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9 19% increase in ABK net profit to KD 38.83m for 9 months of 2024



13 Rare floods bring Morocco's dried-up south back to life



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16 Late Bowen penalty gives West Ham dramatic win over Man Utd



Carnage in Gaza amid truce talk

Heavy fighting in Lebanon • Bibi hails Iran strike as Khamenei warns against exaggeration



GAZA: Palestinians pray over bodies of relatives killed in an overnight Zionist airstrike in Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip on Oct 27, 2024. — AFP

GAZA/BEIRUT: Egypt has proposed an initial two-day ceasefire in Gaza to exchange four Zionist captives of Hamas for some Palestinian prisoners, Egypt's president said on Sunday as Zionist military strikes killed 45 Palestinians across the enclave. Egyptian leader Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi made the announcement as efforts to defuse the devastating, more than year-long war resumed in Qatar with the directors of the CIA and Mossad intelligence agency taking part. Speaking alongside Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune during a press conference in Cairo, Sisi also said that talks should resume within 10 days of implementing the temporary ceasefire in efforts to reach a permanent one. There was no immediate comment from the Zionist entity or Hamas but a Palestinian official

close to the mediation effort told Reuters: "I expect Hamas would listen to the new offers, but it remains determined that any agreement must end the war and get (Zionist) forces out of Gaza." The death toll from the Zionist air and ground onslaught in Gaza is approaching 43,000, mostly women and children, with the densely populated enclave in ruins. An official briefed on the talks told Reuters earlier on Sunday that negotiations in Doha will seek a short-term ceasefire and the release of some captives being held by Hamas in exchange for the Zionist entity's release of Palestinian prisoners. The objective, still elusive after multiple mediation attempts, is to get the Zionist entity and Hamas to agree to a halt in fighting for less than a month in the hope this would lead to a more permanent

ceasefire. At least 43 of those killed in Gaza on Sunday were in the north of the enclave, where Zionist troops have returned to commit atrocities. The United Nations said the plight of Palestinian civilians in northern Gaza was "unbearable" and the conflict was being "waged with little regard for the requirements of international humanitarian law". "The Secretary-General (Antonio Guterres) is shocked by the harrowing levels of death, injury and destruction in the north, with civilians trapped under rubble, the sick and wounded going without life-saving health care, and families lacking food and shelter, amid reports of families being separated and many people detained," UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said in a statement.

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Army warehouse fire put out

KUWAIT: Firefighters controlled a fire at a warehouse containing furniture and stationery belonging to Kuwait Army's Local Supply Department in Mubarkiya camps, Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) said in a statement Sunday, adding that no injuries were reported in the incident. — KUNA



Saudi opens resort island

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's planned futuristic mega-city known as NEOM announced on Sunday the opening of its "first physical showcase": A luxury Red Sea island known as Sindalah featuring restaurants, hotels and yachting berths. "NEOM is committed to supporting the Kingdom's new era of luxury tourism, with the opening of Sindalah," chief executive Nadhmi Al-Nasr said in a statement. Sindalah is "spread over 840,000 sq m" and will be set to receive "up to 2,400 guests per day by 2028", the statement said. — AFP

Bader Al-Kharafi highlights Kuwait's economic role

WASHINGTON: Chairman of Gulf Bank Bader Al-Kharafi emphasized the importance of Kuwait participation in the IMF and World Bank meetings to address global economic challenges, poverty reduction, sustainable development and international monetary cooperation. He noted Kuwait's role in promoting solutions for food economy dynamics, gender equality, private sector investment and sustainable growth, helping prepare for future financial challenges. Minister of Finance, Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment and Acting Minister of Oil Noura Al-Fassam underscored Kuwait's efforts to diversify its economy by improving the business environment, expanding financing options, and encouraging long-term partnerships. Speaking at the 2024 Annual Meetings Plenary, she emphasized the need for strategic investments in innovation, technology and sustainability to reduce dependence on oil revenues. Fassam also highlighted Kuwait's commitment to



WASHINGTON: Gulf Bank Chairman Bader Al-Kharafi, Central Bank of Kuwait Governor Basel Al-Haroon, Kuwaiti Ambassador to the US Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah and other banking chiefs participate in a reception amid IMF/World Bank meetings on Oct 26, 2024. — KUNA

building a resilient economy and advancing sustainable development through regional and international partnerships. The meetings gathered prominent Kuwaiti officials, including Central Bank of Kuwait Governor Basel Al-Haroon, Kuwait's Ambassador to

the US Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah and key banking officials. Leaders from other major Kuwaiti banks participated, highlighting the country's advancements in banking technology and financial reform efforts amid global economic shifts. — KUNA (See Page 2)

Trump woos Muslim vote in Michigan as Obama backs Harris

NOVI/KALAMAZOO, Michigan: Republican Donald Trump appealed to Muslim voters in Michigan on Saturday as Michelle Obama made an impassioned plea on behalf of Kamala Harris at the Democrat's own rally in the battleground state. In Michigan, Harris and Trump are battling for voters that include an Arab American and Muslim population concerned about the Zionist entity's bombardment of Gaza, and union workers worried about how electric vehicles could reshape the US auto industry, which is headquartered in Detroit, the state's largest city. Election Day is Nov 5 but early voting was under way in Michigan, as it is in many states. Speaking at a rally outside Detroit, Trump said he had just met with group of local imams, arguing that he deserved the support of Muslim voters because he would end conflicts and bring peace to the Middle East. "That's all they want," Trump said in the Detroit suburb of Novi, also pledging to auto workers at the rally that he would reverse economic decline in the Detroit area and nationwide. Trump fully backs the Zionist entity but has not said how he would end the conflict there. Even so, Trump appears to be gaining support from some Muslim Americans upset with President Joe Biden's



NOVI, Michigan: Former US President Donald Trump greets local leaders of the Muslim community who endorsed him onstage during a campaign rally on Oct 26, 2024. — AFP

and Harris' support of the Zionist entity, and despite Trump banning immigration from some Muslim majority countries in his first term as president. Imam Belal Alzuhairi of the Islamic Center of Detroit joined Trump on stage, saying, "We ask Muslims to stand with President Trump because he promises peace." With some 8.4 million registered voters and 15 electoral college votes of the 270 needed to win, Michigan is one of seven competitive US states that will decide the election. It is part of the "Blue Wall" that is considered Democrats' best chance of electing Harris, along with Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

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Philippines death toll from tropical storm rises to 110

MANILA: Rescuers in the Philippines searched a lake and scoured isolated villages on Sunday to locate dozens of missing people as the death toll from Tropical Storm Trami hit 110. Trami raged into the Philippines on Oct 24, forcing over half a million people to flee their homes, while at least 42 people remain missing in the storm's aftermath, according to the national disaster agency. The agency announced Sunday night that at least 110 people were reported dead, though no provincial breakdown was provided for the death toll. Trami is the deadliest storm to hit the Southeast Asian country so far this year "especially with the reported number of casualties", Ariel Nepomuceno in the Office of Civil Defense — which oversees disaster management — told AFP. Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos vowed Sunday that help was underway for the residents of Camarines Sur province, located in the hardest-hit region of Bicol. "By air, land, or sea, we'll keep the support coming. Together, we will rise again," Marcos said on his social media accounts.

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Global finance meetings chance to show banking sector's strength

Bader Al-Kharafi stresses significance of active Kuwaiti participation in discussing pressing global issues



WASHINGTON: Kuwaiti banking sector leaders pose for a photo at a reception organized by the Kuwait Banking Association. — KUNA

WASHINGTON: Sheikh Ahmad Duaij Al-Sabah, Chairman for the Commercial Bank of Kuwait and Chairman at Kuwait Banking Association said the participation of Kuwaiti banks in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank meetings is a valuable opportunity to showcase the strength and resilience of the Kuwaiti banking sector at both local and global levels.

In a statement to KUNA during a reception organized by the Kuwait Banking Association in Washington, Sheikh Ahmad Duaij noted that participating in such significant forums highlights the robustness of the Kuwaiti banking sector on local, Arab, and international fronts, especially given the tremendous developments in financial technology and sustainable financing. The reception was held under the patronage of the Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait, Basel Al-Haroon, with the attendance of the Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Noura Al-Fassam, the Kuwaiti Ambassador to the United States Sheikh Al-Zain Al-Sabah, and various central bank governors from Arab countries, alongside key figures from the local banking sector and numerous economic and financial leaders worldwide.

Sheikh Ahmad Duaij highlighted the prestigious ratings and sound financial indicators of the banking sector, which benefit from the prudent oversight of the Central Bank of Kuwait and the adoption of the best regulatory and supervisory standards. He stated that the reception was an opportunity to showcase the progress Kuwait has made in various areas, particularly in financial and economic reform measures, and updating legislation for a more competitive economy and improved business climate.

Sheikh Ahmad Duaij asserted that technology and innovation are key drivers for achieving security, operational efficiency, and enhancing customer experience in the banking sector.

Hamad Al-Marzouq, Vice Chairman of the banking association and Chairman of Kuwait Finance House (KFH), emphasized the importance of participating in the IMF and World Bank meetings as they are among the most prominent economic and financial gatherings globally. Marzouq noted that KFH, as a leader in the global Islamic finance industry, played an active role in the meetings and conferences accompanying the IMF discussions, showcasing its pioneering role in Islamic banking and its

future in the global economy, as well as presenting and discussing joint projects and various fields with multiple parties, particularly following the successful acquisition of Ahli United Bank - Bahrain, which has given KFH new geographical reach, now providing services in 12 countries including Kuwait, Bahrain, Turkey, Egypt, the UK, and Germany.

Bader Al-Kharafi, Chairman of Gulf Bank, pointed out that the importance of these meetings stems from the high-level participation aimed at discussing global economic developments and anticipating future trends amid current international crises, focusing on poverty alleviation, sustainable development, and enhancing monetary cooperation and international trade. He stressed the significance of active Kuwaiti participation in discussing pressing issues, including food economy dynamics, accelerating gender equality, mechanisms for achieving sustainable development, and the complexities facing global financial markets while proposing necessary solutions to increase financing and knowledge, encourage private sector investments, and prepare for future crises.

Isam Al-Sager, Vice Chairman and CEO of the National Bank of Kuwait Group, described the

reception as a significant event for as it gathers a multitude of Kuwaiti government officials, senior bankers, investors, and financial policymakers worldwide to discuss the latest financial and banking developments and explore opportunities for exchange of expertise and collaboration in financing and investment, as well as addressing the major challenges facing the banking and financial industry globally. Adel Al-Majed, Vice-Chairman & Group Chief Executive Officer of Boubayan Bank Group, emphasized that the IMF and World Bank meetings are particularly important as they discuss key policies and trends supporting and achieving economic stability and the impact of challenges on monetary policies amid the financial and economic difficulties facing the global banking industry.

Raed Bukhamseen, Vice Chairman and CEO of Kuwait International Bank (KIB), said KIB's participation in these international forums reflects its strong belief in the importance of enhancing international cooperation in the financial and banking sector. He added that the reception is an opportunity to showcase KIB's distinguished banking model and emphasize its role in financing investment projects and contributing to achieving

Kuwait Vision 2035. Bader Al-Shalfan, Vice Chairman of Warba Bank, noted that Warba Bank has recently made significant advancements, particularly in developing its investment and financing portfolio, especially in light of the global trend toward Islamic banking, which has proven its remarkable success.

Abdullah Al-Sumait, Deputy Chief General Manager at Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK), said the bank is committed to continuously supporting the efforts of the Kuwait Banking Association, praising its significant role and contributions to elevating the banking sector's status and enhancing its image at various levels. Abdullah Marafie, General Manager of Treasury and Financial Institutions at Burgan Bank, concluded that the global economic arena is continuously evolving, making it essential for the bank to participate in global discussions to achieve success. He added that for decades, Burgan Bank has significantly contributed to the development of banking services in Kuwait and the region by adopting sustainability, innovation, digital transformation, and human capital development as core pillars of the group's operations. — KUNA

Vaping as harmful as smoking tobacco: Doctor

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait is exerting continuous efforts in cooperation with NGOs to confront the fatal scourge of smoking through a comprehensive strategy that relies on enforcement, prevention, and treatment, said Health Minister Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi.

The statement came during his opening speech at the International Tobacco Control Conference titled "The Smoking Epidemic and Conflicts of Interest," organized by the Kuwait Society for Smoking and Cancer Prevention in cooperation with the National Anti-Smoking Program at the Ministry of Health.

Dr Al-Awadhi said that tobacco is one of the most dangerous health risks facing the world, with statistics showing that over one billion people around the world smoke tobacco, causing the deaths of more than a million individuals each year. He explained that tobacco contains toxic chemicals like nicotine and cyanide, which damage the human body over time and may increase the risk of dangerous diseases such as heart disease, stroke, lung damage, and various cancers.

Chairman of the Board of Kuwait Society for Smoking and Cancer Prevention Dr Khalid Al-Saleh said that serious and "sincere work must be made to



KUWAIT: Chairman of the Board of Kuwait Society for Smoking and Cancer Prevention Dr Khalid Al-Saleh (right) presents Health Minister Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi (center right) with an award in the presence of Hamad Al-Rasheed and Dr Hussa Al-Shaheen (left).

protect our societies, particularly the young against the dangers of the tobacco industry that is targeting them, taking advantage of their influence on the economies of developing countries".

Dr Al-Awadhi said the WHO gave special interest to the negative effects of the tobacco industry, especially in developing countries which incur tremendous economic and health losses due to the import or manufacturing of tobacco products.

Dr Al-Awadhi said this reflects the importance of the countries having strict legislations that ban smoking in various places. He added that the media bears major responsibility in

raising society's awareness of the dangers of this deadly phenomenon and its negative effects on public health and society.

"Confronting the tobacco industry and promotion is the best way to reduce the harms it causes, bearing in mind that there are governments lose tremendous amounts of money to provide treatments for smoking-related diseases, particularly the rise in chronic diseases, such as cancer," said Dr Al-Saleh.

Dr Al-Saleh emphasized the environmental damage resulting from farming tobacco, which leads to social and economic harm. He added that the damage highlights the need to consolidate efforts to raise awareness "the sad reality we live in," referring to the existence of nearly 1.1 billion smokers aged 15 and older, with 80 percent residing in low- and middle-income countries. Statistics indicate that around 10 percent of individuals aged 13 to 15 worldwide use tobacco, including 12 million adolescents who use new products — a number likely underreported due to a lack of data in over 70 countries.

He said warnings against smoking also include e-cigarettes that contain nicotine and are as harmful as traditional tobacco products. He noted that e-cigarettes are rapidly spreading among society members, particularly the youth and adolescents in addition to the spread of smoking among women. The WHO recently announced that smoking constitutes one of the major threats to public health globally, leading to the death of more than seven million persons per year due to direct use of tobacco, in addition to 1.3 deaths due to passive smoking.



WASHINGTON: Minister of Finance Noura Al-Fassam poses for a photo with World Bank President Ajay Banga. — KUNA

Finance Minister: Kuwait building diverse economy

WASHINGTON: Kuwait is working to expand its scope of financing, encourage long-term partnerships and build a regulatory framework suitable for investors as part of its economic diversification, Minister of Finance Noura Al-Fassam said. She added that Kuwait is capitalizing on its human resources while working to improve business environment and diversify its economy. "The State of Kuwait takes pride in having national youth employed by both prestigious organizations and seeks to build their capacity and benefit from their experience," said Fassam, who is also Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment and Acting Minister of Oil. Kuwait's strategy for economic diversification focuses on expanding priority sectors, seizing market opportunities, strengthening infrastructure and building a resilient and sustainable economy prosperous enough to address future challenges, she said at the 2024 Annual Meetings Plenary of the World Bank Group and governors of the Arab central banks on Saturday. Kuwait and other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council are witnessing a big economic transformation that requires gradual diversification of the sources of income and less reliance on oil revenues. The process necessitates turning to strategic long-term investments based on innovations, hi-tech and sustainability, the minister explained.

Minister Al-Fassam reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to building strategic partnerships on regional and international levels in order to advance sustainable development across the Arab world. She said Kuwait was also keen on enhancing its partnership with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group. She noted that she has had "constructive talks" with IMF leaders, notably IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva, on the role of the IMF in enhancing international cooperation, exchange of expertise and successful examples of partnerships particularly in the Middle East region. "The meeting with WBG representatives explored ways for Kuwait benefiting from the group's experience in economic and financial reforms and promoting the partnership between both sides," she said. The minister's participation in the 2024 IMF-WBG annual meetings, which ended Saturday, came under directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. "This signals the great importance Kuwait attaches to international cooperation in the framework of both global financial institutions," she said. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Japanese and Kuwaiti officials cut a ceremonial ribbon to celebrate the opening of ASICS in Assima Mall.



The fourth ASICS store in Kuwait is seen in Assima Mall.

AAW celebrates opening of ASICS' 4th store in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Ali Abdulwahab Al-Mutawa Commercial Co (AAW) and ASICS, the renowned Japanese sportswear brand, celebrated the opening of their new store in Assima Mall. The event was attended by the Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Morino Yasunari, the ASICS Arabia General Manager Seiji Hori, AAW Chairman and CEO

Faisal Ali Al-Mutawa, AAW Deputy CEO Khalid Faisal Al-Mutawa, along with team members from AAW and ASICS, as well as mall visitors.

The celebration highlighted ASICS' brand heritage and its 'Sound Mind, Sound Body' philosophy. The event featured a range of Japanese-inspired entertainment, including a live handpan performance, a Japanese ink painting show, Japanese catering, and interactive games. These activities not only showcased the brand's cultural roots but also emphasized its technological innovations in sports and lifestyle. The ASICS Assima store, located on the Mezzanine floor, offers a wide range of running, volleyball, padel, tennis, and other sport style apparel and foot-

wear for men, women, and children. In addition, customers can use the brand's Foot ID and Run Analysis to determine their optimal running shoe.

Since its launch in Kuwait in 2018, ASICS has become a preferred choice for those seeking high-quality sportswear and footwear. This success is attributed to the brand's commitment to testing, research, and sustainable practices, ensuring products that align with its philosophy of "A Sound Mind in a Sound Body." It is worth noting that the first ASICS store in Kuwait was opened at The Avenues in 2018, the second at 360 Mall, the third at Al Khiran Mall, and now the fourth at Assima Mall, which is open from 10:00 am to 11:00 pm.

Zain empowers students to excel in the world of business

Second FUN Talks initiative kicks-off in partnership with M2 Club at Kuwait University



Bader Alogaili shares his business success story during the session.



KUWAIT: Zain and M2 Club representatives honor Bader Alogaili for participating in FUN talks.

KUWAIT: For the second time running, Zain has kicked-off its FUN Talks initiative in strategic partnership with the Management and Marketing Club (M2 Club) at the College of Business Administration, Kuwait University. The initiative brings together a distinguished group of local entrepreneurs and business success stories to share their experiences with students, empowering them to pursue their dreams and contribute to the growth of the creative economy.

This initiative comes under the umbrella of Zain's Future University Network (FUN) program, which provides university students with a plethora of opportunities to gain knowledge and skills through a wide range of year-round programs and initiatives. The programs are designed to upskill participants in diverse areas, preparing them to enter the local private sector and empowering them to excel in their future careers.

FUN Talks features insightful discussions with a select group of Kuwaiti entrepreneurs and founders of popular local startups who have achieved inspiring success in the business world. The guests share their stories with the students and discuss how they transformed their dreams into competitive brands that excelled in the local market. This platform enables students to interact closely with the speakers to learn from their unique journeys, something that inspires them to realize their own

dreams one day. The discussions are moderated by Dr Abrar Abul, a faculty member at the College of Business Administration.

This year, FUN Talks hosts several notable figures, including Bader Alogaili, co-founder of the highly successful PICK chain that specializes in passionately made, fresh, and nutritious food. Also joining the guests is Raghad Al Zamil, CEO of Arzi Holding, an enterprise spanning multiple sectors with a focus on creativity and sustainability. She is also the co-founder of Mawada, a unique online gifting platform, and the founder of Ocean Minded, an organization committed to educating younger generations on the importance of marine conservation. Also joining the panels are Maryam Dashti and Abdullah Abu Qasim from Lose & Gain, a comprehensive health center focused on sports care and wellness activities, as well as Fahad Abu Al-Hassan, the creator of the popular social entertainment game MKHMKH.

This new edition follows the success of the first, which featured prominent local business figures such as Mohammed Al-Hajraf, founder of FURDTK, the platform specializing in fresh produce, and Abdulrahman Al-Khulaifi, CEO of Diet Station, a leading provider of healthy meal subscriptions. Other notable participants from last season included Lujain Al-Wazzan, Chief Operating Officer, and Janan Al-Wazzan, Creative Director at Al-Wazzan Education, which operates a number of world-class academic institutions,



Students attend a FUN Talks discussion.

and Mohammed Al-Dhubaib, CEO of Seazen Group, a leader in the hospitality sector managing popular restaurants across the country.

FUN continues to be one of Zain's most engaging sustainable programs since its launch in 2008, focusing on investing in the next generation

of Kuwait's talents. Over the years, the program has provided hundreds of students with paid part-time experiences at Zain, helping them launch their careers, while also bringing them many development and training opportunities to empower them to excel in their fields.



Students pose for a photo with Kuwait Times and Kuwait News staff at the printing press.



Students explore the Kuwait Times warehouse and studio.



KUWAIT: American Academy students learn about journalism at the Kuwait Times Editorial Department. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Students browse old newspaper editions at the Kuwait Times archives room.



Students look at photos taken by Kuwait Times Photojournalist Yasser Al-Zayyat showing lightning as it strikes Kuwait City.

American Academy School visits Kuwait Times, Kuwait News

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: Kuwait Times and Kuwait News hosted students from the American Academy School to explore the behind-the-scenes dynamics of journalism. The students toured various departments and met the Kuwait Times team, who helped them learn about the nature of working in a newspaper. Their tour started with the studio where Kuwait Times Content Creator Dhoha Al-Issa explained to them how videos for Kuwait Times' social media pages are filmed. They then moved to the editorial department, where Kuwait Times reporter Ghadeer Ghloom spoke about the processes involved in news gathering, writing, editing, and translating.



Next, the students visited Kuwait Times' archives, where they were allowed to travel to the past and explore the 63-year history of Kuwait Times. They not only saw historical news but also looked for events that happened on the days they were born, and news that show the world hasn't changed much between the past and the present, making them wonder how history sometimes repeats itself. They were finally taken to the printing press, where they saw how the printer works.



Kuwait, US continue space talks

Officials discuss ways to develop Kuwait's space policy, highlight national space center



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti and US officials pose for a photo during their meeting to discuss opportunities for cooperation in the field of space science.

KUWAIT: Kuwait-US talks to explore ways to collaborate in the field of space science are a foot, with several official meetings held on the matter over the past two weeks. Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister of State for the Americas Khalid Al-Zaabi chaired the latest meeting with Kuwait University and a US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) delegation.

During the meeting, officials reviewed the space policy of the United States, in addition to identifying the vision of Kuwaiti authorities regarding their interests in space projects, and ways to develop Kuwait's space policy.

They also discussed opportunities for cooperation between NASA and Kuwaiti authorities. The

Kuwait National Space Research Center, which was established following an Amiri decree by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, was identified as point of contact through which NASA and Kuwaiti authorities will discuss matters pertaining to space cooperation.

The meeting was attended by Acting Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs, Research and Graduate Studies Susan Al-Bustan, Acting Head of the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences Feryal Bou Rabie, Acting Head of the Physics Department and Director of the Kuwait Satellite National Project Kuwait Sat-1 Hala Khaled Al-Jassar, and the NASA Deputy Assistant Administrator for NASA Administration Casey Weissel, NASA Public

Relations Officer Katherine Hamilton, along with a number of embassy members and representatives of Kuwaiti authorities.

On October 19, Kuwait University, supported by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, hosted a research delegation from NASA in collaboration with Kuwait's foreign ministry and the US Embassy. Discussions centered on opportunities for collaboration, particularly in space technology and student training programs, reflecting Kuwait's commitment to advancing its role in global space exploration. The NASA delegation's visit to Kuwait is aimed to enhance international cooperation in space exploration, focusing on research, education, and training.

Kuwait to host annual Arab news agencies federation meeting

KUWAIT: Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) is hosting the 51st General Assembly conference for the Federation of Arab News Agencies (FANA) Monday, with the participation of 12 agencies in addition to FANA's Secretariat and the GCC as an observer. Issues and challenges facing Arab news agencies would be on the table of discussions during the General Assembly as well as topics of mutual interest and cooperation amongst FANA members. The latest technological developments in media in addition to regional and international happenings would also be discussed during the event.

The General Assembly will be chaired by current FANA President and Acting Director General of the Emirates News Agency (WAM) Dr Jamal Al-Kaabi as well as Vice President of FANA and Director General of KUNA Dr Fatma Al-Salem. FANA was established in 1975 to bolster cooperation and boost integration amongst Arab news agencies to enhance media coverage that would meet the pace of global news events and developments. The federation aims to highlight news from the Arab world, creating a clear Arab media identity in the international arena and also encourage members to use the latest in technological advancement to meet the demand of the digital age. FANA's General Assembly is held once annually, while the federation's secretariat meets twice a year to discuss FANA activities.

The secretariat consists of seven members voted-in during the General Assembly for a period of two years, while the Secretary General of FANA holds the position for a period of five years. The 50th General Assembly saw the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) handing in the Presidency to the Emirate News Agency (WAM). Kuwait News Agency's (KUNA) Director General Dr Fatma Al-Salem was elected as Vice President of the FANA during the meeting, the first Arab woman to hold the position within FANA.



KUWAIT: Kuwait University representatives meet with a Chinese delegation from Jiangsu Province.

KU, Jiangsu discuss student exchange, academic ties

KUWAIT: Kuwait University is discussing ways to enhance student exchange between Kuwait and China. The university's planning department hosted a Chinese delegation last week as part of the university's mission to boost cooperation with other prestigious international institutions and learn about the latest academic, cultural and scientific developments. Kuwait University representatives, led by Vice

President for Planning Asaad Al-Rashed, welcomed the Chinese delegation, led by Vice Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the Provincial People's Congress of Jiangsu Province of China Zhang Baojuan. The two sides discussed ways to strengthen academic bilateral ties and improve student exchange programs.

Jiangsu is among the most economically developed provinces in China and an important industrial base. Known as the "land of fish and rice," it's also one of the richest agricultural provinces in China. However, Jiangsu has one of the lowest natural population growth rates among the Chinese provinces, chiefly because its people have a higher level of education, and have willingly adopted family planning.

Benin, Yemen to get loans, grants from KFAED

WASHINGTON: Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development signed two loan accords with Benin and a grant agreement with the Yemeni Government on the fringes of the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. KFAED said in statement on Saturday that the fund would lend Benin KD 4.5 million for a water project. The accord was signed by Benin's Minister of Economy and Finance Romuald Wadagni and KFAED's Acting Director General Walid Al-Bahr. The fund is granting Yemen KD 300,000 for renovating a hospital. The fund has signed multiple funding agreements over the month of October with several organizations, including cancer treatment centers in Jordan and Lebanon, the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Malaria and Tuberculosis and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to support the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. — KUNA



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KUWAIT: LuLu Hypermarket top management light a ceremonial lamp to kick off LuLu Wali Diwali 2024.

LuLu Wali Diwali offers, festivities light up Kuwait

KUWAIT: LuLu Hypermarket, the regional retail giant, has kicked off its highly anticipated "LuLu Wali Diwali 2024" celebrations across all its outlets in Kuwait, transforming its stores into a hub of cultural festivities, exciting offers, and lively competitions, and ensuring that customers can fully immerse themselves in the Indian Festival of Lights. The Diwali promotional offers, which commenced on October 23 and runs until November 5, provides shoppers with fantastic deals on a wide range of products, including namkeen, sweets, clothing, diyas, lights and home decor.

The official opening ceremony of "LuLu Wali Diwali" was held on October 26, at the LuLu Hypermarket in Al-Rai, where the top management ignited the festive spark by lighting the ceremonial lamp, setting the stage for two weeks of joyful celebrations. Opening day was filled with excitement, featuring a lineup of special Diwali activities, including the Diwali Rangoli Competition, Diwali Sweets Making Competition, and traditional cultural performances, against the background of energetic beats from a live Bhangra band.

First, second and third prize winners of the Rangoli and LuLu Wali Diwali will get prestigious prizes, while every participant will be able to celebrate with consolation prizes for their efforts. Beyond the competitions, all outlets feature Diwali-themed selfie counters, inviting shoppers to capture their festive memories against



People browse rangoli designs.

beautifully adorned backdrops. Every LuLu store has also been meticulously decorated to reflect the joy of Diwali, creating a unique shopping experience for all.

LuLu's special Diwali sweet counters, available across all locations, offer a wide assortment of traditional Indian delicacies, perfect for the season. Additionally, exclusive discounts are available on gifts, including LuLu Shopping Gift Cards with festive Diwali-themed holders, which are an ideal gift to share the joy of the festival with loved ones. LuLu Hypermarket's Diwali celebrations are supported by the renowned Indian fashion accessory brand, Titan, which displayed its high-end accessories including its eponymous watches. Celebrate this Diwali with LuLu Hypermarket, where unbeatable offers, exciting competitions, and heart-warming festivities come together to make this season truly unforgettable.



Georgia thrown into political turmoil after disputed vote

Japan ruling party projected to miss majority in election

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Palestinian children wait for a meal as they sit around a fire in the Bureij camp for Palestinian refugees in the central Gaza Strip on October 26, 2024. — AFP

UN chief says plight of Palestinians trapped in North Gaza 'unbearable'

The situation in northern Gaza is catastrophic, warns WHO chief

UNITED NATIONS/GENEVA: UN chief Antonio Guterres said Sunday he was "shocked by harrowing levels of death, injury and destruction" in north Gaza, where Zionist entity forces are carrying out attacks they say aim to prevent Hamas regrouping. "The plight of Palestinian civilians trapped in North Gaza is unbearable," Guterres's spokesman Stéphane Dujarric said.

"The Secretary-General is shocked by the harrowing levels of death, injury and destruction in the north, with civilians trapped under rubble, the sick and wounded going without life-saving health care, and families lacking food and shelter." The spokesman said that according to Gaza's health ministry, hundreds of people have been killed in recent weeks and more than 60,000 others were forced to flee.

"Repeated efforts to deliver humanitarian supplies essential to survive—food, medicine and shel-

ter—continue to be denied by the Zionist authorities, with few exceptions, putting countless lives in peril," Dujarric said. "In the name of humanity, the Secretary-General reiterates his calls for an immediate ceasefire, the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, and accountability for crimes under international law

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization chief warned of a disastrous situation in the north of war-ravaged Gaza, with "intensive military operations unfolding around and within healthcare facilities".

"The situation in northern Gaza is catastrophic," Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on X, warning that "a critical shortage of medical supplies, compounded by severely limited access, are depriving people of life saving care." He highlighted Kamal Adwan, northern Gaza's last functioning hospital, which was stormed by Zionist entity forces on Friday, ac-

ording to Gaza's health ministry.

The ministry charged that the raid on the facility in the Jabalia camp, where Zionist entity launched a major operation earlier this month, left two children dead. It accused Zionist entity forces of detaining hundreds of staff, patients and displaced people during the raid. The Zionist entity military said its forces were operating around Kamal Adwan, but was "not aware of live fire and strikes in the area of the hospital". Tedros said that the Gaza health ministry had informed WHO, which had temporarily lost contact with its staff at the hospital, that the siege had ended. "But it came at a heavy cost," he said.

Late Friday, WHO said three health workers and another employee were injured in the assault and that dozens of health workers were detained at the hospital, where around 600 patients, health workers and others were sheltering. "Following the de-

struction of 44 male staff members, only female staff, the hospital director, and one male doctor are left to care for nearly 200 patients in desperate need of medical attention," Tedros said Saturday. "Reports of the hospital facilities and medical supplies being damaged or destroyed during the siege are deplorable," he said.

Medical charity MSF meanwhile said that one of its surgeons at the hospital was missing. "We are deeply concerned for the safety and whereabouts of Dr Mohammed Obeid, an MSF orthopedic surgeon who was sheltering and working in Kamal Adwan Hospital," MSF said on X, adding that it had not had contact with him since Friday. "We are trying to get in touch with our colleague and are urgently seeking information about his whereabouts," it said. "We call for his safety and protection, as well as to all medical staff in Gaza." — AFP

The Obamas stump for Harris, key allies

KALAMAZOO, US: Unwaveringly popular and seen as "cool," Barack and Michelle Obama are throwing not just their political weight but also their star power behind Kamala Harris in the final stretch of the US election. With just 10 days to go before the November 5 vote, Michelle Obama appeared before a rapturous Harris rally Saturday in Kalamazoo, Michigan, walking on stage to a deafening standing ovation.

Energizing the crowd, she had the audience chanting "Do something!" a refrain from her speech at the Democratic National Convention in August, when she urged Harris's voters to take action.

Harris has rolled out a variety of A-list admirers to make her case in the campaign's final days. But for Josette Lantis, who spoke to AFP ahead of the Kalamazoo rally, it's the "nostalgia" for the Obamas that makes them particularly powerful advocates. "I like their vibe. I like to hear them talk, you know, they just set people straight," the 48-year-old said. "When they were in office, they didn't have any

scandals, the country wasn't as divided, and they were a great family," she added.

The Kalamazoo rally marked the second major campaign event featuring Michelle Obama, while Barack Obama has already made several high-profile appearances. Harris's strong lineup of star power has included Beyonce at a rally Friday, and appearances by rapper Eminem, singer Lizzo and R&B star Usher in recent days. As for the Obamas, "it brings great credibility that they are both willing to take their time to do this," Craig McDonald, who attended the rally, told AFP.

Harris's Republican opponent, Donald Trump, the oldest major presidential nominee in US history and the first to be running with a criminal record, has campaigned on a dark vision of a declining America. In Kalamazoo, Michelle Obama galvanized the audience, launching an impassioned appeal for the defense of women's rights and reproductive freedom, critical Harris campaign planks.

"To anyone out there thinking about sitting out this election or voting for Donald Trump or a third party candidate in protest because you're fed up, let me warn you, your rage does not exist in a vacuum," Obama said. "If we don't get this election right, your wife, your daughter, your mother, we as women will become collateral damage to your rage." — AFP

Washington Post 'not to endorse Harris or Trump'

WASHINGTON: The influential Washington Post newspaper, owned by Amazon billionaire Jeff Bezos, announced it will endorse neither Democrat Kamala Harris nor Republican Donald Trump in the US presidential election. CEO William Lewis said this was a return "to our roots of not endorsing presidential candidates."

However, the Post editorial board has endorsed candidates for much of the last four decades—all of them Democrats—before deciding to stay on the sidelines in one of the most polarizing elections in US history. Newspaper editorials have little of their once-powerful political heft. But the Post—whose slogan is "Democracy dies in darkness"—is one traditional media outlet that retains influence among Washington's elite. Trump's campaign quickly pounced, crowing that "Harris is so bad, The Washington Post decided to never endorse another presidential candidate again."

The Washington Post Guild, which represents unionized staff at the newspaper, said it was "deeply concerned." "We are already seeing cancellations from once loyal readers," a statement said. US media reported that a senior Post figure, editor at large Robert Kagan, had resigned in protest.



Jeff Bezos

The Post's decision follows a similar move by another of the big remaining US newspapers, the Los Angeles Times. The billionaire owner of the Times blocked the editorial board from issuing an endorsement for Harris, according to editorial editor Mariel Garza, who resigned in response on Wednesday. According to a report by The Washington Post on its website, Bezos likewise intervened to block the board from publishing its editorial in favor of Harris. However, a source close to the Post's leadership told AFP that this "is inaccurate." By contrast, The New York Times endorsed Harris in September, calling her "the only patriotic choice for president" and warning that "it is hard to imagine a candidate more unworthy to serve as president of the United States" than Trump. — AFP

Bolivia's ex-president Morales says 14 shots fired at his car

LA PAZ, Bolivia: Former Bolivian president Evo Morales said gunmen fired a hail of bullets at his car Sunday as he traveled to a radio interview in the central city of Cochabamba, wounding his driver. "The car in which I arrived has 14 bullet holes," said Morales, adding: "This was planned. The idea was to kill Evo." The radio station that hosted the interview, Kawaschun Coca, released a video that it said was of the bullet-ridden pickup truck that Morales had been in.

The windshield had three bullet holes and the driver had blood on his head. Morales blamed the current president, Luis Arce, a former ally and cabinet minister of his with whom he has fallen out, for the attack. "Lucho has destroyed Bolivia and now he wants to eliminate our process by killing Evo," Morales, using the president's nickname, said of his own attempt to regain the presidency.

Morales, a former coca grower who is now 65, served as president from 2006 until 2019. He was highly popular in the Andean country until he tried to bypass the constitution to seek a fourth term. He was forced to resign after losing the support of the military following an election marked by allegations of fraud, and fled to Mexico. Morales returned to Bolivia in 2020 seeking political resurrection. — AFP



US Vice President and Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris and former US First Lady Michelle Obama campaign together at the Wings Event Center in Kalamazoo, Michigan, October 26, 2024. — AFP

International

Georgia thrown into political turmoil after disputed vote

EU parliament mission voices concern about 'democratic backsliding'

TBILISI, Georgia: Georgia plunged into political turmoil on Sunday after the ruling party declared victory in parliamentary elections decried by the opposition as "falsified".

The European Union had warned that Saturday's vote, seen as a crucial test of democracy in the Caucasus country, would determine Tbilisi's chances of joining the bloc. A group of international observers said the vote was "marred by an uneven playing field, pressure and tension," while noting that election day was generally well organized.

A mission from the EU parliament meanwhile expressed concern about "democratic backsliding", saying it had seen instances of "ballot box stuffing" and the "physical assault" of observers. The result sets the stage for a political showdown that analysts warn could derail Georgia's European aspirations.

Official tallies from more than 99 percent of precincts showed the ruling Georgian Dream party winning 54.08 percent of the vote, while a union of four pro-Western opposition alliances garnered 37.58 percent, according to central election commission chair Giorgi Kalandarishvili. The result gives Georgian Dream 91 seats in the 150-member parliament — enough to govern but short of the supermajority it had sought to pass a constitutional ban on all main opposition parties.

"Our victory is impressive," Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze said in a statement, accusing the opposition of "undermining the country's constitutional order" by questioning his party's victory. An exit poll by US pollster Edison Research had projected an opposition victory by an 11-percent margin.

Opposition parties said the vote was rigged and refused to recognize the electoral outcome. Tina Bokuchava, leader of the opposition United National

Movement (UNM) that campaigned on a pro-European platform, said the results were "falsified" and the election "stolen." "This is an attempt to steal Georgia's future," she said, declaring that the UNM did not accept the results.

Nika Gvaramia, leader of the liberal Akhali party, called the way the vote was held "a constitutional coup" by the government. Pro-Western President Salome Zurbishvili said there had been "deeply troubling incidents of violence" at some polling stations.

An election observer at a polling station in Georgia's south-eastern village of Sadakhlo told AFP that he had "witnessed massive ballot stuffing" and suggested "coordinated multiple voting in favor of Georgian Dream." A joint group of observers including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Council of Europe and European Parliament noted concerns about the impartiality of state institutions. "The uneven playing field... undermines trust in the outcome and explains the reactions to the election results," the statement read.

"These issues need to be addressed by the authorities," it added. Analyst Gela Vasadze of the Georgian Strategic Analysis Centre said the Caucasus country was plunging "into political instability for an indefinite period" and that its EU hopes had "dimmed".

He said, however, that the opposition lacked "charismatic leaders who could channel popular anger into a protest wave capable of bringing about political change." Georgia was gripped by mass demonstrations earlier this year against what the opposition saw as government attempts to curtail democratic freedoms and steer the country of four million off its pro-Western course and towards Russia's orbit. In power since 2012, Georgian Dream initially pursued a liberal pro-Western policy agenda. But it has reversed



TBILISI: Tina Bokuchava, the chair of the United National Movement opposition party, gives a speech during a gathering at the party's headquarters after exit polls were announced during parliamentary elections in Tbilisi. — AFP

course over the last two years.

Its campaign centered on a conspiracy theory about a "global war party" that controls Western institutions and is seeking to drag Georgia into the Russia-Ukraine war. In a country scarred by Russia's 2008 invasion, the party has offered voters bogeyman stories about an imminent threat of war, which only Georgian Dream could prevent. Georgian Dream's controversial "foreign influence" law which targeted civil society sparked weeks of street protests and was criticized as a Kremlin-style measure to silence dissent.

The move prompted Brussels to freeze Georgia's EU accession process, while Washington imposed sanctions on dozens of Georgian officials. The ruling party has also mounted a campaign against sexual minorities. It has adopted measures that ban LGBTQ "propaganda", nullify same-sex marriages conducted abroad, and outlaw gender reassignment.

Observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) are set to hold a press conference later Sunday afternoon to present their preliminary conclusions. — AFP

Syria Kurd force denies links to Ankara attack

HASAKEH, Syria: The commander of a Kurdish-led force in Syria denied links to a deadly attack near Ankara claimed by Kurdish PKK militants, after Turkish strikes on Kurd-held Syria killed more than a dozen people in retaliation.

Turkey carried out air strikes against targets linked to Kurdish militants in Iraq and Syria after Wednesday's shooting and suicide attack that killed five people at a defense firm near the Turkish capital. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said the attackers infiltrated from neighboring Syria, vowing there would be no let-up in the fight against Kurdish militants.

"We opened an internal investigation and I can confirm that none of the attackers entered Turkey from Syrian territory," Mazloum Abdi, the head of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) told AFP. The SDF is a US-backed force that spearheaded fighting against the Islamic State group in its last Syria strongholds before its territorial defeat in 2019. It is dominated by the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), viewed by Ankara as an offshoot of the outlawed Kurdistan



Syrian Democratic Forces commander-in-chief Mazloum Abdi speaks during an interview. — AFP

Workers' Party (PKK) which claimed the attack on Ankara. "We have no connection to this attack that took place in Ankara," Abdi said late Saturday from Hasakeh, a major city run by the semi-autonomous Kurdish administration in northeast Syria. "Our battlefields are inside Syrian territory," he added.

Turkish strikes on Kurd-held Syria since Wednesday have killed 15 civilians and two fighters, according to Abdi. The Syrian Observatory for Human

Rights, a Britain-based war monitor, said Turkey has launched more than 100 strikes, most of them using drones, since Wednesday.

It said civilian infrastructure including bakeries, grain silos and power stations were hit alongside military facilities and checkpoints used by Kurdish forces. "It seems that (Turkey's) goal is not just to respond to the events that took place in Ankara, but also to target institutions and sources of livelihood for the population," said Abdi. "The main goal is to weaken and eliminate the (semi) autonomous administration, forcing the population to migrate," he said.

Abdi said he was open to dialogue to de-escalate tensions but demanded an end to Turkey's attacks which he said are "ongoing" and suggest a potentially wider operation. "We are ready to resolve issues with Turkey through dialogue, but not under the pressure of attacks, so these operations must be stopped for dialogue efforts to continue," Abdi said. Turkish troops and allied rebel factions control swaths of northern Syria following successive cross-border offensives since 2016, most of them targeting the SDF. "The Turkish state is taking advantage of the current events in the Middle East, as attention is directed towards Gaza, Lebanon and the Zionist entity attack on Iran" to launch new attacks on Syria, Abdi said. Abdi criticized his US allies for not protecting Kurdish forces, saying the position of the US-led coalition "seems weak". The United States has about 900 troops in Syria as part of an anti-jihadist coalition. — AFP

Uganda's fuel tanker explosion toll rises to 24

KAMPALA: The death toll following a fuel tanker explosion near the Ugandan capital Kampala last week has risen to 24, the government said Sunday. The impoverished East African country has witnessed several similar disasters in recent years, with people rushing to steal fuel from tankers involved in road accidents.

The "devastating accident" on Tuesday in the town of Kigogwa, about 25 kilometers (15 miles) north of Kampala, resulted in "11 reported dead at the scene", said Communications Minister Godfrey Kabyanga in a statement. He added that "13 more have since died in Kiruddu hospital and Bombo military hospital bringing the number to 24". "Since some of the dead were burnt beyond recognition, the police have been working tirelessly hard to identify the deceased through DNA testing," he said. The tanker had left the capital for Gulu in northern Uganda, a journey of some 650 kilometres (403 miles), but it overturned and burst into flames en route. — AFP

Carnage in Gaza amid truce talk...

Continued from Page 1

Zionist authorities were hampering efforts to deliver food, medicine and other essential humanitarian supplies, putting lives at risk, he said. The devastation and deprivation resulting from Zionist military operations in the north were making life there untenable.

Earlier on Sunday, 20 people were killed following an airstrike on houses in Jabalia, the largest of the Gaza Strip's eight historic refugee camps, which has been the focus of a Zionist military offensive for more than three weeks, medics and the Palestinian official news agency WAFA said. Another Zionist airstrike on a school sheltering displaced Palestinian families in Shati camp in Gaza City, killed nine people and wounded 20 others, with many in critical condition, medics said.

Footage circulated on Palestinian media showed

people rushing to the bomb site to help evacuate the casualties. Bodies were scattered on the ground, while some carried wounded children in their arms before loading them in a vehicle. Three local journalists were among those killed at the school in Shati — Saed Radwan, head of digital media at Hamas Al-Aqsa television, Hanin Baroud, and Hamza Abu Selmeya. Zionist military strikes on the towns of Jabalia, Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahia in northern Gaza have so far killed around 800 people during a three-week offensive, the Gaza health ministry said.

One person was killed and dozens were injured on Sunday when a truck struck a bus stop at a major intersection near Tel Aviv. Zionist police said about 40 people were injured to varying degrees, including some seriously, and were taken to nearby hospitals. The attack, in which a truck ran into a bus stop close to a military base, took place around 10 am (0800 GMT), police said, noting the driver — who had Zionist citizenship — was "neutralized" by gunfire from a nearby civilian. Zionist media reported that the attacker was an Arab from Qalansawe in the center of the Zionist entity.

to an animated crowd. Harris was several minutes into an upbeat address when she was interrupted by a demonstrator who repeatedly yelled, "No more Gaza war." After Harris supporters shouted down the interruption, Harris responded, "On the topic of Gaza, we must end that war," then picked up where she left off, asking voters to "turn the page on the fear and the divisiveness".

"Over the last eight years, Donald Trump has become more confused, more unstable and more angry, and it is clear he has become increasingly unhinged. But the last time, at least there were people who could control him, but notice they're not with him this time," Harris said. Ahead of the rally, Harris met with women medical providers in Portage, Michigan, where she said the country was in a healthcare crisis following the 2022 ruling by the US Supreme Court that overturned Roe v. Wade, which had guaranteed a women's right to abortion nationwide.

Harris heard from six women medical providers who described being inundated by patients from other regions due to a lack of reproductive healthcare in their areas since Roe was overturned. After leaving Michigan, Trump traveled to Pennsylvania, where he tried to reel in young voters with a rally on the campus of Penn State University, at one point bringing the school's wrestling team on stage with him. "We have to finish it off with a big victory on Nov 5," he said. — Reuters

The Zionist entity's airstrikes "hit hard" Iran's defenses and missile production, Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday, as Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said the country was considering its response. However, heavy fighting in Lebanon between Zionist forces and Iran-backed Hezbollah, which sharply intensified over recent weeks, continued on Sunday with a Zionist airstrike killing eight people in a residential block in Sidon, medics said.

"The air force attacked throughout Iran. We hit hard Iran's defense capabilities and its ability to produce missiles that are aimed at us," Netanyahu said in a speech, calling the attack "precise and powerful" and saying it met all its objectives. The UN Security Council will likely meet to discuss the attack on Monday, diplomats said.

Khamenei said the Zionist entity's calculations "should be disrupted". The attack on Iran, which killed four soldiers and caused some damage, "should neither be downplayed nor exaggerated", he said. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said Iran was not look-

ing for war but would give an "appropriate response". Separately, Zionist Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said Iran was no longer able to use its allies Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon against the Zionist entity.

Gallant added that Hamas was no longer functioning as a military network in Gaza and that Hezbollah's senior command and most of its missile capabilities had been eliminated. On Sunday, the Zionist military urged residents of 14 villages in southern Lebanon to evacuate immediately and move north of the Awali river. A Zionist strike on Sidon, a city in coastal south Lebanon, killed at least eight people and wounded 25 on Sunday, the country's health ministry said.

Elsewhere in the south, a strike on Zawtar Al-Sharqiya killed three people and a Saturday bombing of Marjayoun killed five, it said. The Zionist entity said five of its soldiers were killed in south Lebanon fighting. Hezbollah also said it had fired a large missile salvo at the Zevulun military industries facility north of Haifa. Hezbollah rockets hit a house and cars and rescue crews responded to put out the fire. One woman was seriously injured. — Agencies

Trump woos Muslim vote...

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In the southern Michigan city of Kalamazoo, about 210 km away, Harris drew contrasts between her and Trump on issues such as abortion rights, taxes and healthcare. But first Obama, the popular wife of former President Barack Obama, fired up the crowd by drawing distinctions between the two candidates on personal character and qualifications, saying there was a double standard in how Trump and Harris were being treated.

"I hope you'll forgive me that I'm a little frustrated that some of us are choosing to ignore Trump's gross incompetence while asking Kamala to dazzle us at every turn," the former first lady said, urging any undecided voters to "snap out of whatever fog they're in." Obama also addressed women's health at length, saying Trump has failed to demonstrate understanding of its complexity and that his vows to rescind the Affordable Care Act passed during her husband's presidency would affect the "entirety of women's health, all of it."

"We as women will become collateral damage to your rage," she said, later introducing Harris

Philippines death toll from tropical...

Continued from Page 1

Bicol regional police director Andre Dizon said they have recorded 41 deaths, most due to drowning, with emergency calls still coming in. "We are still receiving many calls and we are trying to save as many people as we can," Dizon told AFP Sunday morning. He added that many residents across Camarines Sur province were still trapped on roofs and the upper floors of their homes.

South of Manila, the death toll in Batangas province rose to 60, provincial police chief Jacinto Malinao told AFP. Eight deaths were recorded in other provinces, bringing an AFP tally to 109, calculated from official police and disaster agency sources. But a "higher death toll is possible in the coming days since rescuers can now reach previously isolated places", Edgar Posadas, the Civil Defense Office's spokesperson said.

In Taal Lake — Philippines' third-largest and a tourist destination in Batangas province — police, coast guards and a Marines diving team were searching for a family of seven on Sunday. "The

waters from the mountains hit their home in Balete town, causing it to be swept away with them possibly inside," Malinao, the provincial police chief, said. Most of the deaths in Batangas have been attributed to rain-induced landslides.

More than 20 bodies were pulled from heaps of mud, boulders and fallen trees, while police said at least a dozen people in the province were still missing. "We will continue searching until all bodies are retrieved," Malinao said. About 575,000 people had been displaced by floods, which submerged hundreds of villages in swaths of northern Philippines, according to the national disaster agency.

Moving westward, Trami made landfall in central Vietnam on Sunday afternoon bringing heavy rain and winds of up to 74 km per hour, the country's national disaster authority said. It knocked down trees and power lines in the coastal city of Da Nang, with state media reporting that three people were killed before and when the storm arrived in Quang Nam and Thua Thien Hue provinces.

Before landfall, authorities had banned boats from going to sea, closed four airports and evacuated some 25,000 people in Danang, Quang Nam and Quang Ngai provinces. A recent study showed that storms in the Asia-Pacific region are increasingly forming closer to coastlines, intensifying more rapidly and lasting longer over land due to climate change. — AFP

International

Japan ruling party projected to miss majority in election

Blow to premier Ishiba • Worst result for LDP in 15 years

TOKYO: Japan's scandal-hit ruling party fell short of a majority for the first time since 2009 in snap elections on Sunday, media projections showed, a blow to new Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba.

Worse still, it was touch and go whether Ishiba's conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) could secure a parliamentary majority with its long-term coalition partner, the Komeito party.

Former defense minister Ishiba, 67, called an election after being narrowly selected last month to lead the LDP, which has governed Japan for almost all of the past 70 years. But voters in the world's fourth-largest economy have been rankled by rising prices and the fallout from a party slush fund scandal that helped sink previous premier Fumio Kishida. Footage from the LDP headquarters after the polls closed on Sunday showed gloomy faces as the projections based on exit polls said Ishiba's justice and agriculture ministers were likely to lose their seats. Ishiba, a self-confessed security policy geek who likes making model planes, had said his target in the election was for the coalition to win a majority.

Missing this goal would seriously undermine his position in the LDP and mean finding other coalition partners or leading a minority government. "If we are unable to obtain a majority as a result of severe public judgment, we will ask as many people as possible to cooperate with us," the LDP's election chief Shinjiro Koizumi told reporters.

In Japan's last general election in 2021, the LDP won a majority in its own right, with 259 seats in parliament's powerful lower house. Komeito had 32. On Sunday, national broadcaster NHK projected that the LDP would win between 153 and 219

seats — short of the 233 needed for a majority in the 465-seat parliament.

If confirmed by official results, the LDP losing its majority would be the worst result since it lost power 15 years ago before being brought back in a 2012 landslide by late former premier Shinzo Abe.

Together with Komeito, which is projected 21 to 35 seats, the coalition would hold between 174 and 254 seats, according to NHK. Projections from the Asahi Shimbun and Yomiuri dailies suggested the coalition would lose its majority. The Asahi projected the LDP would win 185 seats and that the coalition would manage only 210.

Opinion polls before the election had suggested that in many districts, LDP candidates were neck-and-neck with those from the Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP), the second-biggest in parliament, led by popular former prime minister Yoshihiko Noda. On Sunday, the CDP won between 128 and 191 seats - up from 96 - NHK projected.

"The LDP's politics is all about quickly implementing policies for those who give them loads of cash," 67-year-old Noda told his supporters on Saturday.

Ishiba has pledged to revitalize depressed rural regions and to address the "quiet emergency" of Japan's falling population through family-friendly measures such as flexible working hours. But he has rowed back his position on issues including allowing married couples to take separate surnames. He also named only two women as ministers in his cabinet. He has backed the creation of a regional military alliance along the lines of NATO to counter China, although he has cautioned it would "not happen overnight". "We want to start



Yoshihiko Noda (right), leader of the opposition Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP), attends a press conference at the CDP's headquarters in Tokyo on October 27, 2024. — AFP

afresh as a fair, just and sincere party, and seek your mandate," Ishiba said at a rally on Saturday. Noda's stance "is sort of similar to the LDP's. He is basically a conservative," Masato Kamikubo, a political scientist at Ritsumeikan University, told AFP before the election. "The CDP or Noda can be an alternative to the LDP. Many voters think so." — AFP

India warns social media after airline bomb threats

NEW DELHI: India has warned social media platforms of "consequential action" after hundreds of hoax bomb threats to Indian airlines this month triggered travel chaos and terror it said threatened national security.

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. The government called the spread of the threats "dangerously unrestrained". It warned social media platforms of "consequential action as provided under any law" if they do not comply with the "prompt removal of misinformation".

Centre-left tipped to take power as Lithuanians vote

VILNIUS, Lithuania: Lithuania votes in the second round of its general election on Sunday, likely to replace the ruling conservatives with a centre-left coalition amid security concerns about neighboring Russia.

The Social Democratic Party won the most seats in the first round of voting two weeks ago, and were readying to take power in a shift that is expected to leave intact the NATO and EU member's strong support for Ukraine. The party already secured 20 seats in the 141-seat parliament, and another 35 of its candidates have advanced to the runoffs in the single-member constituencies.

The Baltic state, home to 2.8 million people, has been warily observing Russia, fearing it could be targeted if Moscow succeeds in Ukraine. All major parties running in the elections are agreed on maintaining NATO and EU member's strong support for Ukraine, and on either sustaining or increasing defense spending.

"The disputes in this election are concentrated on domestic policy issues, but on foreign policy we see virtually no difference" between parties, political analyst Rima Urbonaite told AFP. According to the Germany-based Kiel Institute, Lithuania ranks among the top three countries globally in terms of aid for Ukraine in relation to the size of its economy, at 1.64 percent.

On national defense, Lithuania is also among

Far right tipped to gain ground as jaded Bulgarians vote again

SOFIA: Bulgarians voted Sunday in their seventh election in less than four years, with little hope of an end to political turmoil that has favored the country's far right. The European Union's poorest member state has been at a standstill since 2020, when massive anti-corruption protests brought down the cabinet of conservative three-time prime minister Boyko Borisov.

Six consecutive votes since then have so far failed to yield a stable government. Borisov's GERB party once again looks set to top Sunday's vote, currently polling at around 26 percent. "The people want a government, stability, and security," Borisov said as he voted, wearing jeans and a black jacket.

But chances are high that GERB will struggle to find partners to govern. Voter turnout is also expected to be low, amid fears of electoral fraud. During the last election in June, turnout hit its lowest since the

"The instances of malicious acts, in the form of hoax bomb threats to such airlines, lead to a potential threat to the public order and security of the state," it said in a statement on Saturday.

"Such hoax bomb threats, while affecting a large number of citizens, also destabilizes the economic security of the country." At least 275 bomb threats were made since mid-October, all reported to have been false, according to the Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency. Other Indian media suggest it could be as high as nearly 400.

"The exemption from liability for any third party information... shall not apply if such intermediaries do not follow the due diligence obligations," it added. Civil aviation authorities have had to check every flight that has been threatened, many by messages posted on X, formerly Twitter.

The government warning did not mention any social media company by name, but cited an advisory notice from the information technology ministry. "The scale of (the) spread of such hoax bomb threats has

the top NATO spenders, allocating 3.2 percent of its GDP to defense this year, well above the NATO target of two percent. The Social Democratic Party, which last led the government from 2012 to 2016, eyes a three-party coalition with the Democratic Union "In the Name of Lithuania" and the Lithuanian Popular Peasants' Union.

Together, they hope to secure 80 seats, and Social Democrat leader Vilija Blinkeviciute is expected to leave her role as a European Parliament member to lead the new government. Social Democrat voter and student Tomas Valiunas, 18, told AFP that Blinkeviciute as prime minister "won't be ideal, but also not tragic".

"I would like to see better infrastructure and a reduction in social inequality, which is among the highest in Europe," Valiunas said. Pensioner Valerija Zaltauskienė, another Social Democrat voter, hoped for faster pension increases under the new government.

"I get a 300 euro pension in Lithuania. How can I survive on that kind of money?" she told AFP.

The Social Democrats have pledged to raise pensions as well as to make taxation more progressive, tax luxury goods and spend more on social services. "Voters attribute the inflation spike and other crises to the conservative government, and expect the Social Democrats to provide solutions that will improve their financial situation," Urbonaite said. Asked about a possible centre-left coalition taking power, President Gitanas Nausėda said as he cast his vote that he hoped that it "will be effective, that it will not disintegrate, that it will not diverge on fundamental, strategic issues in the life of Lithuania".

The ruling conservative party is expected to finish a close second to the Social Democrats but faces limited prospects of forming a majority. But the Social Democrats may also struggle to form a govern-

ment, as analysts warn that their goal of building a three-party coalition may prove difficult.

"It is very probable that no one will really win this election," Urbonaite said. Preliminary results are expected later on Sunday. The election has been marked by controversy surrounding a new populist party, Nemunas Dawn, led by former long-time lawmaker Remigijus Zemaitytis. In the first round, the party finished third with 15 seats.

While the Social Democrats have ruled out Nemunas Dawn as a coalition partner, analysts suggest it may be difficult to form a stable government without them. "The arrival of Nemunas Dawn would solve the shortage of votes, but the party is now so controversial and toxic that it seems the Social Democrats are going to do everything to keep them out of the coalition," said Urbonaite, the analyst. — AFP

end of communism at just 34 percent. Some 9.55 percent of voters had voted by 11 am local time (0900 GMT) compared with 8.34 percent at the same time in June's elections. Voting began at 7 am and the first estimates will be released when polls close at 8 pm. "I hope more people will come: the weather is nice and that makes me think something can change," 74-year-old pensioner Magdalina Yotova told AFP as she voted.

According to a recent opinion poll, about 60 percent of Bulgarians surveyed view the political deadlock as "extremely alarming". On the streets of the capital Sofia, the rising voter apathy was palpable.

"We're fed up, that's for sure," said Aneliya Ivanova. "We're tired of being stuck in a carousel that goes round and round, and every time it's the same result," the 33-year-old IT worker told AFP.

been observed to be dangerously unrestrained due to the availability of the option of 'forwarding/re-sharing/re-posting/re-tweeting' on the social media platforms," the information ministry said. It said companies must report any offences "likely to threaten the unity, integrity, sovereignty, security or economic security" of the country, and cooperate swiftly with government agencies to aid investigations.

The government on Monday said it is discussing "legislative action" to overhaul aviation and aircraft security laws, and to make those who make such threats guilty of a serious, or "cognizable", crime with longer potential sentences. India, the world's biggest democracy, regularly ranks among the top five countries globally for the number of requests made by a government to remove social media content.

Last year, an Indian court hit X with a \$61,000 fine after the platform unsuccessfully challenged orders to remove tweets and accounts critical of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government. — AFP



Voters get their ballot papers at a polling station in Vilnius, Lithuania, during the second round of parliamentary elections on October 27, 2024. — AFP

ment, as analysts warn that their goal of building a three-party coalition may prove difficult.

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The head of the GERB party and former prime minister Boyko Borisov greets supporters after voting in Bulgaria's parliamentary elections in Sofia on October 27, 2024. — AFP

sels and Washington. Vazrazhdane appears to have gained voter support after proposing a law banning LGBTQ "propaganda" that was passed by a large majority in parliament in August. The legislation was directly inspired by a similar law in Russia, and even though Bulgaria is a NATO member, many citizens remain strongly pro-Russian. — AFP

News in Brief

King Charles to resume tours

LONDON: King Charles III's cancer diagnosis will not prevent him flying abroad next year for foreign visits, a Buckingham Palace official said, as the monarch wrapped up a tour of Australia and Samoa. "We're now working on a pretty normal looking full overseas tour program for next year, which is a high for us to end on, to know that we can be thinking in those terms," the official said late Saturday. Charles was diagnosed with an undisclosed cancer earlier this year but doctors agreed he could pause his treatment to allow him to travel to Australia and Samoa. — AFP

Migrant dies in bid to cross Channel

LILLE, France: A migrant died Sunday in an attempt to cross the Channel to Britain, a death that comes on top of two deadly boat sinkings in the past 10 days, French officials said. The man, an Indian citizen, had set off from the beach of Tardighen in the Pas-de-Calais department in northern France. "The vessel, which was in very poor condition, deflated immediately after leaving the beach" at around 5.30 am (0430 GMT) the local prefecture said in a statement.

Russia says shot down 51 drones

MOSCOW: Russia shot down 51 Ukrainian drones from above several regions, including near the border, Moscow's defense ministry said on Sunday. Eighteen were intercepted in the Tambov region, about 400 kilometers (250 miles) from the Ukrainian border, and 16 in the area of the border town Belgorod, the ministry said in a statement on Telegram. The others were shot down in the regions of Oryol, Bryansk, Lipetsk and Voronej. One was intercepted in the Kursk region, where Ukrainian troops have been conducting a ground offensive since August and control several hundred square kilometers of Russian territory. — AFP

Curfew extended in French territory

PARIS: French authorities maintained a night curfew amid fresh unrest on the Caribbean territory of Guadeloupe on Saturday as they battled to restore power they accused striking energy workers of sabotaging. Guadeloupe and the nearby French island of Martinique have seen weeks of often violent protests over the cost of living. A night curfew has been in force in Martinique for 16 days because of unrest there. French authorities kept Guadeloupe under curfew for a second night "to guarantee safety and tranquility" after the island's power was completely cut on Friday. — AFP

NASA astronaut out of hospital

WASHINGTON: A NASA astronaut who was hospitalized upon return from the International Space Station for an unspecified medical condition was released Saturday in "good health," the US space agency said. The four-member Crew-8 mission splashed down off the coast of Florida early Friday after nearly eight months aboard the orbital laboratory. NASA did not reveal which of the astronauts was hospitalized nor the reason, citing medical privacy. — AFP

19 die in Mexico truck-bus crash

MEXICO CITY: A cargo truck collided with a passenger bus in northern Mexico on Saturday, leaving at least 19 people dead and six injured, authorities said. Officials adjusted the death toll after initially reporting 24 deaths, citing information from first responders. "However, following rescue efforts and expert work carried out at the scene, the confirmed number is, unfortunately, 19 people," said a statement from Rodrigo Reyes, a senior Zacatecas state official. He said six people were being treated at a hospital. — AFP

MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2024

China's second-generation factory owners go digital to fight challenges

Rising costs and geopolitical tensions pushing clients abroad



(Left) Robyn Qiu (center) is seen next to her parents Qiu Zhirong (left) and Cao Suzhen (right) in their metal parts factory in Nantong. (Right) Robyn Qiu is seen talking for a video streaming. — AFP

NANTONG, China: Dressed in a pristine white knit top, Robyn Qiu cut an incongruous figure in her parents' dusty, hangar-like metal hardware factory in eastern China as she gestured excitedly while an assistant filmed her on a smartphone. The 29-year-old is one of many second-generation factory owners fighting to elevate the country's manufacturing sector, pitting digital native skillsets against the rising costs and geopolitical tensions pushing clients abroad.

Qiu said she grew up with "the noise of machines running day and night", but working in manufacturing was not always her first choice. When Qiu was a child, her parents encouraged her to aim for a white-collar office job far from the dust and din of the factory floor. "Even when they were starting the factory, their goal for me, their expectation for me is to really get a good education and break out of the cycle of farmers," Qiu said of her parents, who come from agricultural communities.

But after years spent working in consulting, the Yale-educated Qiu now feels she has "this very strong responsibility to give back to manufacturing". Qiu has set up a marketing business that directly connects factories with foreign audiences, through

videos posted on Instagram and TikTok, which in China can only be accessed using a VPN.

It's a stark contrast from the way earlier generations conducted business, often with many middlemen and at the mercy of major buyers. In her videos, a cheerful Qiu speaks in fluent English, narrating as she buys street snacks in Shanghai or listing China's key manufacturing zones while walking along a factory assembly line. Qiu's parents, who founded the factory in the 1990s, were part of a massive wave of entrepreneurship that marked the first decades of China's reform and opening up, when the country transformed into the world's factory — and eventually, its second largest economy. However, rising wages in China and geopolitical tensions with trade partners including the United States have made alternative locations such as Cambodia and Bangladesh increasingly attractive to clients.

The Qius lost major customers in the 2010s after refusing an offer to move their production to Cambodia. Flagging domestic demand in recent years has further weighed on the sector, with the official factory activity index in China contracting for five months in a row since May. The Qius have adapted — they

recently purchased more advanced equipment to automate more of the manufacturing process. They are also experimenting with making their own products, laser levels for construction use, rather than only making parts for clients.

Qiu said she sees the supply chain as a pyramid, with international brands at the top and raw material suppliers at the bottom. "China is in the middle," she said. And now, "either we go up or we will go down". Rose Law, the daughter of a cosmetics factory owner in southern Guangdong province, echoed many of Qiu's thoughts, telling AFP her personal goals include "being able to have a more positive impact on the industry". She is overseeing the development of product brands for the family business — a step up the supply chain from originally making other brands' goods.

Law runs her own shampoo brand, with packaging and formulas inspired by traditional Chinese herbal remedies. "In my parents' generation, all industries were new, and everyone in various sectors was competing from a similar starting line," Law told AFP. Now, she sees creating brand loyalty rather than remaining an anonymous supplier as a way to

keep orders stable and profitable. "In a market with oversupply, being seen and trusted is extremely important," she said — and social media is an important way to gain that crucial visibility.

Qiu said the reaction to her videos has been "amazing", with more than 500 buyers contacting her since May this year, and more than 150,000 users following her Instagram page. Her online success is mirrored by other "Changerdai", the Chinese name for second-generation factory owners — a play on "Fuerdai", a phrase used to describe often idle scions of generational wealth. Changerdai content has gone viral both at home and abroad, albeit sometimes as inadvertent memes. On Instagram, Guangzhou-based LC Sign has drawn half a million followers through videos in which a man, "Tony", shows off LED signs and does impressions of former US president Donald Trump.

On domestic platforms, a six-episode short video drama called "The Empire of Towel" — made by a towel factory Changerdai — has billions of views. Nowadays, "if you want to do marketing, you want to get people's attention, you have to invest in short videos", said Qiu. — AFP

GCC committed to renewable energy targets: Budaiwi

RIYADH: GCC Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi affirmed on Sunday the GCC countries' commitment to achieving their renewable energy, carbon neutrality and environmental conservation targets. Al-Budaiwi said in his speech at the "Forum on Enhancing the Future of Energy towards Zero Neutrality Targets", which kicked off in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, that the GCC countries are keen on their commitments towards zero neutrality and climate change, pointing to the increasing importance they attach to sustainable energy and climate change issues.

He explained that the GCC countries' efforts to enhance joint projects in supporting the innovation system and technical development in the field of renewable energy, investing in clean energy projects and focusing on investing in human capital and supply chains in order to achieve their targets. He also highlighted the importance of investing in renewable energy projects, developing smart grids, improving energy efficiency and the need to en-



RIYADH: GCC Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi addresses the forum. — KUNA

hance international cooperation to confront the challenges of climate change.

Regarding the forum's activities, Al-Budaiwi said that it contributes to the exchange of expertise, ideas and experiences among the GCC countries

and paves the way for decision-making, wise and appropriate, to face climate challenges, explaining that the Gulf countries have the will and capabilities necessary to achieve their goals in the field of sustainable energy. — KUNA

Maduro: Venezuela won't be silenced after BRICS veto

CARACAS: Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro vowed on Saturday that his country would not be silenced after Brazil vetoed its bid to join the BRICS group of emerging economies. The South American country is in the throes of an unprecedented economic crisis, which the government says is a result of US sanctions, and has long sought to join the BRICS group. Venezuela reacted furiously to Brazil's veto at a summit in the Russian city of Kazan earlier this week, calling the decision a "hostile" and "immoral" act.

Returning home from Kazan, Maduro said on state television that "no one will block or silence Venezuela, not today, not tomorrow, not ever", with-

out mentioning Brazil. Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is a long-time ally of Maduro. But relations between them have been strained since Maduro's disputed re-election following the July 28 ballot, which the opposition claims to have won.

An advisor to Lula, former foreign minister Celso Amorim, attributed the veto to a "breach of confidence" by Venezuela. He said Maduro had promised Lula he would publish detailed results from the July 28 election but had yet to do so.

The Venezuelan opposition has said those results would show that Maduro was handily defeated by Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia, who fled to Spain in September after a warrant was issued for his arrest on what the opposition calls trumped-up charges. Maduro said he had met officials from "nearly 30 governments" in Kazan and that "all" had hailed his "great electoral victory".

The BRICS, which already included Brazil, Russia, India, South Africa and China as members, were joined in 2024 by Ethiopia, Iran, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates. — AFP



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro (left) and Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. — AFP

KFH appoints Alghannam as GM Private Banking and Wealth Management

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has appointed Hamad Mohammad Alghannam as the General Manager Private Banking and Wealth Management. This move aligns with KFH's ongoing strategy of promoting national talents, especially among the youth, to continue leading its journey of success and achievements. This appointment is part of KFH's plans to attract and develop national capabilities and boost competencies by recruiting internally. It is also based on its strategic vision to elevate service delivery, competitiveness standards and performance at all levels. Additionally, this step contributes to qualifying the next generation of leadership that represents KFH's core values, leading to sustainable success as KFH drives its leading journey forward.

As a member of the KFH family and leader of the next generation, Alghannam is one of the most accomplished and prominent bankers. With a professional career spanning 26 years, Alghannam brings a wealth of experience in many positions in private banking. He took part in the department's development plans, while expanding its services and customer segments. This was achieved through an exceptional performance in serving Al-Nukhba customer segment, structuring a business model dedicated towards offering the best solutions and benefits to customers with competitive advantages.

Alghannam held the position of deputy General Manager Private Banking and Wealth Management in 2022. His career at KFH began in 1998 after his graduation from Kuwait University with a bachelor's degree in accounting. He also completed a training program in leadership and transformation.

In addition to possessing extensive experience and skills in organizational operations and leading teams with efficiency, Alghannam has obtained a number of professional certificates and successfully completed specialized training programs from prestigious and world-class institutions.



Hamad Alghannam

ABK reports 19% increase in net profit to KD 38.83 million for 9 months of 2024

Results demonstrate the effectiveness of our strategic plans: Behbehani

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) proudly announced its robust 9-month 2024 financial results, once again affirming its position as a leading financial institution.

Financial performance

ABK reported a Net Profit of KD 38.83 million, representing a 19 percent increase and an increase in Earnings per Share (EPS) of 23 percent to 16 fils. Operating Income increased by 11 percent to KD 150.81 million while operating profit witnessed an increase of 13 percent, reaching KD 80.58 million, reflecting the bank's strong profitability and shareholder value creation.

Total assets reached KD 7.08 billion while maintaining steady growth in loans and advances amounting to KD 4.56 billion, with customer deposits at KD 4.33 billion, affirming the Group's reputation as a trusted financial partner. Moreover, the bank's non-performing loan (NPL) ratio stood at 1.30 percent, with NPL coverage at 467 percent, capital adequacy ratio (CAR) at 17.01 percent, and shareholders' equity at KD 611.26 million, further underscoring ABK's financial stability, healthy financial position, and robust balance sheet.

Continued success

On this occasion, Talal Mohamed Reza Behbehani, Chairman of ABK, said, "Our 9-month financial results demonstrate the effectiveness of our strategic plans, which the Board of Directors and Executive Management are dedicated to implementing according to a well-defined timeline. These results affirm our capability to navigate economic challenges at local, regional, and global levels, as well as our commitment to deliver added value to all our stakeholders, including shareholders, clients, and partners."

He reported that ABK has continued to experience growth in most of its financial indicators since the beginning of 2024. The Group remains committed to adhering to regulatory requirements set forth by the Central Bank of Kuwait, the Capital Markets Authority, and other regulatory bodies, as well as Basel III standards. Furthermore, he emphasized ABK's dedication to strengthening its liquidity and enhancing its capacity to serve all sectors efficiently.

Behbehani stated, "The first nine months of this year have seen several noteworthy transactions. Among the most significant was the successful \$300 million Additional Tier 1 (AT1) bond offering. This issuance experienced robust demand, being oversubscribed 4.5 times by local, regional, and global investors, reflecting the strong confidence the Group has garnered in financial circles." He affirmed the Group's strive to capitalize on the best opportunities to enhance its liquidity and achieve its goals.



ABK Chairman
Talal Mohamed
Reza Behbehani



Acting Group CEO at
ABK Abdulla Al-Sumait

Behbehani also highlighted that ABK signed an agreement this year to renew credit facilities worth \$250 million for Daewoo Engineering and Construction. This underscores the Group's commitment to supporting and financing its clients, as well as its efforts to meet the needs of foreign companies operating in the Kuwaiti market through tailored financing solutions and facilitation of their logistical operations.

Credit ratings and awards

The Chairman noted that ABK has sustained its high ratings with a stable outlook from global credit rating agencies, receiving an A rating from Fitch and an A2 from Moody's. He regarded these as a testament to the financial stability of the Group and its ability to instill trust as a reliable banking and financial partner both in the Kuwaiti market and the regional markets it operates in, such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Egypt. Additionally, these ratings signify the substantial confidence expressed by global institutions that specialize in performance evaluation.

Behbehani added that ABK successfully received several awards from reputable entities, such as Global Finance, MEED, and International Finance, among others. This recognition comes after the Bank met the requirement performance evaluation criteria in various areas, including Retail Banking, Corporate Banking, Human Resources, Digital Transformation and Innovation, and Investor Relations. These achievements reflect ABK employees' outstanding performance and dedication to continuous improvement and enhancing their capabilities and productivity.

A new strategy

Behbehani announced that ABK continues to implement its five-year strategy which is aimed at enhancing its operational processes, with a strong emphasis on digital transformation. This commitment is reflected in the launch of the Bank's new website,

designed to provide customers with a comprehensive banking experience. Additionally, ABK is focused on enhancing its mobile application to deliver added value, ensuring users receive services around the clock while maintaining the highest levels of security. The Chairman conveyed his heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to the Central Bank of Kuwait for its vital role in fostering confidence in the banking sector's stability and strength, as well as its significant contributions to economic activity in Kuwait. He also commended the dedication of the Executive Management and all employees for their roles in achieving the Group's financial objectives, highlighting ABK's endeavor to continue to develop its offerings to the highest levels.

Clear vision

On his part, Abdulla Al-Sumait, Acting Group Chief Executive Officer at ABK, said, "We are committed to achieving sustainable growth in the Bank's profits while adhering to the strategic framework set by our Board of Directors and Executive Management. Our focus is on building customer trust within the banking sector in Kuwait, as well as expanding our operations in the UAE and Egypt. We aim to provide the best banking and financial solutions, products, and services to meet our customers' needs."

He added that ABK is dedicated to continuously improving its systems to ensure customer satisfaction and build trust by providing the highest levels of security across all services. He noted that the Group emphasizes the adoption of advanced digital technologies in partnership with leading and specialized companies in the field. Al-Sumait mentioned that ABK consistently introduces new and exclusive offers, along with promotional campaigns, to attract customers to its expanding family. He highlighted that in the first nine months of 2024, the Bank launched several new accounts and promotional initiatives tailored to various customer segments in the local market. Additionally, he revealed that ongoing studies are being conducted to better understand customer needs, allowing the Bank to innovate new solutions that enhance its competitive position across all sectors.

He announced that ABK is actively progressing with its branch development plan across various regions of Kuwait. This initiative involves modernizing branches with contemporary designs and advanced digital technologies, aiming to enhance customer comfort and deliver seamless service. He noted that in the first nine months of 2024, the Bank completed the renovation of the Jabriya branch and relocated to a new branch in Salmiya. Additionally, there has been an increase in the number of ATMs at key locations to ensure ongoing service for customers in the local market.

Al-Sumait emphasized the bank's ongoing effort to



attract top talents and skills across various divisions. Notably, ABK organizes numerous training programs to enhance employees' capabilities and skills. This initiative aims to address their needs and improve the benefits they receive, ultimately boosting productivity and fostering innovation in banking services and solutions. This commitment aligns with the Bank's dedication to providing a positive work environment.

Egypt and the UAE

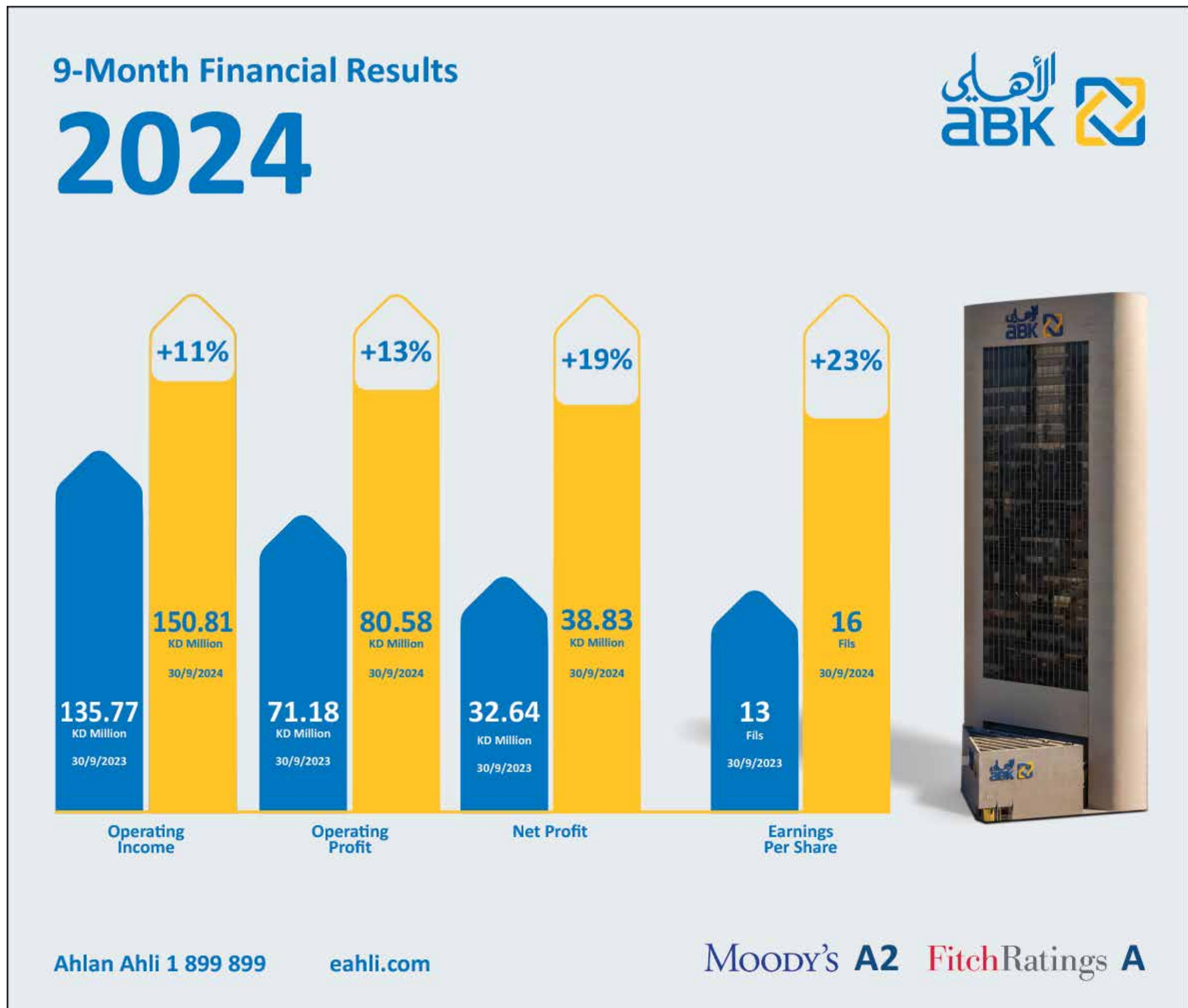
Al-Sumait highlighted that ABK's operations in the UAE and Egypt play a significant role in its financial results. He noted the emphasis on strengthening its presence in these markets, which is reflected in the high-quality financial services provided to both individual and corporate clients in the UAE.

Meanwhile, ABK-Egypt is dedicated to excellence in servicing its clients and aims for planned expansion. This includes opening new branches and renovating existing ones across all Egyptian governorates, as well as offering advanced digital technologies and incentives to effectively reach and serve various customer segments.

Social responsibility

He stated that the Group remains committed to continuously developing its social responsibility programs. This involves participating in, sponsoring, and supporting a wide array of health, sports, and educational initiatives throughout the year, in collaboration with various institutions and organizations from both public and private sectors. These efforts significantly enhance ABK's presence in the Kuwaiti community, reinforcing its role as a responsible institution in the market.

Concluding his statement, Al-Sumait emphasized the ongoing support for the 'Let's Be Aware' awareness campaign, which is a collaboration with the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Kuwaiti Banking Association. The campaign aims to educate customers about the banking sector's role in safeguarding their rights. To achieve this, the Bank distributes targeted awareness content across its social media platforms, within its branches, and on its website. Additionally, various events and competitions are organized to engage all customer segments in the market.



Business

Gulf Bank holds employee seminar to mark cybersecurity awareness month

Seminar covers critical topics including impact of AI on corporate cybersecurity strategies



A view of the annual cybersecurity awareness seminar organized by Gulf Bank.



A huge attendance at the seminar.

KUWAIT: In recognition of Cybersecurity Awareness Month and in support of the "Diraya" campaign, Gulf Bank organized its annual Cyber Awareness conference for its employees titled "You Are the Target," with the participation of cybersecurity experts from several well-known global companies, including Ernst & Young, SecurEyes, and CrowdStrike. The seminar covered several critical topics related to cybersecurity, including the Cyber Threat Landscape, impact of artificial intelligence on corporate cybersecurity strategies, the use of AI in detecting and combating cyber-attacks, and its role in

enhancing incident response capabilities. It also addressed the legal and ethical challenges associated with AI applications in cybersecurity, alongside empowering companies to implement smart solutions to strengthen cybersecurity and identify potential vulnerabilities within systems and applications. Gulf Bank remains committed to staying abreast of rapid developments in the field of cybersecurity, whether related to prevalent threats or available defense measures. This is achieved through continuous training and adherence to the latest and best policies and protection programs,

reaffirming the Bank's dedication to providing a secure and resilient work environment across all banking transactions. The Bank maintains the highest levels of security and protection, parallel to its significant investments in comprehensive technological solutions and skilled staff as part of its digital transformation journey—a cornerstone of its five-year strategy. Gulf Bank places a strong emphasis on tackling cybersecurity risks and ensuring the safety of customer data and transactions, through significant investments in human resources and continuous development of systems and technologies in the field of information security.

Furthermore, Gulf Bank plays a key role in supporting the "Diraya" campaign, overseen by the Central Bank of Kuwait in collaboration with the Kuwait Banking Association. The Bank has made tangible contributions toward achieving the campaign's goals by promoting financial literacy within the community and increasing awareness of the banking sector's role, as well as how customers can best utilize the diverse services provided by banks. Gulf Bank contributes to the success of the "Diraya" campaign by distributing educa-

tional content across a range of platforms, from social media to traditional outlets such as newspapers, radio, and television, aiming to reach a broad audience. The Bank is actively involved in the campaign's initiatives, with a focus on educating customers about their rights when dealing with banks, following the Central Bank of Kuwait's guidelines. It also highlights the importance of securing personal data and bank accounts, and promotes safe practices for using banking cards, especially as financial services rapidly evolve and fraud attempts increase.

Moody's cuts France outlook, opening door to downgrade

WASHINGTON: Ratings agency Moody's downgraded France's outlook Friday, opening the door to a potential credit rating cut as it cited concerns over the country's finances. The shift reflects "increasing risk that France's government will be unlikely to im-

plement measures that would prevent sustained wider-than-expected budget deficits and a deterioration in debt affordability," said Moody's Ratings. It changed France's outlook from "stable" to "negative." In the same statement, the agency affirmed France's credit rating at Aa2, saying this was supported by its "large, wealthy and diversified economy." In lowering the outlook, Moody's said the fiscal deterioration it has seen is "beyond our expectations and stands in contrast with governments in similarly rated countries that are tending to consolidate their public finances." France's new finance minister Antoine Armand noted the decision Friday but maintained that the coun-

try is able to carry out "far-reaching reforms." He said some have already produced results and added that the country has economic strength, while vowing to restore its public finances. Armand told AFP on Thursday that France must take "credible" steps to tackle its high deficit. For now, Moody's said risks to France's credit profile are heightened by its political and institutional environment. It noted the situation is "not conducive to coalescing on policy measures that will deliver sustained improvements in the budget balance." "As a result, budget management is weaker than we had previously assessed," it added. New French

Prime Minister Michel Barnier is hoping to bring public sector deficit to below five percent of gross domestic product next year, from an expected 6.1 percent in 2024. The government hopes that in 2029 it will drop to below three percent, the agreed deficit ceiling for EU members. This month, he unveiled a deficit-slashing budget. France's annual budget debate has often triggered no-confidence motions and Barnier's plan sparked vocal opposition even before its full details were known. France's debt is expected to rise to close to 115 percent of GDP next year, compared to an EU debt target of 60 percent. — AFP

AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 24 OCTOBER 2024

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Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	34,113	7,460.50	-1.5%	-3.2%	-0.2%	322,400,654	117,276,529	29,492	16.3	1.4	82.1%
Main Market	7,455	6,446.17	-0.8%	2.7%	15.7%	1,501,234,565	189,434,274	58,728	13.2	0.9	17.9%
All Share	41,569	6,981.53	-1.4%	-2.2%	2.4%	1,823,635,219	306,710,803	88,220	14.5	1.0	100%

Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Banking	25,557	1,706.03	-1.6%	-2.7%	3.6%	132,054,004	66,194,158	13,911	16.6	1.4	61.48%
Basic Materials	459	813.45	-1.3%	0.8%	9.1%	2,870,619	1,807,217	676	9.1	2.2	1.10%
Consumer Discretionary	980	1,923.86	1.3%	6.5%	19.9%	151,889,742	32,252,257	10,187	17.3	1.4	2.36%
Consumer Staples	311	1,024.72	-0.7%	2.1%	55.6%	2,352,156	1,755,974	200	27.2	1.6	0.75%
Energy	230	1,130.15	1.5%	1.1%	19.1%	29,925,064	3,243,120	1,802	10.5	0.9	0.55%
Financial Services	4,926	1,405.27	-1.7%	-0.4%	15.9%	852,274,499	105,391,473	32,405	12.6	1.0	11.85%
Health Care	65	470.69	0.0%	0.0%	-2.4%	0	0.000	0	47.6	1.5	0.16%
Industrials	2,214	670.82	-2.1%	-7.5%	-26.1%	127,725,644	23,079,331	9,407	14.2	1.0	5.33%
Insurance	829	2,020.92	0.1%	-3.0%	-11.9%	4,764,451	411,937	461	9.1	1.1	1.99%
Real Estate	2,952	1,390.50	-0.6%	1.1%	14.6%	503,781,047	67,098,068	16,319	16.0	0.8	7.10%
Technology	15	1,113.07	7.0%	-23.1%	92.5%	1,168,928	167,941.23	208	463.6	1.3	0.04%
Telecommunications	3,030	991.54	-1.5%	-3.6%	-10.3%	9,615,021	4,552,407	2,201	16.1	1.3	7.29%
Utilities	0	378.95	-2.0%	-2.7%	-16.8%	5,214,044	756,919	443	14.8	1.2	0.00%

Top Gainers					
Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
PAPCO	301	46.83%	3,259,267	1,094,031,557	1,151
EQUIPMENT	53	20.45%	21,527,660	1,067,787	964
URC	130	17.12%	109,101,245	13,082,247	3,090
WARBACAP	172	14.67%	55,093,101	9,687,866	3,313
SENERGY	41	9.63%	8,912,988	349,970	450

Top Losers					
Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
MANAZEL	36.9	-18.54%	238,857,099	10,086,944	4,125
ALOOLA	40.5	-15.63%	96,746,255	4,532,405	2,692
KMEFIC	100	-14.70%	4,073,744	446,170	289
ACICO	79	-10.23%	15,645,351	1,292,832	777
SANAM	208	-7.56%	1,591,347	338,082	195

Top Volume					
Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KBT	132	-0.75%	244,316,926	32,779,222	3,355
MANAZEL	36.9	-18.54%	238,857,099	10,086,944	4,125
URC	130	17.12%	109,101,245	13,082,247	3,090
ALOOLA	40.5	-15.63%	96,746,255	4,532,405	2,692
OULAFUEL	240	9.59%	91,813,575	19,881,271	5,191

Top Value					
Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KBT	132	-0.75%	244,316,926	32,779,222	3,355
KFH	705	-1.40%	46,192,500	32,726,617	6,884
OULAFUEL	240	9.59%	91,813,575	19,881,271	5,191
NIH	226	5.12%	61,813,807	14,318,713	3,509
NBK	840	-2.44%	16,772,559	14,238,294	2,319

Market Summary:

- Premier market volume and value dropped by 37% and 25%, respectively, while the Main market rose by 1% & 4%.
- Both indexes moved in a downtrend due to increasing market uncertainty.
- Technically, the All Share Index closed at 6,981, with support levels at 6,981, 6,959, and 6,933, and resistance at 7,000. The Premier Index closed at 7,460, with support levels at 7,454, 7,399, and 7,343, and resistance at 7,503. The Main Index closed at 6,446, with support levels at 6,437, 6,411, and 6,357, and resistance at 6,463.

Business



Minister of Finance Noura Al-Fassam with Basel Al-Haroon during the reception.



Kuwait Central Bank Governor Basel Al-Haroon and the leaders of Kuwaiti banks.

NBK concludes its participation in annual meetings of IMF and World Bank Group

NBK delegation joins reception ceremony hosted by Kuwait Banking Association

KUWAIT: The official delegation representing National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has concluded its participation in the annual events and meetings organized by the board of governors of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group, which took place in Washington, DC from October 21 to 26.

The delegation was headed by Isam Al-Sager, Vice Chairman and Group CEO, alongside 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 Annual Meetings discussed key economic and financial challenges in addition to various topics including public debt, fiscal sustainability, and economic growth, climate finance, scaling up climate finance. Furthermore, the meetings tackled international trade issues and the impact of geopolitical tensions on the global economic landscape.

On the sidelines of the IMF Meetings, NBK's delegation conducted numerous bilateral meetings with high-ranking international officials, which focused on addressing key current challenges in the global banking and financial industry.

The delegation also joined the reception ceremony hosted by Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) last Friday in Washington, DC, under the patronage of Basel Al-Haroon, the Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait. The event was attended by Noura Al-Fassam, Minister of Finance, Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, and Acting Minister of Oil, and Sheikh Al-Zain Al-Sabah, Ambassador of Kuwait to the United States, along with governors of Arab central banks, chairmen of Kuwaiti banks, Kuwaiti banking leaders, and a number of international economic and financial personalities.

The event featured interactions between bankers from Kuwait and their counterparts from Arab and foreign regions, facilitating discussions on the latest financial and banking developments and the exploration of potential collaborations in the fields of finance and investment. NBK's delegation also joined the



Kuwait Ambassador to the United States Sheikh Al-Zain Al-Sabah and Isam Al-Sager with Kuwaiti banking leaders.

dinner banquet hosted by Sheikh Al-Zain Al-Sabah, Ambassador of Kuwait to the United States, attended by Noura Al-Fassam, Minister of Finance, Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, and Acting Minister of Oil, and Basel Al-Haroon, the governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait, along with Kuwaiti banking leaders.

One of the significant highlights of this year's meetings for the official bank delegation was their participation in a symposium organized by the G30, held concurrently with the annual meetings of the IMF and the World Bank Group. Every year, central bank governors from around the world convene with industry leaders and academic experts at a symposium focused on addressing the most pressing financial and systemic challenges facing the global central banking community. The bank's delegation also took part in meetings organized by the Institute of International Finance (IIF), where a range of topics were discussed. These discussions covered global challenges, includ-

ing interest rate reduction cycle, financial markets volatility, global geopolitical tensions, and strategies aimed at bolstering the resilience of the banking industry while fostering sustainable and broadly inclusive economic growth.

The IMF and the World Bank Group Annual Meetings brought together governors of central banks, ministers of finance and development, parliamentarians, private sector executives, civil society, and academics to discuss issues of global concern. These meetings encompass a wide array of activities, including seminars, regional briefings, press conferences, and numerous other events dedicated to addressing topics related to the global economy, international development, and the global financial system. The 2024 Annual Meetings also covered a range of key topics including the strategies for establishing economic resilience in the face of a weak global economy and heightened uncertainty. Policymakers explored ways to build a more resilient future by reinforcing

social safety nets to safeguard the most vulnerable segments of society, enhancing governance and accountability, strengthening policy frameworks, and addressing the challenges posed by climate change.

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, and the Group of Thirty. The IMFC meeting, in particular, tackled evaluating the current state and potential future trends in the global economy's performance, as well as examining developments in international financial markets and the types of risks that could impact these performance trends.

During its Annual Meetings, the International Monetary Fund conducted a comprehensive assessment of the global economic outlook. This review encompassed the insights IMF's experts regarding trends in the global economic performance, expected risks, and the prospects of the world economy.



Isam Al-Sagar, Omar Bouhadiba, Nassif Chehab and Rani Selwanes.



Basel Al-Haroon with Saudi Arabia's Central Bank Governor.

NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

IMF lowers its 2025 global growth forecast

KUWAIT: The IMF lowered its 2025 global growth forecast to 3.2 percent, a 0.1 percentage point drop from July's estimate, while keeping this year's projection at 3.2 percent. It warned of rising risks like conflicts and trade protectionism but commended central banks for managing inflation without triggering recessions. The US growth forecast for 2024 was raised to 2.8 percent, while the Euro Area's forecast dropped to 0.8 percent, with Germany expected to stall. Growth estimates were also reduced for China (4.8 percent) and Japan (0.3 percent), but the UK's forecast improved to 1.1 percent, and India's growth projection remained steady at 7 percent.

The latest data from S&P Global shows that the US manufacturing and services sectors performed better than anticipated in October. The preliminary Manufacturing PMI reached 47.8, slightly above the expected 47.5 and the previous month's 47.3. Meanwhile, the Services PMI rose to 55.3, exceeding the forecast of 55 and September's 55.2. Despite prior economic challenges due to tight monetary policy, these improved PMI readings suggest signs of recovery, closely watched by markets for potential impacts on the US dollar. In the PMI system, readings above 50 indicate growth, while those below 50 signal contraction.

The University of Michigan's US consumer senti-

ment index for October 2024 was revised up to 70.5, marking its highest level in six months and a third consecutive monthly increase. Improvements were seen in both economic conditions (64.9) and expectations (74.1), driven by better buying conditions for durable goods amid easing interest rates. Consumer sentiment was also influenced by the upcoming election. Year-ahead inflation expectations remained steady at 2.7 percent, while five-year expectations edged down to 3 percent, aligning with earlier estimates.

The Bank of Canada made a significant interest rate cut of 0.5 percentage points, bringing the policy rate to 3.75 percent, as it shifts focus to supporting the Canadian economy. This marks the fourth consecutive rate cut since June and the largest reduction since the 2009 financial crisis, excluding cuts during the COVID-19 pandemic. Governor Tiff Macklem explained that the central bank's priority has shifted from reducing inflation to keeping it stable around the target of 2 percent, as inflation is now well under control.

ECB President Lagarde

European Central Bank (ECB) President Christine Lagarde emphasized that the status of a global reserve currency should not be "taken for granted" during an Atlantic Council event alongside the International Monetary Fund-World Bank meetings. She discussed key challenges facing Europe, including the ECB's focus on price stability, and how Europe's weaker economic competitiveness impacts its inflation battle. Lagarde reviewed the ECB's monetary policy, noting inflation in the eurozone dropped from 10.6 percent in October 2022 to below 2 percent, though she expects it to rise above 2 percent again soon. Unlike the US Federal Reserve,

which also targets growth, the ECB's mandate is strictly focused on price stability. Lagarde highlighted the importance of trade for innovation, growth, and poverty reduction, warning that trade barriers could negatively affect both growth and inflation. She advised that the next US president consider the historical correlation between US economic leadership and periods of open trade, cautioning against restrictive trade policies.

Eurozone PMI

In October, the Flash Eurozone Composite PMI slightly improved to 49.7 from September's 49.6 but remained below expectations, indicating a minor increase in business activity. Services growth eased to 51.2, and the manufacturing downturn softened to 45.9, as companies scaled back output in response to declining demand. New orders fell for the fifth consecutive month, leading to the largest reduction in employment in nearly four years and an 11-month low in business confidence. Input costs rose at their slowest rate since November 2020, and output charge inflation eased. Weakness in Germany and France continued to drag down overall Eurozone activity. The EUR/USD currency pair closed the week at 1.0793.

In October 2024, the UK Services PMI declined to 51.8 from 52.4, indicating the slowest sector growth since June and missing market expectations. New business remained in expansion, boosted by strong export sales, but firms continued to reduce backlogs to maintain output and cut jobs at the fastest rate in 13 months amid economic concerns and cost-cutting pressures. Rising costs from salaries and technology also led firms to increase output charges, while business confidence softened. Meanwhile, the UK Manufacturing

PMI dropped to 50.3 from 51.5, signaling a slowdown in growth as new orders, especially from international clients, fell. The upcoming Autumn Budget on October 30 and concerns over domestic economic growth added uncertainty. Although input prices rose more slowly, firms raised output charges to protect margins, with manufacturers expressing their lowest confidence in nearly two years due to rising political and economic uncertainties. The GBP/USD currency pair closed the week at 1.2959.

China's lending rates

The People's Bank of China has decided to lower its benchmark lending rates, as anticipated by markets and following reductions to other policy rates last month as part of its stimulus measures to revive the economy. The one-year loan prime rate was lowered by 25 bps, reaching 3.10 percent down from 3.35 percent, while the five-year loan prime rate was also cut to 3.60 percent, down from 3.85 percent previously. The decision comes following cuts to the bank's reserve requirement ratio by 50 bps, and the seven-day repo rate by 20 bps in September, which was considered the most aggressive stimulus since the pandemic. Recent data show that China's economic growth saw a slight improvement in the third quarter, while property investment fell by about 10 percent in the first nine months of 2024, and retail sales and industrial production saw a slight pick-up. The USD/CNY currency pair closed the week at 7.1199.

KUWAIT

Kuwaiti dinar
USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30640.



Indigenous environmental guards are pictured at the El Gran Sabalo Indigenous Reservation.



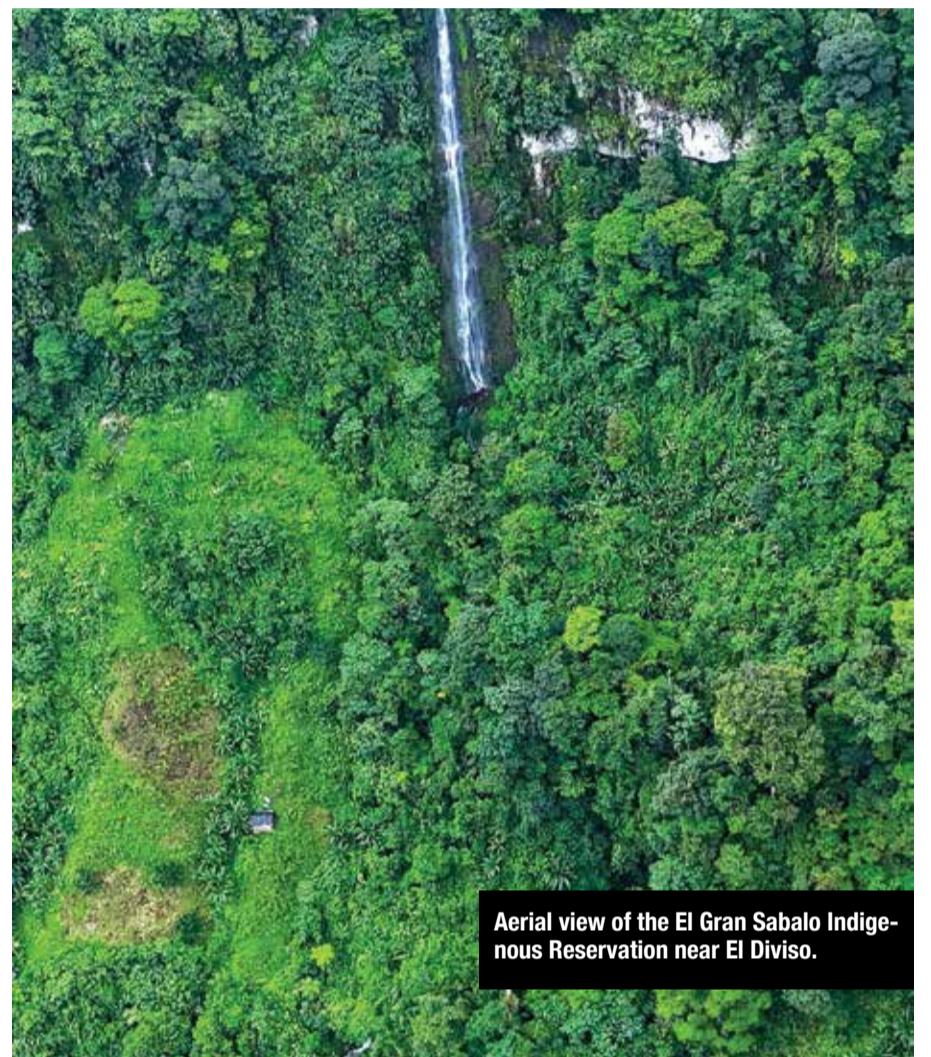
An Indigenous woman carrying green plantains walks at the El Gran Sabalo Indigenous Reservation.



View of the El Gran Sabalo Indigenous Reservation.



Aerial view of El Diviso, Narino department, Colombia.



Aerial view of the El Gran Sabalo Indigenous Reservation near El Diviso.

Colombia's Awa people resist violence, maintain 'spiritual bond' with nature



A tropidurid lizard is pictured at the El Gran Sabalo Indigenous Reservation.

The Awa of Colombia are an Indigenous people who have been threatened by armed groups in the country's southwestern rainforests for decades, but insist on protecting the environment they say they are "connected" to. As environmental policy leaders gather for a major biodiversity meeting in the South American nation, the Awas embody the struggle for survival of native peoples and the defense of the jungle.

"The Awa people have been resisting for 500 years. Against invasion, discrimination, armed groups, forced recruitment and displacement, acculturation," said Olivio Bisbicus, one of the leaders of this community of nearly 50,000. "Being an Awa chief is complicated and dangerous," he said. "Drug trafficking brings vice, territorial disharmony and the destruction of our culture and nature."

The group's full name, Inkal Awa, means "People of the jungle" in their ancestral language. They live in the mountainous rainforest of Colombia and in

neighboring Ecuador. "Three armed groups are fighting over this strategic border region, a drug trafficking corridor to the Pacific" that is also dotted with illegal gold mines, Alex Javier Gonzalez, an official with the Narino governorate, told AFP. The situation is "critical for the Awas," he said.

'Risk of extinction'

The Colombian justice system has documented 25 years of violence against the Awas, who have been caught up in the conflict with the FARC guerrilla army, warning of a "risk of physical, cultural and spiritual extermination." Between 1990 and 2016, the guerrillas killed 185 Awas. The murders continued after a 2016 peace agreement.

At least 22 members of the group were killed in 2022, including a prominent leader who was shot dead by the men with whom he was supposed to negotiate. Many of Colombia's Indigenous communities "are at risk of extinction" due to pressure from criminal groups involved in drug cultivation and trafficking,

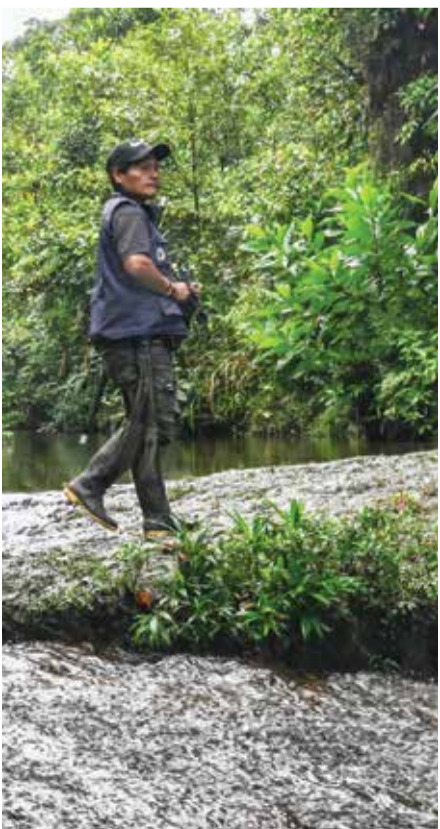


An insect of the genus Schaeferocoris is pictured at the El Gran Sabalo Indigenous Reservation.

Jan Egeland, secretary general of the Norwegian Refugee Council, told AFP.

"The violent competition for the land is so fierce," he said. In early 2023, the ombudsman's offices of Colombia and Ecuador issued a joint warning regarding the future of the Awa people. The Colombian Constitutional Court has repeatedly called for their protection.

But fresh violence claimed the lives of three more Awa men at the end of August, according to Unipa, an organization representing them. "And yet they are holding on," Gonzalez said. "The Awas have managed to maintain control over their lands."



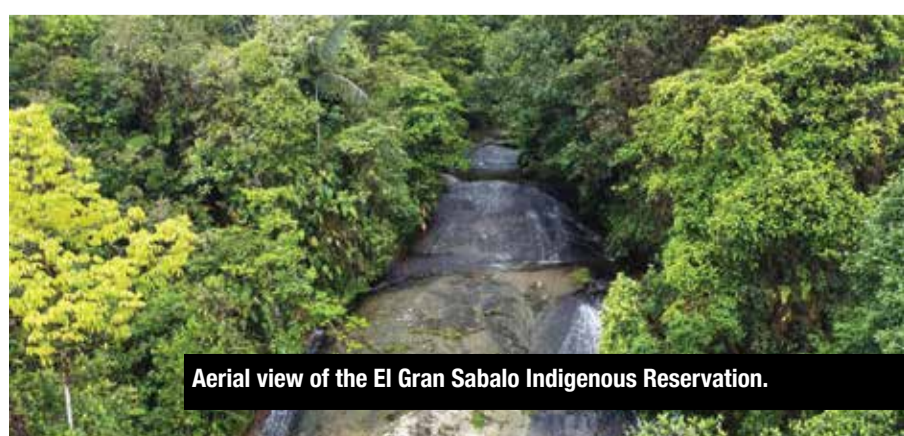
Indigenous environmental interpreter Alvaro Pai Pai walks at the El Gran Sabalo Indigenous Reservation.



An Indigenous environmental guard looks through binoculars.—AFP photos



An Indigenous woman carrying green plantains walks at the El Gran Sabalo Indigenous Reservation.



Aerial view of the El Gran Sabalo Indigenous Reservation.



An Indigenous woman walks at the El Gran Sabalo Indigenous Reservation



Indigenous environmental guard Alberto Garcia inspects a plant.



A slaty-tailed trogon (Trogon massaena) is pictured at the El Gran Sabalo Indigenous Reservation near El Diviso, Narino department, Colombia.

Lifestyle



Awa environmental leader Wilmar Bisbicus (left) and other indigenous environmental guards try to photograph a bird at the El Gran Sabalo Indigenous Reservation.

'Spiritual bond'
Gilles Bertrand, the European Union ambassador to Colombia, describes their group's struggle as "emblematic." "They show great courage," he said. Armed with only sticks and an ethos of non-violence, the Unipa Indigenous guard, made up of 2,000 volunteers, works to protect nature.

"In the face of weapons, we are empty-handed. But we have dialogue, and our ancestral knowledge, our identity, our authorities, our presence here for centuries," Bisbicus said. "We have been able to maintain the unity of our people, and demand respect for our territory. Our land is not a battlefield," he added.



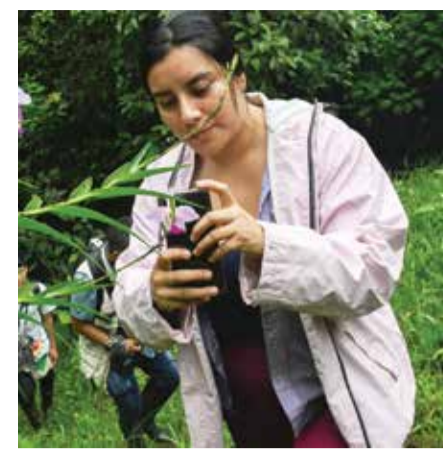
Aerial view of the El Gran Sabalo Indigenous Reservation.

The Awas are also characterized by what they call a "spiritual bond" with their land. "The territory is a living space, where we coexist with nature, animals and spirits. Nature is our mother," said Wilmer Rigoberto Bisbicus, a coordinator in Nutria, a private nature reserve.

At almost 1,000 meters (3,300

feet) above sea level, La Nutria hides an enchanting waterfall overlooking a lush valley. "Here it rains a lot. This water is life," said Alvaro Pai, a guide at the reserve. "The waterfall listens and heals you," he said.

Described by the European Union's ambassador as an "ambitious peace and ecotourism project," Nutria's 365



Mexican biologist Maria Pacheco takes photos of an orchid at the El Gran Sabalo Indigenous Reservation.

hectares are home to 185 species of birds, butterflies and frogs. "We must take care of the earth, because we come from it, learn from it, and we will return to it," Olivio Bisbicus said. "The further we move away from it, the more we harm ourselves."—AFP



Tourists ride camels in the sand dunes in the village of Merzouga in the Sahara desert in southeastern Morocco.



This picture shows Erg Znaigui, a seasonal lake in the village of Merzouga in the Sahara desert.

Rare Sahara floods bring Morocco's dried-up south back to life



A man sits next to his camels on the shores of Yasmina lake.



Tourists visit Yasmina lake.



A man leads his camel along the shores of Yasmina lake.

In Morocco's southeastern desert, a rare downpour has brought lakes and ponds back to life, with locals -- and tourists -- hailing it as a gift from the heavens. In Merzouga, an attractive tourist town some 600 kilometres (370 miles) southeast of the capital Rabat, the once parched golden dunes are now dotted with replenished ponds and lakes.

"We're incredibly happy about the recent rains," said Youssef Ait Chiga, a local tour guide leading a group of German tourists to Yasmina Lake nestled amidst Merzouga's dunes. Khalid Skandouli, another tour guide, said the rain has drawn even more visitors to the tourist area, now particularly eager to witness this odd transformation.

With him, Laetitia Chevallier, a French tourist and regular visitor to the region, said the rainfall has proved a "blessing from the sky". "The desert became green again, the animals have food again, and the plants and palm trees came back to life," she said.

Locals told AFP the basin had been barren for nearly 20 years. Last year was Morocco's driest in 80 years, with a 48 percent drop in rainfall, according to an October report from the General Directorate of Meteorology (DGM).

But in September, torrential rains triggered floods in southern parts of Morocco, killing at least 28 people, according to authorities. The rare heavy rains come as the North African kingdom grapples with its worst drought in nearly 40 years, threatening its economically crucial agriculture sector.

Neighbouring Algeria saw similar rain and flooding in early September, killing six people. North African countries currently rank among the world's most water-stressed, according to the World Resources Institute, a non-profit research organisation.

The kingdom's meteorological agency described the recent massive rainfall as "exceptional". It attributed it to an unusual



Tourists camp on the shores of Erg Znaigui, a seasonal lake in the village of Merzouga in the Sahara desert in southeastern Morocco.—AFP photos

shift of the intertropical convergence zone -- the equatorial region where winds from the northern and southern hemispheres meet, causing thunderstorms and heavy rainfall.

'Climate change'

"Everything suggests that this is a sign of climate change," Fatima Driouech, a Moroccan climate scientist, told AFP. "But it's too early to say definitively without thorough studies." Driouech emphasised the importance of further research to attribute this event to broader climate trends.

Experts say climate change is making extreme weather events, such as storms and droughts, more frequent and intense. In Morocco's south, the rains have helped partially fill some reservoirs and replenish groundwater aquifers.

But for those levels to significantly rise, experts say the rains would need to continue over a longer period of time.

The rest of the country is still grappling with drought, now in its sixth consecutive year, jeopardising the agricultural sector that employs over a third of Morocco's workforce. Jean Marc Berhocoirigoin, a 68-year-old French tourist, said he was surprised to find Yasmina Lake replenished.

"I felt like a kid on Christmas morning," he said. "I hadn't seen these views for 15 years." Water has also returned to other desert areas such as Erg Znaigui, about 40 kilometres south of Merzouga, AFP reporters saw.

While the rains have breathed life into Morocco's arid southeast, Driouech warns that "a single extreme event can't bring lasting change". But last week, Morocco's meteorological agency said such downpours could become increasingly frequent, "driven partly by climate change as the intertropical convergence zone shifts further north".—AFP



A man leads his camels along the shores of Yasmina lake.



This picture shows Erg Znaigui, a seasonal lake in the village of Merzouga.



The sun sets behind the dunes at Yasmina lake.



Camels are seen along the shores of Yasmina lake.



Tourists visit Yasmina lake.



This picture shows the Kasbah Hotel near the shores of Yasmina lake.

Sports

Zheng hails consistency after Pan Pacific Open win

Red-hot Yin Ruoning secures LPGA Malaysia title with flawless 65

TOKYO: Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen hailed her new-found consistency after capturing her third title of the year on Sunday, beating Sofia Kenin in the Pan Pacific Open final in Tokyo. China's Zheng beat American Kenin 7-6 (7/5), 6-3 to extend an impressive run of form this year for the world number seven.

The 22-year-old became the first Chinese player to win an Olympic singles tennis gold when she triumphed in Paris. She also won in Palermo and finished runner-up in Wuhan and at the Australian Open. Zheng struggled for consistency after losing to Aryna Sabalenka in Melbourne at the start of the year and she said it had forced her to re-evaluate her mindset.

"When I made the final at the Australian Open, everybody said it was really good but after I had ups and downs at the other tournaments," she said. "I started to repair myself and start thinking again what kind of mentality I need." Zheng, the top seed in Tokyo, kept her cool to edge a tight first set despite two rain delays, before pressing home her advantage to take the second comfortably.

She hit a total of 16 aces to finally lift the trophy having lost to Russia's Liudmila Samsonova in the final two years ago. "I did some good preparation here," she said. "In all the matches I played there is only one with three sets, so I would say it's a quite successful tournament for me."

Kenin injury scare

Kenin, the 2020 Australian Open champion, had an injury scare when she retired from her doubles semi-final on Saturday. She played the final with heavy strapping on her upper leg and said she "felt it



TOKYO: China's Zheng Qinwen (R) poses with the winner's trophy after her victory over Sofia Kenin of the US in their women's singles final match at the Pan Pacific Open tennis tournament in Tokyo. — AFP photos

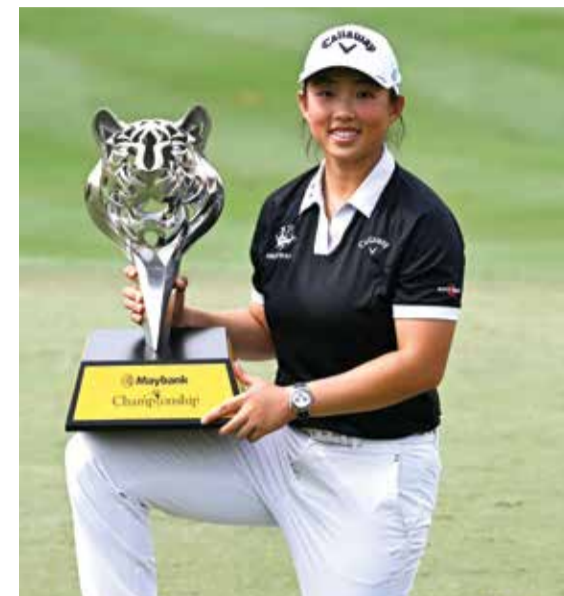
but "Qinwen played well and deserved to win".

It was the world number 155's first final of 2024, and she was looking to end a title drought that stretches back more than four years. "I expected nothing but the best from her because she's been having an amazing year and she's a top-10 player," said Kenin.

"I just wanted to see where I stand. I feel like overall it was a great match." Neither player was allowed to get into a rhythm early in the match as rain twice brought play to a halt. The roof was eventually closed and Zheng edged ahead with the slimmest of margins to take the first set in a tiebreak.

Backed by a large contingent of Chinese fans, the 22-year-old took control of the second set early. She closed it out when Kenin hit a return that was called in but overturned when Zheng successfully appealed. "I was pretty sure the ball was out

because I saw the mark," said Zheng. "In my eyes it was far away but when the challenge came out it was really close, only a tiny bit." Zheng had already qualified for next month's season-ending WTA Tour Finals in Saudi Arabia. "It's tough to say if it's going to help me in Riyadh because every tournament is different," she said. "The conditions change a lot. Of course it's going to help with my confidence." — AFP



KUALA LUMPUR: China's Yin Ruoning poses with the trophy.

Pakistan appoint Rizwan white-ball skipper, Azam back

LAHORE: Pakistan appointed on Sunday Mohammad Rizwan as skipper for the white-ball tours of Australia and Zimbabwe, replacing Babar Azam who stepped down this month. Rizwan, 32, had led Pakistan in two Tests on the tour of New Zealand in 2020 when Azam was injured but has never led in limited over matches.

Rizwan will lead the squad with Azam and Shaheen Shah Afridi also named after being dropped from the last two Tests against England in the series Pakistan won 2-0 on Saturday. Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Mohsin Naqvi announced the decision.

"We consulted all the stakeholders before deciding Rizwan's name as skipper for white-ball team," said Naqvi in a news conference in Lahore. Azam, appointed white-ball captain for the first time in 2019, stepped down after Pakistan's disastrous first-round exit from the ODI World Cup in India last year.

However, he was re-appointed for a second time in March ahead of the T20I World Cup in the United States and West Indies — where Pakistan exited in the first round again, adding pressure on him to resign. Rizwan said he will take all players with him.

"It is an honor to lead Pakistan," said Rizwan, also in the news conference. "We will fight hard to bring good results on the tours." Middle-order batter Salman Agha will be Rizwan's deputy. Selectors said Azam and Shaheen will be rested for the limited-overs matches in the Zimbabwe tour next month.

Pakistan open the Australia tour with three one-day internationals in Melbourne (November 4), Adelaide (November 8) and Perth (November 10). That will be followed by three Twenty20 internationals in Brisbane (November 14), Sydney (November 16) and Hobart (November 18).

Allrounders Aamer Jamal and Arafat Minhas, spinner Faisal Akram, wicketkeeper batsman Haseebullah and batsmen Irfan Khan and Saim Ayub have been selected for the first time in ODIs. Likewise, allrounders Jahandad Khan and Salman Agha have been selected for the first time in T20Is.

Squads for Australia:

ODI SQUAD: Mohammad Rizwan (captain), Aamer Jamal, Abdullah Shafique, Arafat Minhas, Babar Azam, Faisal Akram, Haris Rauf, Haseebullah, Kamran Ghulam, Mohammad Hasnain, Irfan Khan, Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Salman Agha, Shaheen Shah Afridi

T20I SQUAD: Mohammad Rizwan (captain), Arafat Minhas, Babar Azam, Haris Rauf, Haseebullah, Jahandad Khan, Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Hasnain, Irfan Khan, Omair Bin Yousuf, Sahibzada Farhan, Salman Agha, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Sufyan Moqim, Usman Khan.

Squads for Zimbabwe:

ODI: Mohammad Rizwan (captain), Aamer Jamal, Abdullah Shafique, Arafat Minhas, Ahmed Daniyal, Faisal Akram, Haris Rauf, Haseebullah, Kamran Ghulam, Mohammad Hasnain, Irfan Khan, Saim Ayub, Salman Agha, Shah Nawaz Dahani, Tayyab Tahir.

T20I: Mohammad Rizwan (captain), Ahmed Daniyal, Arafat Minhas, Haris Rauf, Haseebullah, Jahandad Khan, Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Hasnain, Irfan Khan, Omair Bin Yousuf, Qasim Akram, Sahibzada Farhan, Salman Agha, Sufyan Moqim, Tayyab Tahir, Usman Khan. — AFP

India fears end of an era after NZ Zealand loss

PUNE: Indian media feared on Sunday that the cricketing powerhouse's first home Test series defeat in 12 years might herald the end of a golden era of players such as Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma. India went down to New Zealand by 113 runs inside three days in the second Test in Pune on Saturday as the Black Caps took an unbeatable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

It was New Zealand's first Test series win on Indian soil since they began touring there in 1955. Tom Latham's men ended India's record of 18 consecutive bilateral home series wins, the home team's previous series loss coming against England in December 2012. "End of a golden era for Rohit Sharma's India as Tom Latham does an Edmund Hillary," a headline in the Indian Express newspaper said, likening the visitors' achievement to their countryman's ascent of Mount Everest in 1953.

"Beyond the group that miserably lost the Test series against New Zealand, does India have worthy replacements?" an opinion piece in the same paper said. "Not really, this is all we have and that is a real cause of concern for Indian cricket. "... Rohit and Virat were woefully out of touch, their best years behind them." Others expressed similar fears. "Olympus Has Fallen," The Times of India declared on its front page.

Sakamoto leads Japanese sweep at Skate Canada

MONTREAL: Three-time reigning world champion Kaori Sakamoto led a Japanese podium sweep at Skate Canada on Saturday, locking up a second straight Canadian women's title despite two falls in her free skate.

Sakamoto, who led 19-year-old American Alysa Liu after the short programme, looked a little tight during her jazzy free skate, falling on a Salchow jump and again on a triple flip while fighting to hang on to a few other moves. But her second-best free skate score of 126.24 was enough for gold in the second Grand Prix event of the season in Halifax, Nova Scotia. She finished with a total of 201.21 points, well ahead of compatriot Rino Matsuiki — who roared from 10th place with a sensational free skate that earned 139.85 points for a total of 192.16.

Japan's Hana Yoshida was third with 191.37 points as Liu, in her first Grand Prix event since 2021, dropped to sixth. Reigning pairs world champions Deanna Stellato-Dudek and Maxime Deschamps of Canada

Echavarría wins PGA Tour's Zozo Championship

INZAI: Colombia's Nico Echavarría sunk a short birdie putt at the final hole Sunday to win his second US PGA Tour title by a single stroke at the Zozo Championship in Japan. The birdie four enabled Echavarría to avoid a playoff with two-time major winner Justin Thomas and his fellow American Max Greysenman, who finished tied for second at 19-under par.

The Colombian reached the green in two at the par-five 18th and calmly rolled up a 40-foot eagle attempt to three feet before stroking home the winning putt at Narashino Country Club. "It's surreal, this moment is very special," said the 30-year-old, whose previous win came at the Puerto Rico Open in March 2023. "It's been a good year for me, I just haven't had



PUNE: New Zealand players celebrate after their win against India at the end of the third day of their second Test cricket match in the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium of Pune. — AFP

Skipper Rohit and Kohli were among India's batting failures against a New Zealand spin attack led by Mitchell Santner. India's batting collapses in the series included 46 all out in the first innings of the opening Test and then 156 in the second.

Rohit fell for a duck and eight in the second Test while Kohli made one and 17, falling both times to Santner's left-arm spin. Rohit played down the losses against New Zealand. "We are allowed one such performance in 12 years," he said. "I don't want to do too much of a post-mortem".

However, the series defeat "has cast a spotlight on

the futures of Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, and their careers", the Hindustan Times said. "Watching him (Kohli) bat has become more frustrating than anything else. It's hard to believe this is the same player who, not long ago, seemed nearly indestructible."

"King Kohli" has hit just one half-century and has three single-digit scores in five Tests this year. New Zealand in contrast played spin with aplomb, with Devon Conway scoring 76 and Rachin Ravindra 65 in the first innings in Pune. India's disappointing show has left them grappling for quick answers ahead of a five-Test tour of Australia starting next month. — AFP



HALIFAX: Gold medalist Kaori Sakamoto of Japan (C) poses for photographers with silver medalist Rino Matsuiki of Japan (L) and bronze medalist Hana Yoshida of Japan (R) during the victory ceremony in the women's competition at ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating "2024 Skate Canada International" at the Scotiabank Center in Halifax. — AFP

captured their second consecutive Skate Canada title, also despite finishing second in the free skate.

Men's world champion Ilia Malinin got off to a roaring start in his bid to complete a rare Skate America-Skate Canada double with a short programme that garnered 106.22 points. Stellato-Dudek and Des-

champs had led after Friday's short programme. Their free skate earned 124.10 points, enough to give them gold with a total of 197.33 points ahead of Uzbekistan's Ekaterina Geynish and Dmitrii Chigirev, who topped the free skate with 126.12 points.

That lifted the Uzbek duo, fourth after the short programme, into second overall on 189.65 with Australians Anastasia Golubeva and Hektor Giotopoulos Moore third overall on 186.14.

Relaxed Malinin

Malinin, the 19-year-old American who won a third consecutive Skate America title last week, delivered a superb short programme that put him almost 10 points ahead of Japan's Shun Sato going into Sunday's deciding free skate.

The 20-year-old Sato, a former world junior champion, earned 96.52 points. Reigning Skate Canada champion Yamamoto Sota was third on 92.16. Malinin, the self-styled "Quad God," won last year's ISU Grand Prix Final then claimed his first world title with a world record free skate point total.

After a short programme featuring a quadruple flip and a quadruple Lutz-triple toe combination he is poised to become the first man since Alexei Yagudin in 1999 to win both Skate America and Skate Canada — the only time a men's skater has won the opening two Grand Prix events of a season. — AFP



INZAI: Nico Echavarría of Colombia (L), winner of the 2024 Zozo Championship PGA golf tournament, poses with the victory trophy and his girlfriend Claudia De Antonio (R) at the Narashino Country Club in Inzai. — AFP

burned the edge to fall." Greysenman had four birdies on the front nine and another on the 14th, but his birdie attempt on 18 to force a playoff rolled agonizingly wide of the hole as he finished with a 65. — AFP

Sports

Lewandowski double as Barca shred Madrid in La Liga Clasico

Barcelona snapped Madrid's 42-match unbeaten streak in La Liga

MADRID: Robert Lewandowski struck twice in two minutes as Barcelona crushed rivals Real Madrid 4-0 on Saturday, inflicting the Spanish champions' first La Liga defeat in over a year.

Teenage winger Lamine Yamal and Raphinha completed the rout, while Madrid superstar Kylian Mbappe had two goals ruled out for offside on a frustrating first Clasico appearance for Los Blancos, who now trail league leaders Barcelona by six points. France captain Mbappe was consistently outwitted by the visitors' high defensive line to the chagrin of the exasperated Santiago Bernabeu crowd, whose mood darkened as Barcelona hit four second-half goals.

Barcelona snapped Madrid's 42-match unbeaten streak in La Liga, one game short of the Catalan giants' all-time record, adding further shine to their triumph. "It's a hard moment, a tough moment when you lose a game, (especially after) so many unbeaten," admitted Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti.

His counterpart Hansi Flick has whipped Barcelona into shape in just a matter of months and in ending a run of four Clasico defeats, his young side made a statement victory to show how far they have come.

"The big objectives are (fought) against the best in the world and we've shown that we've got the ability to beat anyone, that we've got the mentality and that we've changed," said Barcelona goalkeeper Inaki Pena. Ancelotti's game-plan was clear — defend in numbers and try to spring Mbappe or Vinicius Junior with a long ball into the space behind Barcelona's defence. It led to an intense but repetitive first half, with Barcelona's defence catching Madrid offside on eight occasions.

Mbappe hit the side-netting and lobbed over but was offside on both occasions, while Jude Bellingham forced a superb save from Pena, but it would also have been disallowed for offside. "We always play with the back four very high, (regarding Mbappe's

goals), it's always like that because the referees don't whistle, so it looks dangerous — but it's not dangerous," said Flick.

At the other end Yamal sent a soft effort at Andriy Lunin when put through on goal by a superb Lewandowski flick. Barcelona were not playing with the fluidity they have demonstrated in recent weeks, culminating in the impressive 4-1 Champions League win over Bayern Munich on Wednesday. Mbappe thought he had broken the deadlock when he got in behind and produced a fine dinked finish over Pena, but yet again the forward was marginally offside and his celebration was cut short.

Silence the Bernabeu

Despite the feeling they were constantly menacing Barcelona, Madrid only produced one legal shot in the first half, with Vinicius dragging into the side-netting when he tried to catch Pena out at the near post. Eager for more control, Flick replaced Fermin Lopez with Frenkie de Jong at half-time and Barcelona soon took the lead and never looked back.

Marc Casado slipped Lewandowski through and with Madrid defender Ferland Mendy a step behind his team-mates, the Pole was onside. The 36-year-old slotted low past Lunin to silence the Bernabeu, and two minutes later he pounced again.

Lewandowski headed home Alejandro Balde's cross to double Barcelona's advantage and net his 14th league goal in 11 games, continuing his stunning revival under Flick after struggling last season.

Mbappe had a second goal ruled out for offside as Madrid struggled to find a way back in and Pena kept out a low stinging effort from the former Paris Saint-Germain forward. Lewandowski spurned two golden chances to complete his hat-trick, shooting against the post from Raphinha's lay-off and then blazing over after good work by Yamal.



MADRID: Real Madrid's French midfielder #06 Eduardo Camavinga (top) collides with Barcelona's Spanish midfielder #08 Pedri during the Spanish league football match between Real Madrid CF and FC Barcelona at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid. — AFP

Spain's Euro 2024 star Yamal plundered Barcelona's third by rifling home after the surging Raphinha teed him up, with Flick celebrating jubilantly in the dugout. Raphinha completed the rout with a lob over Lunin to leave the Bernabeu reeling.

"We played a first half with intensity, we could have scored (but) we lacked some accuracy," said Ancelotti. "When they scored they hit two goals that took all of our energy away, we took more risks at the back and they found a lot more chances on the counter attack. "For 60 minutes we competed very well and we have to forget the last 30." — AFP

Lille score twice in stoppage-time to beat Lens

PARIS: A 98th-minute penalty by Jonathan David set Lille up to take the bragging rights at the home of their northern rivals Lens on Saturday, while Brest completed an impressive week by winning 2-1 at Reims. David's penalty was followed up three minutes later by a breakaway Mohamed Bayo strike to complete a stunning 2-0 win for the visitors.

The derby victory comes on the back of Lille's 3-1 surprise defeat of Atletico Madrid in the Champions League on Wednesday.

"It's been more than just a great, great week," said Lille coach Bruno Genesio. "To go to Monaco, Madrid and Lens and take four points out of six in the league and three in Madrid, that's extraordinary."

The result sent Lille level on 17 points with third-placed Marseille, while Lens' first defeat on the season left them in fifth spot, three points behind their rivals. Lens and Lille both cancelled each other out in a hard-fought encounter that appeared destined to end goalless until the 94th minute.

Kevin Danso flew in to challenge for a cross at the near post and the ball ricocheted up and hit his outstretched arm. The referee was called over to review the VAR monitor, confirming his original decision to award a spot-kick. After a long wait, David stepped up and stroked the ball into the right corner to grab the three points for Lille in the 98th minute. With Lens desperately searching for an equalizer, Lille broke and Bayo squeezed the ball past the goalkeeper in the 101st minute to complete the win.

Earlier, two goals inside the opening 20 minutes were enough to secure a 2-1 win for Brest at sixth-placed Reims. Brest have failed to translate their excellent form in their debut Champions League campaign into success on the domestic front so far this term. But following a 1-1 draw with Bundesliga



LENS: Lille's Canadian forward #09 Jonathan David (R) shoots a penalty and scores his team's first goal during the French L1 football match between RC Lens and Lille LOSC at Stade Bollaert-Delelis in Lens. — AFP

winners Bayer Leverkusen in Europe on Wednesday that won Eric Roy's side plenty of plaudits, they won their fourth game of the league season to move to eighth place.

A Romain Faivre penalty in the fourth minute sent them on their way before Mama Balde doubled the lead on 18 minutes. Joseph Okumu halved the deficit with a header one minute before the half-hour but the away team managed to hold firm for the remaining hour to claim victory. Angers escaped the relegation zone with a 4-2 home win against fellow strugglers Saint-Etienne. Himad Abdelli, Jean-Eudes Aholou, Ibrahima Niane and Bamba Dieng were on target for the hosts.

Zuriko Davitashvili levelled twice for Saint-Etienne either side of half-time, but once Niane converted a 69th-minute penalty for Angers, Les Verts were unable to again find a response. The result gave Angers their first win of the campaign, after being promoted back to the top flight from Ligue 2 last season. They now sit 14th in the table, level on seven points with Saint-Etienne, who are just one spot above the relegation play-off position. The derbies continue on Sunday as high-flying Monaco travel along the south coast to visit mid-table neighbors Nice. — AFP

Ohtani injury scare as Dodgers down Yankees to take lead

LOS ANGELES: The Los Angeles Dodgers took a 2-0 stranglehold on the World Series after defeating the New York Yankees on Saturday but a worrying injury to Japanese star Shohei Ohtani took the shine off the 4-2 victory.

Home runs from Tommy Edman, Teoscar Hernandez and Freddie Freeman and a clinical pitching performance from Yoshinobu Yamamoto laid the foundations for the win at Dodger Stadium which leaves the Dodgers in a commanding position heading into game three of the best-of-seven series on Monday.

But the post-game celebrations were muted by the injury suffered by Ohtani in the seventh inning as he attempted to steal second base. Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said Ohtani had suffered a "little left shoulder subluxation" — defined by the US National Institutes of Health as a partial or incomplete dislocation — and said Ohtani would undergo an MRI scan to determine the severity of the injury.

"We're going to get some tests at some point tonight, tomorrow, and then we'll know more in the next couple days," Roberts said. However Roberts said team medical staff were "encouraged" by Ohtani's range of motion and strength, and said he expected the Japanese leadoff hitter to feature again in the series.

"I'm expecting him to be there. I'm expecting him to be in the lineup," Roberts replied when asked if the Dodgers were equipped to play without Ohtani. Any serious injury to Ohtani would be a devastating blow for the Dodgers, who signed the two-way star from the Los Angeles Angels last December on a record \$700-million-dollar, 10-year deal.

"He's the best player in the game, and to see him on the ground in pain, it's not a good feeling for sure," Dodgers utility man Edman said. "But we're hopeful he recovers quickly." The Dodgers had followed up



LOS ANGELES: Freddie Freeman #5 of the Los Angeles Dodgers and teammates celebrate their 4-2 win over the New York Yankees during Game Two of the 2024 World Series at Dodger Stadium. — AFP

Friday's extra-innings thriller with a controlled performance to subdue the Yankees.

Dodgers starter Yamamoto dominated the Yankees' vaunted batting line-up, allowing just one hit through 6.1 innings. The victory means the Dodgers will travel to New York with both momentum and history on their side.

In the history of Major League Baseball, teams that win the first two games of a best-of-seven postseason series have prevailed 77 times out of the 92 times it has occurred. "No one said it's going to be easy," Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. "It's a long series, and we need to make it a long series now. We won't flinch. We've just got to keep at it."

Unlike Friday's nerve-shredding extra-innings thriller, when the Dodgers rallied from 3-2 down in the 10th to win after Freeman's historic walk-off grand slam, Saturday's win was mostly comfortable — before a bases-loaded scare in the ninth inning. Edman got the offensive ball rolling for the Dodgers in the bottom of the second inning, sweeping a towering 355-foot home run to left field off Yankees starter Carlos Rodon to make it 1-0. Yankees star Juan Soto brought it back to 1-1 in the top of the third, creaming a solo home run to deep right field off Yamamoto. — AFP

Classifieds

Clinics & Hospitals

Clinics

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Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
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Shaab	22518752
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Ayoum Al-Qibla	22451082
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Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

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West Ham pile more pressure on Manchester United boss

Palmer fires Chelsea to victory over Newcastle, Tottenham beaten



LONDON: Manchester United's Portuguese midfielder #08 Bruno Fernandes (C) heads the ball during the English Premier League football match between West Ham United and Manchester United at the London Stadium, in London on October 27, 2024. — AFP

LONDON: West Ham piled more pressure on beleaguered Manchester United boss Erik ten Hag with a dramatic 2-1 win on Sunday as Cole Palmer inspired Chelsea to a victory by the same scoreline over Newcastle. Tottenham were beaten 1-0 at Crystal Palace, who picked up their first win of the season.

Liverpool can go back to the top of the table with victory away at Arsenal in the biggest clash of the Premier League weekend later on Sunday. Ten Hag was left to rue a familiar lack of ruthlessness as United's fourth league defeat in nine games will spark further speculation on how long he will be given to turn the Red Devils' fortunes around.

The visitors should have been out of sight by half-time at the London Stadium. Alejandro Garnacho hit the woodwork inside two minutes and Edson Alvarez also headed off his own crossbar.

But it was Diogo Dalot who missed the biggest chance when the Portuguese international somehow fired over with the goal gaping after rounding Lukasz Fabianski.

Under-fire West Ham boss Julen Lopetegui showed his disgust with the Hammers' first-half display by making three substitutions at the break. Crysencio Summerville was one of those introduced and he slid in to open the scoring against the run of play on 74 minutes.

Casemiro brought United level nine minutes from time with a header from point-blank range. But there was late drama when VAR intervened for a foul on Danny Ings by Matthijs de Ligt. Jarrod Bowen smashed in the resulting spot-kick to take West Ham above United, who sink to 14th in the table.

Chelsea had been beaten in the Premier League

for the first time since Enzo Maresca's first match in charge at Liverpool last weekend despite an impressive performance. The Blues got back to winning ways with Palmer at the heart of their best work.

The England international had a goal marginally ruled out for offside inside the first five minutes. Palmer was the creator for the opening goal, despite not being credited with the assist, as his sumptuous ball over the top freed Pedro Neto, who picked out Nicolas Jackson to slot in his sixth goal of the season.

Newcastle are now winless in five league games as the pressure mounts on Eddie Howe ahead of a rematch against Chelsea in the League Cup on Wednesday. The Magpies did get back on level terms before half-time as Alexander Isak tapped in Lewis Hall's cross at the end of a well-worked move.

Palmer took just two minutes into the second period to make the decisive impact with a driving run forward and powerful finish that beat Nick Pope at his near post. Newcastle should have left London with a point, though, as Isak botched a huge chance to level 15 minutes from time after rounding Robert Sanchez.

Palace began the day in the relegation zone but were good value for the three points at Selhurst Park as Tottenham's struggles on the road continued. Eberechi Eze's deft flick teed up Jean-Philippe Mateta to fire home the only goal. Eze had a second ruled out for offside in the second half, but Tottenham, without injured captain Son Heung-min, were toothless in attack. Spurs have won just once in five away league games this season as they slip to eighth, four points off the top four. — AFP

Lakers hold off Kings, Clippers down Nuggets

LOS ANGELES: LeBron James and Anthony Davis combined for 63 points -- 30 of them in the fourth quarter—as the Los Angeles Lakers held off the Sacramento Kings 131-127 Saturday to improve to 3-0 in the young NBA season.

The Lakers, who led by as many as 15 points on the way to a 64-60 halftime lead, trailed 94-87 heading into the final period. But they opened the fourth on a 21-0 scoring run that included 16 points from superstar James, the league's all-time scoring leader now in his 22nd season.

The Lakers twice pushed their lead to 14 points in the fourth but the Kings cut the deficit to two with less than a minute to play. James found Davis for a three-pointer and Rui Hachimura for a dunk and the Lakers held on for the win.

James finished with a triple-double of 32 points, 14 rebounds and 10 assists, while Davis put up 31 points with nine rebounds, three steals and two blocked shots. Domantas Sabonis had a triple-double of 29 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists for the Kings, who had 28 points and 10 assists from De'Aaron Fox and 23 points from DeMar DeRozan.

The Los Angeles Clippers also came through in the clutch as Norman Powell scored 22 of his 37 points in the fourth quarter of a 109-104 victory over three-time NBA Most Valuable Player Nikola Jokic and the Denver Nuggets.

Powell sank a 3-pointer with 53.1 remaining to pull the Clippers level at 103-103, then James Harden made four free throws and Powell sank two more in the final 30.1 seconds to deliver the win in Denver. "Just locking in, being aggressive, being what the team needed me to be," Powell said. "Taking the shots that came to me."

Harden finished with 23 points and 16 assists for the Clippers, while Croatian center Ivica Zubac added 24 points and 15 rebounds. Jokic made a career-best seven 3-pointers on the way to 41 points



LOS ANGELES: Keegan Murray #13 of the Sacramento Kings looks up as LeBron James #23 of the Los Angeles Lakers blocks a shot, but is called for goal tending in the second half at Crypto.com Arena on October 26, 2024 in Los Angeles. — AFP

but the Serbian center missed a late game-tying attempt from beyond the arc.

Powell, a 31-year-old guard who won an NBA title with Toronto in 2019, said the Clippers are confident even with Kawhi Leonard sidelined by a right knee injury. "Same expectations as always," Powell said. "The take is that we've got enough. We have the belief in ourselves to go out there and compete in games. "When Kawhi comes back, we're going to be ready to accept him as we always do and be clicking on all cylinders."

Celtics rally

Jayson Tatum scored 37 points and Jaylen Brown added 24 points as reigning NBA champions Boston rallied late for a 124-118 victory at Detroit. Cade Cunningham's layup gave Detroit a 112-106 lead with 5:12 remaining but the Celtics closed the game with an 18-6 scoring run for the triumph, improving to 3-0.

Jrue Holiday made back-to-back 3-pointers to pull Boston level at 112-112 and Tatum's two free throws with 1:05 remaining put the Celtics ahead to

stay at 116-114. Cunningham pulled the Pistons within 120-118 on a free throw with 11 seconds remaining but Brown and Tatum sank clutch free throws to seal victory and the Pistons dropped their third straight to start the season.

In Phoenix, Kevin Durant scored 31 points to lead the Suns to a 114-102 victory over the Dallas Mavericks. Phoenix withstood a 40-point, 10-rebound performance from Mavs star Luka Doncic and never trailed after a tight first quarter.

Frenchman Victor Wembanyama scored 29 points to spark the host San Antonio Spurs over Houston 109-106. The Spurs clung to a 100-99 lead before "Wemby" hit two free throws and Jeremy Sochan added a basket to make it 104-99.

Jalen Green's layup for Houston cut the Spurs lead to 106-104 with 12 seconds to play. San Antonio's Keldon Johnson made two free throws but Houston's Fred VanVleet responded with a basket. Stephen Castle hit a free throw for the Spurs with seven seconds remaining and Green, who led Houston with 29 points, missed a shot at the final buzzer. — AFP

Bayern thump Bochum to retake top spot

BOCHUM: Bayern Munich bounced back from Wednesday's Champions League drubbing in Barcelona, thumping rock-bottom Bochum 5-0 away to return to the league summit on Sunday. RB Leipzig's 3-1 comeback win over Freiburg on Saturday sent them three clear atop the table overnight, but Bayern reclaimed the lead as five different players got on the scoresheet.

Bayern may have looked impressive going forward under new coach Vincent Kompany but stumbled into Sunday's game having won just one of their last six in all competitions. Just days after former Munich coach Hansi Flick picked apart the high Bavarian line in Barcelona, Bayern were almost caught out again early.

Moritz Broschinski sped past Minjae Kim and beat Manuel Neuer to the ball, but his shot was too soft, allowing the Korean to clear the ball off the line. Olise gave Bayern the lead in simple fashion, curling a free kick over the Bochum wall and beyond the reach of goalie Patrick Drewe, who was well out of position. Bayern doubled up 10 minutes later again from a set piece, with Musiala getting his head to a Joshua Kimmich free kick. Bayern then cut loose in the second half, with Kane, Sane and Coman all scoring in a 14-minute period.

The England captain took advantage of some superb lead-up work from Musiala to hammer the ball into the top left of the net, his ninth goal in eight league games. Sane pounced after 65 minutes when Bayern pressured Bochum into an error playing out from the back and Coman smashed a superb effort in off the crossbar to round out the big win.

While Bayern are top on goal difference, Bochum finish the weekend in dead last, with just one point from eight games this season. Later on Sunday, fifth-placed Union Berlin play sixth-placed Eintracht Frankfurt in the German capital, while Heidenheim host Hoffenheim. — AFP