derby in September. — AFP

Unbeaten Chiefs march past 49ers

MIAMI: The Kansas City Chiefs remain as the last team in the NFL with an unbeaten record after an impressive 28-18 win at the San Francisco 49ers in their Super Bowl rematch on Sunday. The only other team who went into week seven unbeaten, the Minnesota Vikings, suffered their first loss of the season falling 31-29 to divisional rival Detroit.

The trip to Santa Clara was the biggest test of the season yet for the Chiefs, and coach Andy Reid's players showed they mean business in their Super Bowl title defense with yet another performance mixing rock solid defense with the clever quarterback play of Patrick Mahomes.

Two rushing touchdowns from Kareem Hunt gave the Chiefs a 14-3 lead in the second quarter but the 49ers fought back when, after Mahomes threw an interception, San Francisco's Brock Purdy led a seven-play touchdown drive which ended with him running in the final yard. But Purdy, who threw three interceptions, was picked off by Christian Roland-Wallace and Mahomes took full advantage on the resulting possession. Mahomes scrambled brilliantly for 33 yards to the San Francisco 4-yard line and finished off the drive by powering up the middle to score himself and make it 21-12.

Purdy had a chance to narrow the deficit but his throw into the end zone, intended for Chris Conley, was intercepted by Jaden Hicks and once again Kansas City scored on the possession with Mecole Hardman racing in on an 18-yard sweep. A late touchdown pass from Purdy to Bell came too



PITTSBURGH Jaylen Warren #30 of the Pittsburgh Steelers runs with the ball during the third quarter against the New York Jets at Acrisure Stadium. — AFP

late for any comeback by the 49ers, who slipped to 3-4 on the season.

Gibbs roars for Lions

Jahmyr Gibbs ran for two touchdowns and 116 yards on 15 carries for the Detroit Lions, who take over at the top of the NFC North and the conference, sharing a 5-1 record with Minnesota. The Vikings were up 10-0 at the end of the first quarter after Aaron Jones ran in a 34-yard touchdown and Will Reichard made a 57-yard field goal.

But Detroit grabbed control of the game with

three touchdowns in an explosive second quarter. Gibbs rushed 45 yards to get the Lions on the scoreboard before quarterback Jared Goff connected with Amon-Ra St. Brown on a 35-yard touchdown pass.

Gibbs finished off a 72-yard drive with an 8-yard rush to give Detroit a 21-10 half-time lead. The Vikings got back in the game as quarterback Sam Darnold found Justin Jefferson with a 25-yard pass into the end zone.

Goff responded, finding Kalif Raymond with a short left pass the receiver grabbed for a 21-yard score putting Detroit up 28-17. The Vikings cut the

Lions' lead to five with two Reichard field goals in the fourth quarter before Detroit running back David Montgomery fumbled and Minnesota's Ivan Pace recovered and raced 36 yards for the touchdown.

The Vikings failed in a two-point conversion attempt, leaving the Lions behind by a point, but Detroit took the win with Jake Bates' 44-yard field goal. Minnesota had one last chance to save their unbeaten record but Trevor Nowaske sacked Darnold to end the contest.

The Green Bay Packers are third in the NFC North but far from out of the picture after a thrilling 24-22 win over visiting Houston. Brandon McManus' 45-yard, walk-off field goal ensured the Packers moved to 5-2 after a game where quarterback Jordan Love threw for 220 yards and three touchdowns.

Texans quarterback C.J. Stroud managed just 86 yards on 10 of 21 passing with running back Joe Mixon doing the heavy lifting with two touchdowns and 115 yards on 25 carries. The Washington Commanders (5-2) lost quarterback Jayden Daniels to a rib injury but back-up Marcus Mariota threw two touchdowns in a 40-7 crushing of the struggling Carolina Panthers (1-6). Saquon Barkley returned to haunt his former club, the New York Giants, rushing for 176 yards and a touchdown as the visiting Philadelphia Eagles won 28-3. Eagles quarterback Jalen Hurts ran in two touchdowns and threw another to A.J. Brown as the Eagles moved to 4-2.

The arrival of wide-receiver Davante Adams to re-unite with his former Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers failed to stop the New York Jets from slumping to a fourth straight defeat as they fell 37-5 at the Pittsburgh Steelers. Steelers quarterback Russell Wilson, who started ahead of Justin Fields, threw for 264 yards and two touchdowns and ran in another as Pittsburgh moved to 5-2. — AFP